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DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PLAN

Digital Connectivity Plan

State of Georgia

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This document is a draft of the State of Georgia's Digital Connectivity Plan and is being released for public comment in advance of its submission by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), the Eligible Entity for the State of Georgia, to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) has been designated by OPB to draft this Plan.

All are welcome to submit comments regarding this draft document. After submitted comments are received and considered, OPB will submit the final version of the Digital Connectivity Plan for formal approval. Comments regarding the draft should be submitted via GTA's website at <https://gta.georgia.gov/broadband> by 11:59 PM on December 8, 2023.

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1 Executive summary

On behalf of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), the Eligible Entity for the State of Georgia, the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) is pleased to present this Digital Connectivity Plan (the Plan). This Plan includes all 15 requirements outlined in NTIA’s State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). For more information, see Appendix F.

The Digital Connectivity Plan serves as Georgia’s foundational framework for addressing the digital divide, developed in strict compliance with the Digital Equity Act of 2021 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429. Spearheaded by GTA, this Plan is a collaborative effort involving a broad network of stakeholders, termed the “State Collective.”

The Plan aligns with the federal framework for state digital equity plans. Its mission is to break down barriers to digital connectivity within Georgia by focusing on multiple facets of digital inclusion. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring broadband technology is both available and affordable, promoting digital literacy, enhancing cybersecurity awareness, and ensuring affordable access to consumer devices and technical support.

We recognize that federal funding serves as the starting point for our efforts, but it is insufficient to fully bridge the digital divide. Achieving true digital connectivity demands a multi-faceted approach that addresses not only technological gaps but also socioeconomic disparities.

Serving multiple roles, the Digital Connectivity Plan not only aims to establish and track measurable objectives for digital equity, but also places these goals in the broader context of economic development, workforce training, public health, educational outcomes, and civic engagement.

The Plan is designed to be a living document, evolving to meet both current and emerging digital needs. We are committed to annual reviews led by GTA in consultation with the State Collective, ensuring that our strategies and actions stay current and effective.

The term “State Collective” is used to describe the cooperative involvement of state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and private-sector participants. “State Collective” is not a formal entity, but a descriptor for the group of partners committed to the Plan’s implementation.

When we say “we” and “our” in the context of this Plan, we refer to the shared objectives and aspirations of the diverse members of the State Collective. In other words, this is “our plan,” co-created and collaboratively implemented.

The Plan includes all 15 requirements outlined in NTIA's State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

1.1 Vision for digital connectivity

Our vision for a fully connected Georgia is to ensure that every Georgian has reliable and affordable access to the internet along with the necessary tools and skills that unlock opportunities for educational advancement, economic success, improved health, and strengthened social ties. This will create more connected, resilient, and prosperous communities and cultivate an environment across the state where our workforce can thrive, our infrastructure can support growth, and our industries can continue to succeed.

In that envisioned future, all Georgians will have access to the following **five critical elements of digital connectivity**:

1. Access to affordable, reliable internet connectivity at home and in their community
2. A computing device and the opportunity to maintain it
3. Opportunity to learn and apply digital skills
4. Tools and practical knowledge for safe online engagement
5. Accessible and usable online government and community resources for all abilities

To achieve this vision, we will adopt the following framework principles for our digital connectivity efforts:

1. Targeted impact on key populations for statewide growth
2. Collaborate and strengthen our partnerships
3. Build on existing achievements and collaborations
4. Prioritize data and rigorous information gathering
5. Smart growth and lasting impact

1.2 Current state of digital connectivity: barriers and assets

The most significant barrier to digital connectivity in Georgia is the lack of physical infrastructure for delivering broadband services. In rural parts of the State, in particular, the infrastructure is often weak or lacking. Many rural Georgians thus do not have the opportunity to use the internet at home; in some cases, they also cannot access the internet at their places of work or at community anchor institutions (CAI) that serve their communities. However, it's not just the rural areas that face this problem. Even in metropolitan areas, there are pockets where the

infrastructure is inadequate, resulting in limited access to the internet. For that reason, this Plan prioritizes extension of broadband infrastructure as the most important element of ensuring digital connectivity, both in rural and metropolitan areas.

A second crucial barrier to digital connectivity in Georgia is affordability. Many Georgians struggle to afford access to the internet (i.e., service); many also struggle to afford a computing device. The cost of technical services to support those devices is yet another affordability concern. For this reason, this Plan recognizes affordability as a key priority for digital connectivity.

A third barrier to Georgia’s digital connectivity vision is that some residents lack the foundational digital skills to navigate the internet—and to do so without risk to their privacy and security. Given these challenges, this Plan prioritizes skills training as a key aspect of the State’s digital connectivity efforts.

1.3 Collaboration and stakeholder engagement

GTA developed a strategy to engage a fully diverse and comprehensive set of stakeholders throughout the State of Georgia. GTA’s approach to collaborating with key constituencies and partners has been inclusive, extensive, and transparent. At each stage of planning and engagement, GTA has implemented several strategies to ensure that the State’s broadband and digital connectivity goals are inclusive, and feedback driven.

Ongoing initiatives range from community roundtables and regional planning sessions to a statewide symposium, each tailored to meet the unique needs of covered populations.¹ The Digital Connectivity Advisory Committee (DCAC) is pivotal in offering guidance and facilitating community involvement through their networks.

¹ Covered populations are defined in the Internet Infrastructure and Jobs Act, Section 60301 et seq. (known as the Digital Equity Act of 2021) as: “(A) individuals who live in covered households; (B) aging individuals; (C) incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; (D) veterans; (E) individuals with disabilities; (F) individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who (i) are English learners; and (ii) have low levels of literacy; (G) individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and (H) individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.” “Internet Infrastructure and Jobs Act, Section 60302 (Definitions), paragraph 8,” Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text>. Covered households are those for which “the income of which for the most recently completed year is not more than 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level, as determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.” “Internet Infrastructure and Jobs Act, Section 60302 (Definitions), paragraph 7,” Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text>. For the definition of “aging individuals,” the statute uses the definition of “older individual” as “an individual who is 60 years of age or older” from the United States Code. “42 U.S.C. Section 2003, paragraph 40,” Findlaw, <https://codes.findlaw.com/us/title-42-the-public-health-and-welfare/42-usc-sect-3002.html>.

Complementing these foundational efforts is a targeted outreach strategy that includes awareness campaigns and storytelling projects that highlight real-world digital experiences. A specialized insights portal will be a central online hub for data and resources.

Our comprehensive collaboration and outreach strategy outlined in this Plan presents a solid framework for enabling broadband adoption and engaging the perspectives of diverse stakeholders. The strategy is further strengthened by numerous partnerships among government agencies, community organizations, and educational institutions, all working toward promoting digital connectivity in line with broader social and economic objectives.

1.4 Strategies, objectives, and key activities for implementation

This Plan sets forth a multi-year, multi-faceted strategy targeting our State's covered populations. We address key challenges such as lack of broadband availability and affordability issues by increasing access to residential broadband infrastructure and partnering with ISPs for better service affordability. Key activities for these strategies include capital projects to extend last-mile broadband, awarding points for connecting CAIs, and educational campaigns for broadband adoption. Furthermore, we are taking innovative approaches to target hard-to-reach communities through public media networks for information dissemination and weighted scoring models to pinpoint areas with layered socioeconomic challenges.

To ensure meaningful digital engagement, key activities also include creating specialized guidebooks and toolkits and a digital skills framework that integrates financial literacy, online safety, and other essential professional skills to supporting youth and adult learners. Special attention is given to communities requiring specialized support, including training Digital Navigators to assist targeted populations, and enhancing the accessibility and awareness of assistive technologies. Additionally, the Plan emphasizes the importance of device ownership and how CAIs and other community-based organizations can be used for device loaner programs.

Our approach ensures no community is left behind by fostering a collaborative ecosystem among state, local, and nonprofit entities. We intend to build local capacity through a statewide consortium, funding local Digital Connectivity Fellows and providing grant writing support. A range of measures have been implemented for sustainability, including efforts to secure additional funding and metrics to assess impact. Overall, the Plan aims to strategically unite various stakeholders to close the digital divide in a measurable, actionable, and sustainable manner.

GTA anticipates the opportunity to use its Digital Equity Capacity Grant to support and develop further digital connectivity capacity in Georgia, in partnership with the many local and regional entities that have participated in GTA's community and stakeholder engagement work over the past year.

At the same time, GTA notes that the ability to develop and sustain these initiatives is dependent on the availability of resources and the many other priorities policymakers have for those resources. For that reason, these potential initiatives are offered as examples of what may be possible if resources are available.

Consistent with its longtime efforts to expand broadband, GTA has designed these initiatives in the most pragmatic way possible—to be actionable, measurable, and sustainable—rather than risk designing more ambitious initiatives that are not financially or practically actionable.

2 Introduction and vision for digital connectivity

Digital connectivity refers to the inclusive availability and access to digital technology and internet services, enabling individuals and communities to participate in, engage, and benefit from the modern digital world. This concept emphasizes the provision of appropriate tools, resources, and support, ensuring that all individuals—regardless of background or circumstance—have the opportunity to connect and thrive in the digital landscape.

2.1 Vision

2.1.1 Vision statement

Our vision for a fully connected Georgia is to ensure that every Georgian has reliable and affordable access to the internet along with the necessary tools and skills to unlock opportunities for educational advancement, economic success, improved health, and strengthened social ties. This will create more connected, resilient, and prosperous communities and cultivate an environment across the state where our workforce can thrive, our infrastructure can support growth, and our industries can continue to lead the way.

In that envisioned future, all Georgians will have access to the following **five critical elements of digital connectivity**:

1. Access to affordable, reliable internet connectivity at home and in their community
2. A computing device and the opportunity to maintain it
3. Opportunity to learn and apply digital skills
4. Tools and practical knowledge for safe online engagement
5. Accessible and usable online government and community resources for all abilities

To achieve this vision, the State of Georgia will adopt the following framework principles for its digital connectivity efforts:

1. **Targeted impact on key populations for statewide growth:** In conjunction with our efforts for statewide broadband expansion, we recognize the need for specialized outreach, support, and investments aimed at “covered populations,” as designated by the Digital Equity Act of 2021. These populations include low-income households, aging populations, incarcerated individuals, veterans, people with disabilities, people with language barriers, racial and ethnic minorities, and rural inhabitants. To optimize impact and ensure efficient use of resources, focused investments will be directed toward initiatives aimed at enabling these populations to participate fully in society and the digital economy. Through this targeted approach, we can nurture thriving, resilient

communities throughout Georgia that are conducive to both economic growth and robust full civic participation for all residents.

2. **Collaborate and strengthen our partnerships:** Digital connectivity work will require collaboration and partnerships. Our community, inclusive of members with lived experiences, regional and local governments, ISPs, workforce organizations, philanthropic entities, corporate partners, CAIs, and community-based organizations, will actively partner to solicit ideas, insights, priorities, and lessons learned to strengthen our digital connectivity ecosystem. Together, we will prioritize identifying and addressing gaps to ensure equitable digital access and inclusion across our diverse communities.
3. **Build on existing achievements and collaborations:** As a statewide community, we will leverage and benefit from the efforts of entities that have spent years developing expertise and capabilities in digital connectivity. Rather than attempt to replicate or re-create those capabilities, we will enhance coordination among state agencies, local governments, and nonprofit partners. By sharing timely data, focused support, and helpful resources we aim to align our collective initiatives with established local and regional digital connectivity plans. In this way, the State of Georgia will respect and amplify local and community experience and know-how, working to support its local government and nonprofit partners that have proven capabilities in digital connectivity.
4. **Prioritize data and rigorous information gathering:** Data will be our guide for informed and impactful actions. Through our united community, which includes local and regional governments, state agencies, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector, we recognize the value in using data as a roadmap for effective action. These entities are encouraged to leverage data to make wise investment decisions, focusing funding on the regions and communities that most urgently require digital access and skills. These efforts will be enhanced by continually gathering, synthesizing, and updating data through tools like the Georgia Broadband Map, periodic surveys, and technical assistance. These synthesized data will guide smart investments in addressing digital connectivity gaps in the communities where our covered populations live and interact.
5. **Smart growth for lasting impact:** Our goal is to support the development of programs that can expand and adapt, ensuring that all Georgians, including our covered populations, remain connected. These programs should be designed for long-lasting impact, aligning with our vision of educational advancement, economic success, and community resilience across Georgia. By thinking forward in this Plan, we are laying the groundwork for prosperous and resilient communities throughout our State.

To achieve this vision, the State of Georgia will aim to reduce barriers to digital connectivity to create conditions that enable all Georgians to equitably access and use the internet.

Access to dependable and affordable internet connectivity is a cornerstone for flourishing communities in Georgia. Our data pinpoint areas of particular concern—most notably, regions with high poverty rates and significant gaps in broadband availability and adoption. Lack of reliable internet connectivity in these areas affects overall quality of life and restricts access to opportunities for educational, economic, and health opportunities for everyone, including small businesses that are vital to local economies. Access to affordable and reliable broadband is a major challenge in rural areas, which limits the availability of digital connectivity programs and services. This makes it difficult for community members to access devices, digital skills training, or digital navigators. To ensure equal access to digital resources and opportunities for all, it is essential to establish digital connectivity programs in these areas. However, the establishment of such programs and services will require further assistance. Urban areas also face diverse challenges to digital connectivity. For example, low-income individuals in urban areas may not be able to afford home internet or own a computer, which limits their ability to participate in online learning or access important services and information. To bridge the digital divide and decrease barriers, it is important to collaborate with local leaders who have an extensive knowledge of their community.

It is important to recognize that strategies needed to address the challenges in rural and urban communities may differ. Therefore, working with local leaders is one way to initiate the process and ensure that everyone has equal access to digital resources and opportunities. Through a collective and collaborative effort, we are committed to accelerating progress in these regions. We will draw upon successful frameworks and provide support for initiatives that have been effective in highly connected urban communities, adapting them to meet the unique needs and opportunities of rural Georgia. This ensures that we not only provide immediate solutions but also build a sustainable digital ecosystem that benefits everyone.

The affordability of broadband services and devices are additional barriers. Statewide, 22.3 percent of households are living on income that is no more than 150 percent of the federal poverty threshold.² These households may find it difficult to afford the costs of broadband subscriptions and necessary hardware, such as computers or tablets. As a result, individuals in these households face restricted access to online education, job opportunities, and crucial government services. This digital divide limits social mobility and access to the benefits of the digital world.

² “Digital Equity Act Population Viewer,” NTIA, <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c5e6cf675865464a90ff1573c5072b42> (accessed September 11, 2023).

Additionally, an hourly housing wage of \$24.75 is needed to afford basic housing in Georgia.³ Coupled with the 15.9 percent of Georgians facing severe housing problems and 14.3 percent living below the poverty line, the financial stressors on families are evident. Such families are likely to prioritize housing and food over internet connectivity, despite its importance. Furthermore, the data collected for this Plan show that digital literacy and skills gaps hinder digital connectivity in Georgia. Nearly a quarter of adults (23.6 percent) have low literacy, and child poverty stands at 19.5 percent. These conditions create a dual-faceted challenge. On one hand, low literacy rates hinder people’s ability to interact with essential digital platforms, stunting economic mobility. On the other hand, child poverty not only restricts access to technological devices and broadband but also sets up a home environment where the nurturing of digital skills takes a backseat to more immediate survival needs. This creates a generational cycle of limited digital access and literacy and stifles the long-term potential of our workforce.

The barriers to digital connectivity and affordable access also compromise the ability of Georgians to protect their online security and discern credible information from misinformation. This lack of digital skills leaves individuals susceptible to privacy breaches and exposes them to cyber threats, undermining their full participation in a digital society and economy.

Aging individuals, who make up 20.1 percent of the population, are often hindered by low digital literacy—making them more susceptible to cybersecurity risks and misinformation. English learners, accounting for 5.4 percent of residents, face language barriers that can compound issues of digital literacy. Incarcerated individuals, although only 0.9 percent of the population, face almost insurmountable barriers to digital access and literacy. Their unique circumstances often make them part of the 14.3 percent living below the poverty line, and they are likely to have fewer opportunities for digital literacy training while in correctional facilities.

Addressing these interconnected barriers requires efforts that encompass infrastructure expansion, affordable access, digital skills training, and targeted support for covered populations and underserved communities to ensure that all Georgians can participate fully in the digital economy.

Table 1: Achieving positive outcomes by addressing barriers to connectivity

Desired outcome	Barriers	Positive outcomes for individuals	Positive outcomes for communities
Economic success (mobility and	Affordability, lack of broadband and	Enables access to a wider range of employment through online job	Enables local businesses to operate online stores, utilize digital marketing,

³ “Out of Reach: Georgia,” National Low Income Housing Coalition, <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/ga> (accessed September 11, 2023).

Desired outcome	Barriers	Positive outcomes for individuals	Positive outcomes for communities
growth)	device access, online safety concerns	platforms, upskilling through online courses, and increased earning potential through remote work. Creates the ability to manage personal finances through online banking and financial platforms.	and reach global markets. Enables local governments to offer more efficient and accessible online services.
Educational advancement	Affordability, device access, digital literacy, child poverty, accessibility	Enables access to educational resources, remote learning, self-paced learning, tutoring, and digital libraries. Enables skill-building through specialized online courses, certifications, and degree programs. Enhanced access to adaptive learning tools tailored for people with disabilities and multilingual educational resources for English learners.	Training programs empower youth and adults, contributing to a more skilled workforce. Schools and community centers can become local hubs for educational resources and digital connectivity. Digital navigators act as educational multipliers, extending the reach of available educational resources and services and ensuring they are well-utilized.
Improved health	Lack of access , affordability	Enhanced ability to schedule appointments online, participate in telehealth consultations, and access critical health information. Use of remote monitoring technologies can improve quality of life and independence for aging and individuals with disabilities.	A healthier community leads to reduced healthcare costs, and telehealth could bring specialized healthcare expertise to local healthcare institutions. Enables improved healthcare accessibility, reducing travel times for routine check-ups and specialized consultations.
Strengthened	Digital literacy, online safety	Access to communities and social media can reduce	Fostering a sense of community through digital

Desired outcome	Barriers	Positive outcomes for individuals	Positive outcomes for communities
social ties	concerns	feelings of isolation and loneliness for aging and individuals with disabilities. Specialized forums and online services can offer emotional support and reintegration assistance for veterans and incarcerated individuals.	means can lead to increased civic participation and social engagement. Enables businesses to strengthen their social ties with the community through online engagement, thereby increasing customer loyalty and local economic stability.

2.1.2 Goals and objectives

Georgia’s digital connectivity goals and objectives expand upon—and align with—the following key goals for achieving broadband connectivity stated in [Georgia’s BEAD Five-Year Action Plan](#) issued in August 2023:

1. Ensure comprehensive high-speed internet accessibility
2. Empower workforce advancement and economic growth in unserved and underserved communities and population groups through broadband expansion projects
3. Bolster cybersecurity across state networks, foster a cyber-ready workforce, and establish lasting partnerships for collaborative action
4. Reduce obstacles to digital connectivity and foster an environment conducive to economic growth, academic achievement, and improved healthcare outcomes

Guided by these key goals, this Plan underscores a series of overarching goals designed to promote safe and efficient digital connectivity across Georgia. Achieving these goals requires conducting sound financial stewardship, leveraging diverse funding avenues, and fostering public-private partnerships to ensure that every Georgian can responsibly access and utilize online resources to their best advantage. The focal points of our digital connectivity goals are as follows:

1. **Goal #1: Boost broadband internet adoption.** In line with the extensive efforts of recent years, Georgia remains committed to ensuring robust fixed broadband connections are available. Initiatives like the BEAD Program play a pivotal role targeting unserved broadband locations. While we prioritize infrastructure as a foundational step, we

simultaneously strive to enhance broadband internet adoption encompassing not only the newly connected areas but also the underserved and areas already with service. Through amplified awareness and by supporting the practical use of the internet within homes and community spaces, we aim for all Georgians, especially our covered populations, to be active and meaningful participants in the digital economy.

2. **Goal #2: Ensure broadband affordability.** Building on Goal #1's emphasis on broadband adoption, we understand that affordability is a tangential yet critical component. As efforts are made to continue to expand broadband infrastructure, particularly with the support of the BEAD program, it is crucial to recognize that accessibility does not always equate to affordability. To truly drive adoption among the covered populations, broadband must be both accessible and affordable. This effort will involve coordination with entities dedicated to enabling eligible households to access federal support programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and Lifeline and as well as building affordability into the scoring and requirements for all broadband grant programs.
3. **Goal #3: Strengthen digital literacy and access to essential tools.** As we collectively strive to foster an environment that unlocks opportunities for educational advancement, economic success, and improved health, we understand that device ownership, robust technical support, and education in digital skills and online safety become ever more crucial. Through collaboration with nonprofit and public partners, the intent is to ensure that every Georgian, particularly low-income residents, aging adults, incarcerated populations, and English learners have the tools and knowledge they require. Furthermore, recognizing the significance of online safety—especially for our aging population—it is vital to embed online privacy and cybersecurity measures in training programs and organizational protocols. The goal is not just to overcome technological and economic barriers, but to help individuals navigate both the opportunities and the potential pitfalls of the online world with confidence and competence.
4. **Goal #4: Expand accessible and inclusive digital opportunities.** In Georgia, ensuring every resident, especially those with disabilities and English learners, can efficiently access public resources and services is a paramount commitment. As the availability of assistive technology (AT) and software programs is promoted across workplaces and communities, these provide the necessary tools for more active participation in our digital economy. Our goal is to ensure state and local agencies have clear guidelines on best practices for website design, rooted in well-established accessibility standards. By transforming our public services where accessibility is not an afterthought but an essential program feature, we can foster a Georgia where digital resources are a gateway to opportunities for all, laying a pathway to inclusivity and equity at every digital touchpoint.

2.2 Alignment with existing efforts to improve outcomes

GTA's role in administering broadband infrastructure development and digital connectivity efforts is fully aligned with state programs and priorities to improve outcomes in economic and workforce development, education, health, civic and social engagement, and the delivery of other essential services.

Aligned with Governor Brian P. Kemp's goal to be the best state in the nation to live, work, and raise a family regardless of ZIP code, the State of Georgia has increased broadband expansion efforts over the past two years by deploying record levels of funding for projects throughout the State, standing up advisory committees for broadband and digital connectivity, and creating a comprehensive State strategy to chart a path to close the digital divide.⁴

In 2018, the State launched the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI) through the Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act⁵ with the goal of delivering broadband services throughout the state to unserved areas without a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds (25/3) delivered via terrestrial technologies. The initiative is jointly led by GTA and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which have formed an inter-agency team⁶ to coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders in the implementation of the GBDI.⁷

To underscore the importance of local planning for broadband expansion, in 2018 Georgia also began requiring that all communities' comprehensive plans include an element that provides for the promotion of broadband deployment.⁸ By the end of 2022, nearly every community in Georgia had updated their plans to include local coverage data, as well as specific goals and strategies for broadband in their jurisdiction.

⁴ "Georgia Broadband Annual Report 2022," Georgia Technology Authority and Georgia Department of Community Affairs, <https://gta.georgia.gov/document/document/2022-broadband-annual-report/download>.

⁵ Senate Bill 402 <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/52636>; enacted through Georgia Code Title 50, Chapter 40, <https://broadband.georgia.gov/media/6/download>. See also: OCGA 50-40, <https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2021/title-50/chapter-40/>.

⁶ In addition to GTA and DCA, the five-agency team includes the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD), and the State Properties Commission (SPC).

⁷ "Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative," DCA,

<https://broadband.georgia.gov/sites/default/files/documents/georgia-broadband-deployment-initiative.pdf>.

⁸ See, GA Code § 36-70-6 (2022), <https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2022/title-36/chapter-70/article-1/section-36-70-6/> and GA Code § 50-8-7.1(b)(1) (2022), <https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2022/title-50/chapter-8/article-1/section-50-8-7-1/>, as amended by the 2018 Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act (SB 402), <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/52636>. "[T]he governing bodies of municipalities and counties shall provide in any comprehensive plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services by broadband services providers" and DCA is required to establish "the promotion of the deployment of reasonable and cost-effective access to broadband services" as a minimum element addressed by comprehensive plans local governments create as part of the coordinated and comprehensive planning process.

Cities and counties that have both adopted a comprehensive plan in accordance with this requirement and adopted a Broadband Model Ordinance that streamlines permitting for broadband projects⁹ can apply for a Broadband Ready Community designation from DCA.¹⁰ As of June 2023, 56 communities in the state have received the Broadband Ready designation. Many communities that have not yet been designated as Broadband Ready stated that recognition is a goal, and DCA is providing outreach to directly assist those seeking the designation.

A community seeking the Broadband Ready designation has identified the need for expansion of broadband services in their community and is interested in promoting these needs to homes and businesses. Broadband Ready Communities recognize that high-speed internet is critical infrastructure for their community. They prioritize the need for expansion, incorporate the need for broadband into their goals and strategies, and promote themselves as “expansion ready.”

The following table shows the alignment of the strategies of this Plan with the State’s priorities across the outcomes of economic and workforce development, education, health, civic and social engagement, and the delivery of other essential services and applies to each covered population.

⁹ Available at <https://gta.georgia.gov/broadband/support-local-governments>; if DCA receives an application inclusive of an adopted ordinance that does not follow the model ordinance, the application will be made available for a public comment period of at least 30 days after such an application is received.

¹⁰ “Support for Local Governments,” GTA, <https://gta.georgia.gov/broadband/support-local-governments> (accessed March 10, 2023).

Table 2: Digital connectivity alignment with State outcomes

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan / strategy	Key goals / priorities	Digital connectivity strategic alignment
Economic & workforce development	Office of the Governor	Governor’s Strategic Goals for Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase rural broadband access for economic growth, educational opportunity, and healthcare access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure • Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses
	Department of Economic Development	Strategic Plan FY 2023-FY 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of engagements with businesses • Catalyze economic development through the arts • Educate rural communities on arts for economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses • Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement • Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy
	GTA, DCA	2022 Broadband Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase broadband availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure • Build collaboration among state, local, and nonprofit entities • Sustain and grow state and local efforts in digital connectivity
	GPSC	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase economic growth in Georgia by improving utility infrastructure for businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure
	ARC, DCA	2023 Strategy Statement to ARC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community and economic development through reliable broadband internet and other necessary public infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure • Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses • Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement • Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan / strategy	Key goals / priorities	Digital connectivity strategic alignment
	GDOL	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect job seekers quickly and efficiently with available resources for career goals Utilize cutting-edge technology for effective employment service delivery Implement a distance learning / job training program in rural counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a foundational digital skills framework Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations
Education	GaDOE	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the percentage of high school students ready for enrollment, employment, or enlistment Provide instructional supports to CTAE teachers Remove barriers for clear post-secondary pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a foundational digital skills framework Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy Sustain broadband affordability
	Governor’s Office of Student Achievement	Strategic goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote student success through partnerships, professional development, and rural focus Connect with students and parents via a two-generation approach Ensure that Georgia’s literacy rates are on a trajectory of improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses Expand digital literacy through community collaborations Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources
	USG	2024 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase student success and economic competitiveness; develop talent for industry needs; support entrepreneurship; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a foundational digital skills framework Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan / strategy	Key goals / priorities	Digital connectivity strategic alignment
	TCSG	2020-2024 Strategic Plan	<p>enhance student career development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase student success through online learning opportunities; close the middle skills gap in Georgia; increase integrated education and training opportunities for youth and adult education students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a foundational digital skills framework Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement
Health	GDPH, GDCH	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills
	GDVS	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to benefits and health services for veterans Workforce skill development: attract, retain, and grow talent Serve the needs of aging veteran population Connect federal, state, and community-based organizations in service ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations
	DBHDD	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to health services for individuals with disabilities Build a recovery-oriented, community-based behavioral health system Improve access to services and supports for intellectual and developmental disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan / strategy	Key goals / priorities	Digital connectivity strategic alignment
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement 9-8-8 for crisis services Develop skilled workforce to meet current and future needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement
	GVRA	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to health and workforce training services for individuals with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement
Civic and social engagement	GPLS	2021 Statement on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide accessible content to support needs of diverse communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a foundational digital skills framework Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources
	DCA	Consolidated Plan 2022-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand community concern about internet access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources
	GPB – Georgia Public	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate and inform public; support teachers and students with digital education content; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan / strategy	Key goals / priorities	Digital connectivity strategic alignment
	Telecommunications Commission		community engagement initiative for GPB education’s resources; provide relevant and educational content and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand digital literacy through community collaborations Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses
	GEMA/HS	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to emergency information; develop statewide capacity for equitable and inclusive disaster recovery in rural and economically disadvantaged areas; increase knowledge of FEMA Public Assistance Program through targeted training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a foundational digital skills framework Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations
Delivery of essential services	DHS	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to basic human services for covered populations Build a workforce that supports a strong business environment and small businesses Strengthen strategic partnerships and utilizing technology to improve service delivery Increase access to programs and services Promote programs that empower Georgians to improve their economic, medical, and mental well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with ISPs and community stakeholders for improved broadband affordability and device accessibility Expand device ownership initiatives Leverage CAIs to expand community-level device access Prioritize and prepare for broadband and digital inclusion in counties with highest digital inequities Develop a foundational digital skills framework Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan / strategy	Key goals / priorities	Digital connectivity strategic alignment
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy • Expand digital literacy through community collaborations • Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy • Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources • Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations
	<p>GDOT</p>	<p>2023-2026 Strategic Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to transportation services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a foundational digital skills framework • Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources • Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan / strategy	Key goals / priorities	Digital connectivity strategic alignment
	DJJ, GDC, DCS	2023-2026 Strategic Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase safety and security in facilities while providing educational opportunities • Expand delivery of virtual diversion telecounseling services • Develop new virtual gang awareness employee onboarding training • Establish effective responses to the needs of human trafficking victims • Utilize technology to improve operational efficiencies • Increase and maintain mental health appointment completions • Increase rehabilitative opportunities • Address mental health and addiction needs; expand the use of accountability courts • Launch reentry online network to increase the number of judicial circuits receiving reentry services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a foundational digital skills framework • Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills • Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy • Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy • Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms • Expand device ownership initiatives • Leverage CAIs to expand community-level device access • Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources • Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations
	DNR	2023-2026 Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve public access to parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources

2.2.1 Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes

Governor's Strategic Goals

This Plan aligns with and supports Governor Brian P. Kemp's Strategy Goals for Georgia.¹¹ The goals, strategies, and envisioned activities in this Plan enable the goals to strengthen rural Georgia, specifically the cross-cutting objective to "increase rural broadband access for economic growth, educational opportunity, and healthcare access." Under Governor Kemp's first goal to "Make Georgia #1 for Small Business," this Plan specifically supports "develop[ing] a skilled workforce to meet current and future needs across the industry spectrum."

State Broadband Strategy

Since 2019, the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) jointly submit the Georgia Broadband Annual Report, which highlights the efforts of the State broadband program in support of Governor Kemp's goal to be the best state in the nation to live, work, and raise a family regardless of zip code. The most recent (2022) report highlighted the State's deploying record funding for projects to increase broadband expansion efforts throughout the State and creating a comprehensive State strategy to chart a path to close the digital divide. The report outlines the following program objectives:

1. Bridge the broadband gap in the most cost-effective, timely way possible. Specifically, the State seeks to optimize the cost and time to implement a statewide broadband strategy to avail high-speed, reliable internet service to Georgia's households, businesses, and institutions.
2. Enable sustainable, reliable, and affordable broadband service to end users.
3. Increase the impact of capital investments by expanding internet usage for remote education, telehealth, small business operations, agriculture, and telework.
4. Achieve government objectives for public safety, emergency response, and modern and efficient government administration and customer service with reliable broadband connectivity statewide.
5. Ensure safe and effective end user experiences through digital literacy.
6. Establish workforce development programs to support future broadband expansion efforts, maintenance, and technical support.¹²

DCA's Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026 underscores its commitment to working with GTA and State agencies to support economic and community development in rural areas of the State through

¹¹ "The Governor's Strategic Goals for Georgia," State of Georgia Office of Planning and Budget, accessed September 1, 2023, <https://opb.georgia.gov/planning-and-evaluation/strategic-planning>.

¹² 2022 Broadband Report, available from GTA website, <https://gta.georgia.gov/broadband/additional-resources>.

broadband deployment, noting it as part of its objective to “strengthen rural Georgia” in alignment with the Governor’s Strategy Goals.¹³

Public Service Commission

In support of rural broadband expansion in the State under the larger objective of supporting economic development opportunities and other outcomes including health, education, and quality of life, the Georgia Public Service Commission aids Georgia’s Electric Membership Corporations (EMC) and other ISPs to rural Georgians through the review of EMC cost allocation manuals for compliance.¹⁴

Appalachian Region

Georgia’s involvement in the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is managed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which provides technical and project development assistance for local governments and other eligible organizations. Georgia’s Appalachian Region encompasses 37 out of 159 Georgia counties throughout the northern part of the State and spans five State regional commission districts.

In the State’s 2023 Strategy Statement to the ARC, Governor Kemp highlighted increased access to broadband capacity across rural Georgia as one of five top priorities for the State, with other the priorities of spurring small business, preparing a ready workforce and removing barriers to employment, strengthening rural Georgia, and improving the quality of and access to healthcare options in rural Georgia closely benefiting from improvements in broadband access.¹⁵

Workforce development

A key objective of the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) for FY2023-FY2026 is to “utilize cutting edge technology that supports effective and efficient service delivery.”¹⁶ GDOL plans to update its legacy unemployment insurance (UI) Benefits, Tax, and Appeals systems to a new web-enabled solution by the close of FY2026 and completed upgrades in September 2023 to various aspects of its operations, such as its call center and website, to improve customers’ access to

¹³ Georgia Department of Community Affairs Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

¹⁴ Georgia Public Service Commission Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

¹⁵ State of Georgia 2023 State Strategy Statement to the Appalachian Regional Commission: <https://www.arc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Georgia-State-Strategy-Statement-FY2023.pdf>.

¹⁶ Georgia Department of Labor Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

GDOL resources. GDOL also plans to implement a Distance Learning Program in eight rural career centers, which will make training from GDOL and partners available remotely.

2.2.2 Educational outcomes

K-12 schools

In alignment with the Governor’s priority of “putting students first,” the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE)’s Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026 sets an objective to expand educational opportunities and non-academic supports to meet student needs and maximize engagement.¹⁷ As part of this goal, the GaDOE Office of Rural Education will provide free Georgia Virtual School seats to identified students in rural areas to remediate or accelerate their learning. The Virtual School, a program of GaDOE’s Office of Technology Services, offers students across the state access to courses at the middle school and high school level—including core content areas, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, electives, and more—through a virtual classroom environment.¹⁸

University System of Georgia

The University System of Georgia’s (USG) Strategic Plan 2024 lays out four primary goals: 1) Student success, 2) Responsible stewardship, 3) Economic competitiveness, and 4) Community impact. Of these, student success and economic competitiveness take strategic approaches that rely on digital connectivity.

As a key part of its goal of student success, which involves providing adequate access to higher education wherever and whenever a student needs it, USG will expand its distance education opportunities by expanding its eCampus online education offerings and overhauling its Georgia ONmyLINE to help expand use of online courses and programs offered by USG institutions.¹⁹ However, this is just part of USG’s goal to support access to educational opportunities regardless of location.

“USG is also expanding virtual instruction across the State. Development of more classrooms configured to support virtual instruction provides a cost-effective means to deliver needed undergraduate and graduate programs throughout Georgia. This allows students to take advantage of academic programs on other USG campuses without having to leave their community. In addition, we are researching how the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), a unit of USG, can help support citizens’ access to lifelong educational opportunities. GPLS already

¹⁷ Georgia Department of Education Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

¹⁸ Georgia Virtual School, <https://www.gavirtualschool.org/>.

¹⁹ University System of Georgia Strategic Plan 2024, https://www.usg.edu/strategic_plan/assets/strategic_plan/documents/SP2024.pdf.

supports access to information for all Georgians through libraries across the State as well as online resources. Better use of this resource allows USG to increase availability of academic programming to meet citizen and employer needs.”²⁰

The USG plan recognizes the need for students to have technology literacy. To help achieve its goal of economic competitiveness, USG plans to update the structure and content of its general education curriculum to better prepare students with the skills, knowledge, and experience to be successful. Among the design principles of this update is support for “developing 21st-century skills such as data, technology literacy and being able to work in diverse multi-disciplinary teams.”

USG’s Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026 also includes a complementary objective to support student success that relies on digital connectivity. Recognizing that “colleges and universities increasingly utilize technological tools to make student success efforts more comprehensive, efficient, real-time and data driven,” USG intends to research and identify effective technology solutions to help increase systemwide student retention rates.²¹

Technical College System of Georgia

In its Strategic Plan FY2023-2026, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) notes an increased demand for online learning opportunities after the Covid-19 pandemic.²² To support the objective of improving student retention and graduation rates, TCSG plans to continue expanding its eCampus platform, which offers online courses through a “shared resource model” that increases students’ access to programs and allows TCSG to share instructional capacity across colleges.²³

The Plan also notes that advances in technology impact its core mission to “recruit and grow a globally competitive workforce.” TCSG designates the high-demand field of cybersecurity as a target area to increase enrollment and plans to create industry-specific “micro-credentialing” programs for cybersecurity that offer short-term training and “provide easier access to education and required documented skills.”

2.2.3 Health outcomes

Public and community health

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) sets an objective in its Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026 to “leverage technology to provide long-term cost savings to the State.”²⁴ To advise the

²⁰ University System of Georgia Strategic Plan 2024, https://www.usg.edu/strategic_plan/assets/strategic_plan/documents/SP2024.pdf, p. 16.

²¹ University System of Georgia Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

²² Technical College System of Georgia Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

²³ “TCSG eCampus,” TCSG, <https://www.tcsg.edu/ecampus/>.

²⁴ Georgia Department of Public Health Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

Department on public health technology solutions, a chief technology strategy officer joined the DPH team in 2022 through a public-private partnership with the Georgia Institute of Technology.

DPH identifies its IT infrastructure capacity as a critical issue in the plan, noting that the Department has “created a significant technical infrastructure with a large number of core legacy data systems.” To further its technology-related goals, the Department has planned IT upgrades for several public health systems. DPH also received federal grant funding to implement a unified Electronic Health Record (EHR) system across all county health departments.

Additional objectives in the Strategic Plan incorporate solutions that rely on digital connectivity to deliver services more effectively. To support HIV prevention efforts, DPH plans to increase the number of public health departments that deliver pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services via telehealth; the Department also intends to improve the “accessibility and usability” of the Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), an online database, to support opioid-related overdose prevention and response.

The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) is committed to “promot[ing] the health and prosperity of its citizens through innovative and effective delivery of quality health care programs.” To support this vision, a key objective of the Department’s Strategic Plan FY2023-2026 is to continue transitioning its legacy Medicaid Management Information System to the Medicaid Enterprise System Transformation (MEST), a modular solution which the Department expects to be more agile and provide “increased system integration and functionality” as well as “improved data governance and quality.”²⁵

Veterans’ services

The Georgia Department of Veterans Services (GDVS) is implementing the Unite Georgia platform, a coordinated care network developed through a partnership with Unite Us,²⁶ to support its strategic objective of serving veterans holistically through partnerships with community-based organizations.²⁷ The online platform streamlines connecting veterans to resources beyond the VA claims process.

Behavioral health and developmental disabilities

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) notes as a strength that it has embraced technology to administer and provide services in accordance with

²⁵ Georgia Department of Community Health Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

²⁶ “Georgia Department of Veterans Service and Unite Us Team Up to Expand Coordinated Care Network, Streamline Access to Services in Georgia,” GDVS news release, November 9, 2022, <https://veterans.georgia.gov/press-releases/2022-11-09/gdvs-partners-with-unite-us>.

²⁷ Georgia Department of Veterans Services Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

its mission of “easy access to high-quality care that leads to a life of recovery and independence for the people we serve.”²⁸

In alignment with the Governor’s Strategy Goal to “leverage technology to best utilize limited State resources,” DBHDD is also developing online professional development offerings for its staff, including a new a new DBHDD University intranet landing page that will provide easier access to available learning pathways, according to the Department’s Strategic Plan FY2023-2026.

Vocational rehabilitation

The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), which “serves Georgians with disabilities to empower them to live independent lives,” identifies a need to leverage technology to enhance the delivery of its services in its FY2023-FY2026 Strategic Plan.²⁹ GVRA plans to implement a new case management system, automate repetitive business processes, and provide technology training for its staff twice per year by July 2025.

2.2.4 Civic and social engagement

Libraries

The Georgia Public Library Service Statement on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility, approved in 2021, highlights GPLS values and commitments to its staff, its libraries, and to the public. Key among its commitments to the public, and aligned with the goals of this Plan, GPLS commits “to abiding by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standard to support universal access to all of our online content.”³⁰

Department of Community Affairs

The State of Georgia Consolidated Plan 2023-2027 outlines engagements conducted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and concern related to internet access and broadband availability as an issue raised in community engagements and focus groups.³¹

Georgia Public Broadcasting

Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) produces and distributes content across a variety of platforms—including television, radio, and online—to “educate, inform and entertain Georgians and enrich the quality of their lives.” This Plan supports and aligns with GPB’s Strategic Plan

²⁸ Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

²⁹ Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

³⁰ Georgia Public Library Service Statement on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility, <https://georgialibraries.org/our-values/> (accessed September 5, 2023).

³¹ State of Georgia Consolidated Plan 2023-2027: https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/2023-2027_consolidated_plan_final_v.3.pdf.

FY2023-FY2026, particularly its “recommit[ment] to [its] core mission” of providing educational content for the public, serving as a primary provider of digital learning tools for the State’s students and teachers, and “using the media we have access to as a way to provide much needed services and information to Georgia’s many varied communities across the State, including rural and underserved communities.”³²

2.2.5 Delivery of other essential services

Emergency preparedness and response

To advance its objective of increasing information sharing and collaboration with local agencies and first responders,³³ the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) utilizes notification and messaging technology and well as secure collaboration platforms—all of which depend on reliable connectivity.

GEMA/HS’s Strategic Plan for FY2023-FY2026 also prioritizes preparing for the transition to Next Generation 911 (NG-911), and the agency intends to collaborate with GTA and the Georgia Cyber Center, among other partners, to develop best practices around cybersecurity for public safety answering points (PSAP) implementing the technology.

Human Services

The ability to effectively access and use the internet is critical to households that benefit from the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) programs that support workforce development and partnerships, educational needs for Georgia’s most vulnerable residents, and empower Georgians to improve their economic, medical, and mental well-being (whether in person or virtually). In addition, as the agency streamlines its service delivery system with a greater utilization of technology, broadband access and digital connectivity skills efforts highlighted in this Plan are key enablers.

Specifically, this Plan supports DHS mission to provide “individuals and families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence and protect Georgia’s vulnerable children and adults.”³⁴

Transportation

Expanding access to reliable connectivity supports the Georgia Department of Transportation’s (GDOT) goal to “deliver [its] mission responsibly and more efficiently”³⁵ by managing communications with the public through NaviGator, GDOT’s Advanced Transportation

³² Georgia Public Broadcasting Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

³³ Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

³⁴ DHS Strategic Plan, accessed from DHS website, <https://dhs.georgia.gov/organization/about/dhs-strategic-plan>.

³⁵ Georgia Department of Transportation Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

Management System, which residents access through Georgia 511. GDOT’s objectives also include “put[ting] Georgians’ safety first through innovation and technology,” including deploying connected vehicle technology at traffic signal locations and continuing its statewide traffic signal timing program, Signal Operations (SigOps).

Law enforcement

The Georgia Department of Community Supervision (DCS), in accordance with its approach to “leverag[e] research and technology to prioritize activities that promote success among justice-involved persons,” plans to launch a Reentry Online Network platform integrated with its case management system by 2025 to “expand the impact of reentry services throughout the entire state.”³⁶

The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) also plans to “expand delivery of virtual diversion telecounseling services for low-impact offenders” by 2027.³⁷

Parks and recreation services

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, which manages parks and historic sites in the state, intends to raise the number of online bookings through FY2026 by improving its online reservation system and increase use of its website and social media to share information with potential visitors.³⁸

2.3 Strategy and objectives

This section of the Plan describes, at a high level, the key strategies and objectives of the Plan, which are designed to address the key digital connectivity challenges described below. Additional details regarding how these strategies are implemented and their associated initiatives are provided in Section 5, which details GTA’s plans for execution.

³⁶ Georgia Department of Community Supervision Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

³⁷ Department of Juvenile Justice Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

³⁸ Department of Natural Resources Strategic Plan FY2023-FY2026, submitted to OPB.

Table 3. Key digital connectivity challenges, strategies, and objectives

Challenge	Strategies	Objectives
Lack of broadband availability	1: Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure 2: Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses	<i>Short-term</i> 1: Achieve statewide broadband access: every Georgian can access 100/20 Mbps at home. 2: Every Anchor Institution that wants it can access 1/1 Gbps. 3: Increase broadband subscription statewide through a holistic awareness campaign. 4: Spur a significant increase in broadband subscription for Georgians living in counties with highest digital inequities. <i>Long-term</i> 5: Spur equitable outcomes across sectors related to broadband expansion.
Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services, devices, and technical support	1: Partner with ISPs and community stakeholders for improved broadband affordability and device accessibility 2: Expand device ownership initiatives 3: Leverage CAIs to expand community-level device access 4: Prioritize and prepare for broadband and digital inclusion in counties with highest digital inequities	<i>Short-term</i> 1: Boost ACP enrollment. 2: Increase the percentage of ISPs with low-cost broadband service offerings. 3: All Georgians have access to a workable computing device: a) establish a foundational device ecosystem, secure stakeholder commitments, and integrate community organizations for device distribution and training, and b) expand device lending programs and enhanced public computer labs through CAIs serving covered populations. 4: Georgians in need can access affordable device options through digital connectivity organizations. 5: Increase device loaner programs and public computer labs through CAIs serving covered populations. <i>Long-term</i> 6: Sustain broadband affordability – track and monitor increases in affordable broadband and device ownership/access rates among the State’s low-income households.
Covered populations, particularly those in low-income and senior households, need support to	1: Develop a foundational digital skills framework for all Georgians 2: Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills 3: Foster online safety and privacy awareness within	<i>Short-term</i> 1: Design and develop a statewide digital skills framework. 2: Covered populations in Georgia can effectively use the internet if they so choose. 3: Covered populations in Georgia can access information or training to learn how to protect their security and privacy online.

Challenge	Strategies	Objectives
develop digital skills, including skills to protect themselves and their personal data online	digital literacy	4: Enable opportunities for members of covered populations to learn how to protect their security and privacy online.
	4: Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy 5: Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms	<i>Long-term</i> 5: Enhance digital health literacy in covered populations: establish a network of organizations offering digital health navigation and literacy training. 6: Expand digital literacy through community collaborations: a) maximize public-private collaborations across stakeholders supporting covered populations and b) facilitate enhanced digital literacy training and support tools. 7: Increase digital skills program enrollment and proficiency among covered populations. 8: Enhance workforce development related to broadband expansion and digital connectivity programs.
Ensuring digital inclusivity as Georgia advances in digital services	1: Improve universal design and accessibility in public resources	<i>Short-term</i> 1: Covered populations can access government services online.
	2: Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations	2: Align State and local government websites to accessibility standards and usability guidelines. 3: Widen the accessibility and awareness of assistive technologies. <i>Long-term</i> 4: Train and deploy specialized Digital Navigators within community spaces serving covered populations.
Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital connectivity efforts	1: Build collaboration among state, local, and nonprofit entities	<i>Short-term</i> 1: Establish local digital connectivity plans.
	2: Support and develop local capacity through a statewide consortium	2: Establish a statewide digital connectivity consortium.
	3: Sustain and grow state and local efforts in digital connectivity	3: Establish a digital connectivity insights hub.
	4: Create a repository of digital connectivity insights	4: Increase the engagement and participation of localities in DCA, GTA, or other organization's technical assistance programs.
	5: Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement	5: Monitor the financial sustainability of digital connectivity efforts.

2.3.1 Strategies

Strategies are organized based on the key challenge they are designed to address (see Section 5 for details).

1. Key challenge: Broadband has far-reaching impacts on Georgia’s individuals, communities, businesses, education, healthcare, and overall economic and social development. However, 315,783 unserved households in Georgia face a lack of broadband availability. State and federal resources will be used to provide robust high-speed internet connections for all Georgians, with a particular focus on the populations most affected by limited service options.

- **Strategy 1: Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure.** By ensuring every Georgia household has high-speed internet, we unlock opportunities for individuals to access vital resources. This connectivity is a foundation for improved education, healthcare, workforce, essential services, and civic participation. Moreover, enhanced connectivity fosters equitable outcomes in these essential sectors.
- **Strategy 2: Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses.** ISPs are pivotal in expanding the physical networks while CAIs, governments, and other key partners spearhead community-level initiatives. Leveraging both public and private investments, Georgia aims to scale digital inclusion programs and address broadband gaps. As the broadband infrastructure continues to improve, these concerted efforts are directed toward bridging the connectivity gaps across the unserved and underserved locations of Georgia.

Short-term objectives:

- **Objective 1: Achieve statewide broadband access**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of locations with access to 100/20 broadband. Every Georgian can access 100/20 Mbps at home, which will increase broadband connectivity rates in areas identified as “underserved” by 2029.
- **Objective 2: Every Anchor Institution that wants it can access 1/1 Gbps**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of Anchor locations with access to 1/1 Gbps.
- **Objective 3: Increase broadband subscription statewide through a holistic awareness campaign**

- **Metric:** Percentage increase in broadband subscription rates among households with no internet. By the end of 2027, launch and complete a statewide campaign aiming to achieve a 25 percent increase in broadband subscription rates among Georgians as a direct measure of heightened awareness and appreciation of broadband’s benefits.
- **Objective 4: Spur a significant increase in broadband subscription for Georgians living in counties with highest digital inequities**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of locations subscribed to broadband in targeted counties. Achieve considerable connectivity improvements based on baseline data in the following counties: Baldwin, Bibb, Bulloch, Burke, Calhoun, Charlton, Chattooga, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Crisp, DeKalb, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Elbert, Evans, Floyd, Franklin, Fulton, Glascock, Hancock, Hart, Heard, Jasper, Jenkins, Johnson, Macon, Madison, McIntosh, Meriwether, Mitchell, Peach, Pike, Polk, Randolph, Screven, Stephens, Stewart, Sumter, Tattnall, Telfair, Terrell, Turner, Ware, Warren, Wheeler, Wilcox, and Wilkinson.

Long-term objectives:

- **Objective 5: Spur equitable outcomes across sectors related to broadband expansion**
 - **Metric:** Establish inter-agency partnerships to track and showcase marked improvements in key sectors such as education, healthcare, workforce development, and civic engagement through enhanced broadband access, highlighting instances where access has materially improved outcomes in the services delivered by these sectors to the communities in Georgia.

2. Key challenge: Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services and devices and technical support. Affordability of broadband services and devices is essential for Georgians to participate in the digital economy, regardless of their financial circumstances. Currently, approximately 22 percent of Georgia’s households have incomes no greater than 150 percent of the federal poverty threshold. This economic circumstance translates to digital disconnection, with 18.8 percent of the state’s population not utilizing the internet. Furthermore, despite having 1,662,063 households meeting the ACP eligibility criteria as of June 2023, a significant gap is evident with 1,014,346 households still unenrolled in the program. If all eligible were to avail the subsidy, the collective savings could amount to up to

\$365,164,560 per year. Rechanneling these substantial savings could open opportunities for Georgian households to meet other essential needs, invest in education, or circulate the savings back into the local economy.

- **Strategy 1: Partner with ISPs and community stakeholders for improved broadband affordability:** GTA acknowledges that it does not possess regulatory authority over broadband pricing. However, by establishing clear compliance criteria for ISPs, especially those receiving state funds for broadband projects, and engaging with community stakeholders, GTA can help to ensure the availability of affordable broadband packages. The State Collective can also provide enrollment assistance to make federal programs like the ACP and Lifeline more accessible to eligible households, particularly promoting broader participation and adoption.
- **Strategy 2: Expand device ownership initiatives:** Access to large-screen devices like laptops and desktops at home is crucial for maximizing the benefits of broadband. While smartphones serve as a stopgap, they cannot replace the comprehensive capabilities of larger devices, which are especially crucial for students, those with disabilities, and others requiring more complex engagement. Recognizing the challenge faced by low-income households in affording both broadband and essential devices, The State Collective can work with the community's digital connectivity organizations. These organizations distribute devices and offer affordable technical support, underscoring the principle that broadband affordability is intrinsically linked to device affordability. By supporting these organizations, we reinforce that both are vital in addressing the broader goal: *affordability is fundamental to the widespread adoption of broadband services.*
- **Strategy 3: Leverage CAIs to expand community-level device access:** Harnessing the foundational role of CAIs like libraries, schools, and community centers, the State Collective can strengthen these entities as pillars of device accessibility. By fortifying their digital resources and promoting ready access to device programs (i.e., lending programs and tech kiosks) we seek to provide residents with cost-effective avenues to access current technology, simultaneously fostering an environment of digital literacy and awareness about affordable device ownership options. Through this approach, CAIs are positioned as vital hubs for digital inclusion, ensuring every Georgian can engage with the digital world, irrespective of personal device ownership.
- **Strategy 4: Prioritize and prepare for broadband and digital inclusion in counties with highest digital inequities:** As we work toward digital connectivity in Georgia, we must direct attention to counties grappling with high levels of digital disparities. While all of Georgia's 159 counties have diverse needs, this comprehensive strategy focuses

on 50 counties that showcase heightened digital inequities. This approach considers a variety of critical factors, including the percentage of unserved broadband households, the demographic makeup in terms of racial or ethnic minorities, aging populations, low literacy levels, disabilities, rural residency, county health factors, and rates of incarcerated individuals.

The complexity of digital inequity often arises from the intersection of multiple factors. For instance, areas with a high percentage of unserved broadband households might also suffer from low literacy levels and poor county health outcomes, making digital inclusion not just a matter of connectivity but a broader socioeconomic imperative. It is imperative to clarify that the targeted focus on these 50 counties does not mean prioritizing them over others. Rather, this targeted strategy is an integral part of our holistic approach to ensure that no county, irrespective of its unique challenges, is left behind in our statewide digital connectivity efforts. By concentrating resources and interventions in these counties, we aim to build a replicable model of success that can be adapted and implemented across all counties in Georgia.

Short-term objectives:

- **Objective 1: Boost ACP enrollment**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of eligible households participating in ACP. Pending the continuance of the ACP program, achieve a 52 percent increase in enrollment from the current 1,014,346 unenrolled households in available federal support programs like ACP by 2027.
- **Objective 2: Increase the percentage of ISPs with low-cost broadband service offerings**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of ISPs that offer low-cost products for lower-income households. By 2027, engage with ISPs to ensure they offer affordable broadband subscription packages for the 22 percent of Georgia households below 150 percent of the federal poverty threshold.
- **Objective 3: All Georgians have access to a workable computing device**
 - **Metric:** By 2027, establish a foundational device ecosystem that prioritizes device ownership and technology reuse and incorporates local partnerships, both public and private. Aim to secure commitments from a minimum of five key stakeholders, integrating community organizations for device distribution and training. Furthermore, leverage the statewide

consortium to champion device accessibility, ensuring a clear, initial framework for Georgians to access devices and essential support.

- **Metric:** Percentage of all Georgians, including members of all covered populations, who report that they cannot fix a broken computing device within a month.
- **Objective 4: Georgians in need can access affordable device options through digital connectivity organizations**
 - **Metric:** Number of organizations that provide desktop or laptop computers for ownership.
 - **Metric:** Percentage of households that have a desktop or laptop computer.
- **Objective 5: Increase device loaner programs and public computer labs through Anchor Institutions serving covered populations**
 - **Metrics:** Number of Anchor Institutions that have device loaner programs and/or public computer labs. By 2027, a targeted 20 percent of Anchor Institutions serving covered populations will expand ready device access through lending programs and enhanced public computer labs.

Long-term objectives (post-2029):

- **Objective 6: Sustain broadband affordability**
 - **Metric:** Achieve a notable increase in affordable broadband and device ownership/access rates among the State’s low-income households, as evidenced by a substantial drop in the percentage of Georgians (from the current 18.8 percent) not utilizing the internet.

3. Key challenge: Covered populations, particularly those in low-income and senior households, need support to develop digital skills, including skills to protect themselves and their personal data online. Georgia’s diverse populations face unique and intersectional challenges when it comes to digital literacy. While digital skills and knowledge are universally essential, the ability to navigate the digital landscape is even more pivotal for covered populations to ensure they are not left behind. This includes both low-income households contending with financial barriers and aging individuals who must adapt to the increasing digitalization of services, such as healthcare, where they may be at an elevated risk from online threats and fraud.

Digital literacy and skills are not only about using technology but also about fostering empowerment, critical thinking, and participation in the digital society. These skills are instrumental in promoting education, employability, small business and entrepreneurship, healthcare access, financial management, and lifelong learning. Our data paint a vivid picture of these challenges.

In Georgia, 34.6 percent of rural residents face the digital divide, an issue that becomes even more pronounced in the 50 counties where communities, mainly those with high poverty rates exceeding 14 percent, have over 20 percent of locations without broadband access. Furthermore, while our students are the future, an alarming 34 percent of third graders read below grade level,³⁹ underscoring the essential role digital skills can play in boosting their educational trajectories. By understanding these challenges, we aim to tailor digital skills interventions in a manner that addresses the specific needs of all our covered populations, ensuring no one is left behind.

- **Strategy 1: Develop a foundational digital skills framework for all Georgians:** To create a universal standard for digital proficiency in Georgia, GTA’s Digital Connectivity Council alongside inter-agency partners will craft a comprehensive digital skills framework. This blueprint will encompass key competencies including professional digital communication, cybersecurity awareness, digital financial literacy, and information literacy. Recognizing the increasing importance of digital literacy in today’s economy, the framework will serve as a guidepost for educational institutions and training centers. Its design will ensure that all Georgians, irrespective of age or socioeconomic background, are well-equipped with essential digital skills, spanning from basic navigation to advanced cybersecurity.
- **Strategy 2: Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills:** With healthcare services undergoing rapid digital transformation, there is a pressing need to ensure our covered populations are adept in using these digital tools. Partnerships within the State Collective will be fostered to work with health providers, leveraging their insights to establish tailored telehealth literacy initiatives. By prioritizing areas where in-person medical services might be limited, it bridges a significant digital and healthcare gap, ensuring better health outcomes for all Georgians.
- **Strategy 3: Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy:** GTA and other partners within the State Collective that promote cybersecurity seek to

³⁹ See, Reading Status End-of-Grade | Grade 3 | Spring 2023, Georgia Milestones Results Dashboard, Georgia Department of Education, <https://georgiainsights.gadoe.org/Dashboards/Pages/Georgia-Milestones.aspx> (accessed October 12, 2023).

promote a secure and safe online environment for Georgians by integrating digital privacy and cybersecurity modules within digital literacy programs, emphasizing the importance of personal data protection, secure browsing, and phishing threat awareness. This effort should include a layered cyber literacy strategy that provides foundational online safety training for covered populations while also paving a pathway to advanced learning and career opportunities in the cyber sector. This approach acknowledges the dual necessity to guard vulnerable groups against cyber threats and to foster talent and expertise in the cybersecurity field, capitalizing on Georgia's robust resources and achievements in the cyber domain.

- **Strategy 4: Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy:** Communities are at the heart of fostering digital inclusion. Local organizations will be empowered to champion digital literacy initiatives. By emphasizing multi-generational learning, we will support every member of the community according to their needs, ensuring widespread digital competence. The focus on hybrid and remote learning solutions ensures adaptability, catering to the evolving digital needs of Georgia's diverse populace.
- **Strategy 5: Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms:** Acknowledging the unique challenges covered populations face in accessing digital learning resources, career innovation platforms will be utilized. These platforms, tailored for specialized learning needs, will be expanded to encompass digital literacy, ensuring that individuals receive not just knowledge but also the necessary tools, from devices to connectivity.

Short-term objectives:

- **Objective 1: Design and develop a statewide digital skills framework**
 - **Metric:** By the end of 2025, collaboratively design and develop a comprehensive, foundational statewide digital skills framework, involving inter-agency partnerships, to serve as a guiding post for educational institutions and training centers in Georgia.
- **Objective 2: Covered populations in Georgia can effectively use the internet if they so choose**
 - **Metric:** Average number of key digital skills performed out of 14 measures.
- **Objective 3: Covered populations in Georgia can access information or training to learn how to protect their security and privacy online**

- **Metric:** Percentage of members of covered populations who say they are very confident they can protect their security online.
- **Objective 4: Enable opportunities for members of covered populations to learn how to protect their security and privacy online**
 - **Metric:** Covered populations in Georgia can access information or training to learn how to protect their security and privacy online
 - **Metric:** By the end of 2027, ensure that digital literacy programs in Georgia include foundational cybersecurity modules tailored for everyday digital safety and awareness and all Georgians can access information or training to learn how to protect their privacy online.
 - **Metric:** Development and distribution of a cybersecurity guide in collaboration with state agency partners.

Long-term objectives (post-2029):

- **Objective 5: Enhance digital health literacy in covered populations**
 - **Metric:** Establish a network of organizations offering digital health navigation and digital health literacy training in collaboration with medical institutions.
- **Objective 6: Expand digital literacy through community collaborations.**
 - **Metric:** Measure the number of entities who serve covered populations offering foundational digital skills and advanced technology skills training. Ensure a 30 percent increase in available digital literacy programs for Georgians by maximizing public-private collaborations and partnerships between educational institutions, community-based organizations, and local governments, concentrating on the covered populations.
- **Objective 7: Increase digital skills program enrollment and proficiency among covered populations**
 - **Metric:** Percentage increase in enrollment in digital skills programs among covered populations.
 - **Metric:** Overall proficiency assessment scores for digital skills among covered populations.

- **Objective 8: Enhance workforce development related to broadband expansion and digital connectivity**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of individuals from communities enrolled in broadband-related workforce programs. Monitor the positive impact on job opportunities directly associated with broadband deployment in unserved communities.
 - **Metric:** Number of entities who serve covered populations offering technology certifications. Collaborate with educational institutions, nonprofits, and certification providers to track enrollment, completion, and certification rates, especially focusing on the targeted covered populations.
 - **Metric:** Number of participants in specialized training for those seeking advanced digital skills and cybersecurity careers. In collaboration with key entities like the Georgia Cyber Center, the US Army Cyber Command, and the Georgia Center Innovation and Training Center, introduce specialized advanced training programs aimed at community members seeking to advance digital skills and explore cybersecurity career pathways.

4. Key Challenge: Ensuring digital inclusivity as Georgia advances in digital services. As Georgia surges ahead in the domain of digital services for its constituents, thanks to the significant strides taken by GTA Digital Services, it faces a nuanced challenge of ensuring the inclusivity of all its residents. A deep dive into Georgia’s demographics reveals that 12.9 percent of its residents live with a disability, 20.2 percent navigate language barriers, 32 percent are aged 50 and above, and 14 percent are 65 or older. While the State boasts a life expectancy of 77 years, these figures highlight a multifaceted user base with unique digital needs. These demographics underscore the need to ensure that every Georgian, irrespective of age, disability, or language preference, experiences barrier-free access to digital resources. The challenge lies in creating a digital ecosystem that is universally accessible and serves as a bridge to opportunities for all its residents.

- **Strategy 1: Improve universal design and accessibility in public digital resources:** Georgia stands firm in its commitment to elevate the inclusivity and functionality of its public digital platforms. Universal accessibility is not just an aspiration; it is a foundational pillar that ensures every Georgian, regardless of age or ability, can seamlessly harness online resources.

- **Strategy 2: Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations:** Georgia stands poised to invest in a network of Digital Navigators, ambassadors of digital literacy, trained to assist English learners and other vulnerable demographics in navigating the digital landscape with adeptness. Their role becomes pivotal in removing language barriers and nurturing skills that empower individuals to leverage online resources efficiently, unlocking avenues previously inaccessible, and paving the path toward a digitally fluent Georgia.

Short-term objectives:

- **Objective 1: Members of covered populations can access government services online**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who say they are very confident using the internet to access government services online. Increase the ability of individuals from covered populations to access government services online, facilitated by enhanced digital literacy training and support tools tailored to navigating government platforms.
- **Objective 2: Align state and local government websites to accessibility standards and usability guidelines**
 - **Metric:** Number of state and local government websites aligned with digital standards. By 2027, 70 percent of state and local government websites will have alignment with the Department of Digital Services digital standards and usability guidelines, promoting accessibility and inclusivity.
- **Objective 3: Widen the accessibility and awareness of assistive technology (AT)**
 - **Metric:** Number of locations where assistive technologies are available. Leverage Georgia’s libraries and other resources to facilitate the broad dissemination of assistive technologies, aiming to expand resource availability and use.

Long-term objectives (post-2029):

- **Objective 4: Train and deploy specialized Digital Navigators within community spaces serving covered populations**
 - **Metric:** Number of Digital Navigators (volunteers, interns, or employees) at nonprofits, libraries, schools, community centers, etc. Train and position

specialized Digital Navigators within community spaces serving covered populations, emphasizing the importance of assisting seniors, English learners, and those with disabilities.

5. Key challenge: Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital connectivity efforts. Georgia’s commitment to digital connectivity means a significant commitment of resources to sustain the initiatives contemplated in this Plan and to support local communities, nonprofits, and CAIs to develop local capacity. To sustain these efforts over time, Georgia will require resources beyond that provided by the Digital Equity Capacity Grant program. The focus will be on developing a strategy for continuing the work launched under this Plan by partnering with philanthropic organizations to seek other funding sources, and by tracking the impact of Georgia’s digital connectivity efforts to quantify the business case for further investment in digital connectivity programs.

- **Strategy 1: Build collaboration among state, local, and nonprofit entities:** Unite the efforts of state agencies, regional planning commissions, local governments, and nonprofit organizations to create a cohesive digital connectivity framework and to support the development of local digital connectivity plans. Together, we will harness Georgia’s vast resources and leverage the expansion of high-speed, reliable internet access for all.
- **Strategy 2: Support and develop local capacity through a statewide consortium:** Facilitate the formation and nurturing of a digital connectivity consortium that brings together diverse stakeholders. This consortium will serve as a platform for regular convenings, fostering collective efforts to gather and analyze data, address existing digital gaps, and capitalize on emerging digital opportunities. Central to this strategy is co-creating solutions that leverage the unique strengths and perspectives of each stakeholder.
- **Strategy 3: Sustain and grow state and local efforts in digital connectivity:** Support the sustainability and growth of local programs that provide digital skills training, device access, technical assistance, digital navigation, and support for workforce, economic, and community development. This effort focuses on enabling communities to address gaps and prepare for future opportunities by providing technical assistance, grant writing expertise, and professional development opportunities for key leaders and staff. Additionally, we will facilitate access to current data and insights on the covered populations to ensure that localities are best positioned to make a

compelling case for funding and to maximize the impact of these resources in increasing digital connectivity.

- **Strategy 4: Create a repository of digital connectivity insights:** As we prioritize high-speed, reliable broadband for all Georgians, we will harness actionable data to thoroughly understand Georgia’s digital connectivity landscape. This helps identify gaps, spot funding and research opportunities, and adapt to technological shifts in education, workforce, and other key sectors.

Short-term objectives:

- **Objective 1: Establish local digital connectivity plans**
 - **Metric:** Number of digital connectivity plans by county.
- **Objective 2: Establish a statewide digital connectivity consortium**
 - **Metric:** Number of consortium convening events per year. Spur partnership opportunities for localities, nonprofits, and Anchor Institution and monitor the number of stakeholders actively participating in the consortium and assess the effectiveness of consortium-driven initiatives in improving local digital connectivity capacity.
- **Objective 3: Establish a digital connectivity insights hub**
 - **Metric:** Stakeholder access frequency to the hub and number of stakeholders using hub’s data. Synthesize and analyze data from various digital connectivity, public services, and economic programs across the state.
- **Objective 4: Increase the engagement and participation of localities in DCA, GTA, or other organizations’ technical assistance programs**
 - **Metric:** Percentage of localities that participate in technical assistance programs. Monitor the steady growth in the number of localities participating each year. Technical assistance includes grant writing guidance and expertise for localities to access federal digital connectivity funds.
- **Objective 5: Monitor the financial sustainability of digital connectivity efforts**
 - **Metric:** Amount of funding secured by stakeholders annually for digital connectivity initiatives, distinguishing between state, local, federal, and

philanthropic sources. Within one to two years post the initial Statewide Digital Capacity grant allocation (anticipated in 2024), work with stakeholders and interagency partners to establish clear funding benchmarks for each source (state, local, federal, and philanthropic) to collectively ensure adequate and sustained financial support that contributes toward closing the digital divide.

2.3.2 Key performance indicators

In connection with each of the key digital connectivity challenges described above, GTA has established the following measurable objectives and key performance indicators (KPI) toward achieving digital connectivity in Georgia.

2.3.2.1 Key challenge: Lack of broadband availability

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
Every Georgian can access 100/20 Mbps at home ⁴⁰	Percentage of locations with access to 100/20 broadband (includes all covered populations)	90%	95%	98%	FCC National Broadband Map
	Percentage of rural residents	69%	95%	98%	
Every Anchor Institution that wants it can access 1/1 Gbps	Percentage of Anchor locations with access to 1/1 Gbps	Data collection in progress (supporting BEAD challenge process)	95%	98%	GTA data collection
Spur broadband subscription statewide through holistic awareness campaign	Percentage increase in broadband subscription rates among households with no internet	81.3% of all residential locations in state subscribed	86%	90%	Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard
Spur a significant increase in broadband subscription for Georgians living in counties with highest digital inequities	Percentage of locations subscribed to broadband in targeted counties (includes all covered populations)	80.2%	85%	90%	GTA data collection

⁴⁰ These coverage metrics reflect current state as reported by the FCC in the National Broadband Map as of July 25, 2023. They do not include grant funded or planned deployments for the future.

2.3.2.2 Key challenge: Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services, devices, and technical support

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
Boost Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) enrollment	Percentage of eligible households participating in ACP	38%	52%	66%	USAC
Increase the percentage of ISPs that offer low-cost products for lower-income households	Percentage of ISPs that offer low-cost products for lower-income households	64%	75%	95%	USAC ⁴¹
All Georgians have access to a workable computing device	Percentage of all survey respondents who report that they can't fix a broken computing device	93.2%	95%	98%	U.S. Census Bureau ACS data
Members of covered populations have access to a workable computing device	Percentage of all covered populations who report that they can't fix a broken computing device within a month	Data collection in progress	95%	98%	GTA phone survey, U.S. Census Bureau ACS data
	Percentage of covered households	Data collection in progress	95%	98%	
	Percentage for aging individuals ⁴²	Data collection in progress	95%	98%	
	Percentage for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	Data not available	95%	98%	
	Percentage for veterans	Data collection in progress	95%	98%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	Data collection in progress	95%	98%	

⁴¹ Baseline estimate based on ACP participation data from USAC and known ISPs in Georgia from GTA's internal data.

⁴² Data gathered through the residential phone survey categorized seniors as individuals aged 65 years or older. Future survey instruments will reflect the NTIA's definition of aging individuals/seniors as 60 years or older.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier	Data not available	95%+	98%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	Data collection in progress	95%	98%	
	Percentage of rural residents	Data collection in progress	95%	98%	
Georgians in need can access affordable device options through digital connectivity organizations	Number of organizations that provide desktop or laptop computers for ownership	4	5	6	GTA data collection
	Percentage of household that have a desktop or laptop computer	76.8%	80%	85%	Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard
Increase device loaner programs and public computer labs through CAIs serving covered populations	Number of CAIs that have device loaner programs	2,200+ K-12 schools, 385 public library locations	TBD	TBD	GTA data collection
	Number of CAIs that have public computer labs	Data collection in progress	TBD	TBD	

2.3.2.3 Key challenge: Covered populations need support to develop digital skills

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
Design and develop a statewide digital skills framework	Digital skills framework	Digital skills indicators	Develop by 2025	Update by 2027	GTA phone survey and data collection
All Georgians can effectively use the internet	Average number of key digital skills performed (out of 14 measured)	11.3/14	12/14	13/14	GTA phone survey

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
Members of covered populations can effectively use the internet	Average number of key digital skills performed by members of covered populations (out of 14 measured)	10.9/14	12/14	13/14	GTA phone survey
	Average for covered households	8.8/14	12/14	13/14	
	Average for aging individuals	9.1/14	12/14	13/14	
	Average for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	Data not available	12/14	13/14	
	Average for veterans	11.2/14	12/14	13/14	
	Average for individuals with disabilities	9.7/14	12/14	13/14	
	Average for individuals with a language barrier	Data not available	12/14	13/14	
	Average for members of racial or ethnic minorities	11.5/14	12/14	13/14	
	Average of rural residents	10.9/14	12/14	13/14	
All Georgians can access information or training to learn how to protect their security online	Percentage of all survey respondents who say they are confident they can protect their security online	83%	85%	90%	GTA phone survey
Members of covered populations can access information or training to learn how to protect their security online	Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who say they are confident they can protect their security online	81%	85%	90%	GTA phone survey
	Percentage for covered households	56%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for aging individuals	78%	85%	90%	

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
	Percentage for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	Data not available	85%	90%	
	Percentage for veterans	81%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	75%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier	Data not available	85%	90%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	81%	85%	90%	
	Percentage of rural residents	86%	85%	90%	
All Georgians can access information or training to learn how to protect their privacy online	Percentage of all survey respondents who say they are confident they can protect their privacy online	80%	85%	90%	GTA phone survey
Members of covered populations can access information or training to learn how to protect their privacy online	Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who say they are confident they can protect their privacy online	76%	85%	90%	GTA phone survey
	Percentage for covered households	48%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for aging individuals	61%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	Data not available	85%	90%	
	Percentage for veterans	69%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	65%	85%	90%	

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier	Data not available	85%	90%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	83%	85%	90%	
	Percentage of rural residents	72%	85%	90%	
Enable opportunities for members of covered populations to learn how to protect their security and privacy online	Number of digital literacy programs that include foundational cybersecurity training	Data collection in progress	Establish number of available trainings by 2025	TBD	GTA data collection
	Cybersecurity guide in collaboration with state agency partners	Basic resources publicly available online	50,000 units to Georgia residents	100,000 units to Georgia residents	
Enhance digital health literacy in covered populations	Establish network of organizations offering digital health navigation and literacy training	Data collection in progress	Convene partners by 2026	Establish network by 2029	GTA data collection
Expand digital literacy through community collaborations	Number of entities who serve covered populations offering foundational digital skills and advanced technology skills training	142 digital literacy programs	baseline + 15%	short-term goal + 15%	GTA data collection
Increase digital skills program enrollment and proficiency among covered populations	Percentage increase in enrollment in digital skills programs among covered populations.	Data collection in progress	# enrolled + 15%	# enrolled + 15%	GTA data collection
	Overall proficiency assessment scores for digital skills among covered populations.	Data collection in progress	# proficient in foundational digital skills + 15%	# proficient in foundational digital skills + 15%	

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
Enhance workforce development related to broadband expansion and digital connectivity programs	Percentage of individuals, including those from rural communities, enrolled in broadband-related workforce programs	Data collection in progress	# enrolled + 15%	# enrolled + 15%	TCSG, WIA, DOL data
	Number of entities offering technology certifications that serve covered populations	11	Baseline + 15%	Short-term goal + 15%	
	Number of participants in specialized training for those seeking advanced digital skills (post-secondary education) and cybersecurity careers	Data collection in progress - # participants from covered populations enrolled in programs	20% of # complete program	20% of # receive of job placement in cyber careers	GTA data collection

2.3.2.4 *Key challenge: Ensuring digital inclusivity as Georgia advances in digital services*

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
All Georgians can access government services online	Percentage of all survey respondents who say they are very confident using the internet to access government services online	91%	95%	98%	GTA phone survey
Members of covered populations can access government services online	Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who say they are very confident using the internet to access government services online	90%	95%	98%	GTA phone survey

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
	Percentage for covered households	82%	95%	98%	
	Percentage for aging individuals	85%	95%	98%	
	Percentage for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	Data not available	95%	98%	
	Percentage for veterans	87%	95%	98%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	81%	95%	98%	
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier	Data not available	95%	98%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	95%	95%	98%	
	Percentage of rural residents	91%	95%	98%	
Align state and local government websites to accessibility standards and usability guidelines	Number of state and local government websites aligned with digital standards	# local government websites who meet the digital standards (out of X #)	60%	75%	GTA data collection
Widen the accessibility and awareness of assistive technologies	Number of locations where assistive technologies are available	Data collection in progress - # of entities where AT is available	10 % increase	10% increase	GTA data collection
Train and deploy specialized Digital Navigators within community spaces serving covered populations	Number of Digital Navigators (volunteers, interns, or employees) at nonprofits, libraries, schools, community centers, etc.	Data collection in progress	# + 15% increase	# + 15% increase	GTA data collection

2.3.2.5 Key challenge: Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital connectivity efforts

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	Short-term goal	Long-term goal	Data source
Establish local digital connectivity plans	# of county digital connectivity plans	1	20	50	GTA data collection
Establish a statewide digital connectivity consortium	Number of consortium convening events per year	0	6	8	GTA data collection
Establish a digital connectivity insights hub	Digital connectivity insights hub	Georgia Broadband Program Website	Establish hub by 2025	Track stakeholder access frequency to the hub and number of stakeholders using hub’s data.	GTA data collection
Increase the engagement and participation of localities in DCA, GTA, or other organizations’ technical assistance programs	Percentage of localities that participate technical assistance programs	Data not yet available – 2025	25% in 2025-2026	N/A	GTA and DCA data collection
Monitor the financial sustainability of digital connectivity efforts	Amount of funding secured by stakeholders annually for digital connectivity initiatives, distinguishing between state, local, federal, and philanthropic sources.	Data not yet available – Statewide Digital Capacity grant Allocation 2024	10% growth from each source	Each source meets or exceeds its established benchmark year over year	GTA data collection

Please [click here to submit](#) your public comments and contribute to the development of the plan

[Click here](#) to include your organization in our state's Community Connection Map, our asset inventory collection tool.

3 Current state of digital connectivity

This section describes the current state of digital connectivity in Georgia, as documented through rigorous and comprehensive data collection and outreach efforts. It describes the resources and relationships available to GTA to promote digital connectivity; presents detailed asset inventories related to Digital Equity and broadband adoption, affordability, and access; and presents a needs assessment.

3.1 Asset inventory

This section identifies assets that promote digital connectivity for each of the State’s covered populations, including resources, programs, plans, and strategies from public and private entities. Assets may be leveraged by the State in its implementation plan.

3.1.1 Digital inclusion assets by covered population

Through its outreach and research, GTA has identified key digital connectivity assets that support covered populations in the State, including workforce development training and employment services related to broadband adoption; technical assistance programs aimed at supporting digital connectivity; and nonprofits, partnerships, and coalitions that work toward digital connectivity. Table 4 lists a selection of representative digital connectivity assets and indicates the primary population(s) they serve; additional assets can be found in Appendix A: Asset inventory – additional assets.

Table 4. Digital inclusion assets by covered population(s)

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
Accelerate: Atlanta	Accelerate: Atlanta brings together civic, learning, and corporate partners to provide skills across the spectrum of digital proficiency to build a more inclusive workforce for all. The program empowers underserved communities to close the digital divide in the growing workforce. It provides digital skills to promote economic uplift for Atlanta’s populations with the highest susceptibility to automation and the impact of Covid-19. Digital fluency will ensure that they can keep up with advances in AI and machine learning.	x				x	x	x	
Albany State University	Albany State University received a \$2.9 million dollar Connecting Minority Communities grant in 2022 from NTIA to address the growing demand for broadband connectivity in the Albany community while establishing a foundation for future distance learning at the University. ⁴³	x						x	x
Atlanta CareerRise	Atlanta CareerRise invests in planning, shaping, and piloting employer-led, demand-driven partnerships in Atlanta’s fastest-growing industries. Managed by the United Way of Greater Atlanta, CareerRise works with local employers, educators, and philanthropy and nonprofit partners to strengthen its partnerships,	x					x	x	

⁴³ NTIA, “Biden Administration Announces More Than \$2.9 Million in Internet for All Grant to Albany State University,” Internet For All, November 22, 2022, <https://ntia.gov/press-release/2022/biden-administration-announces-more-29-million-internet-all-grant-albany-state>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	develop common solutions to the region’s labor issues, and collectively invest in Atlanta’s workforce.								
Atlanta Housing	The Achieving Connectivity to Create Equity and Self Sufficiency (ACCESS) program connects those in need to training from private partners. ⁴⁴	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Atlanta Housing – Digital Leadership Academy	The Digital Leadership Academy is a free education and certification program that teaches high-demand technology skills, greatly increasing the employability of each graduate in the IT sector. This 16-week pilot program launched in February 2021 and provides students with the devices and connectivity needed to create a fully immersive educational experience. Partners include TechBridge, Diversity Cyber Council, Braintrust, WrightNow Solutions, and Generation USA.	x					x	x	
Atlanta Police Foundation At-Promise Centers	The At-Promise Initiative’s mission is to reduce youth crime by diverting susceptible young people from criminal activity toward a productive life outside the criminal justice system. Atlanta Police Foundation has established a network of three At-Promise Centers (Westside, Southside, Southwest) with AT&T Connected Learning Centers.	x		x			x	x	
Atlanta Technical College	The College received a \$3 million award from NTIA in 2023 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to improve its broadband infrastructure, increase the number of devices available to students through its lending program, and offer digital skills	x			x		x	x	

⁴⁴ “Digital Inclusion,” Atlanta Housing, <https://www.atlantahousing.org/digitalinclusion/>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	training for senior citizens in the community through its Continuing Education Division.								
Boys & Girls Clubs of Georgia	The Boys & Girls Clubs of Georgia is a collective of 36 Boys & Girls Clubs organizations across Georgia that work together as one “movement” to provide out-of-school youth development and character building to over 79,000 children in Georgia.	x						x	
Clark Atlanta University	The University offers a STEM enrichment program in partnership with Verizon Wireless’ Verizon Innovative Learning initiative. ⁴⁵							x	
Clayton County	Clayton County offers several programs through its community institutions, as detailed in its Digital Equity and Broadband Strategic Plan. The Clayton County Public Library offers technical assistance for devices and software, access to Wi-Fi and devices, a Bookmobile with Wi-Fi, and hotspot borrowing. Clayton County Public Schools extend learning beyond the classroom through college and career preparation. Clayton County Senior Services supports adult literacy by offering computer tablets for seniors’ home use.	x	x				x	x	
Columbus Technical College	The College provides Northstar Digital Literacy training, desktop computers, laptops, or tablets and technical support for adult education students obtaining a high school diploma/equivalency. The budget is under \$25,000 funded by the Office of Adult Education. The program serves Muscogee, Talbot,	x			x		x	x	x

⁴⁵ “STEM enrichment program at Clark Atlanta lights the way,” Verizon press release, October 5, 2021, <https://www.verizon.com/about/news/stem-enrichment-program-clark-atlanta>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	Stewart, Quitman, Harris, and Chattahoochee counties. With over 100 people served in 2022, the target is to serve over 500 people over the life of the project.								
Emory University School of Medicine	The Emory University School of Medicine offers support through access to telehealth. This planned effort will include programs addressing Digital Navigators, broadband access, and creating accessible and inclusive internet content. Key components include: 1) access to health information, 2) telehealth and remote healthcare, 3) online health support communities, and 4) health tracking and remote patient monitoring. The program will also include remote education and training for healthcare professionals, and health promotion and preventive measures.	x							x
Empower Southwest Georgia	Empower SW GA provides many services to its area’s constituents, including supporting applicants for ACP, hosting Leadership Forums for ISPs and community members, broadband workforce development, and educating consumers about internet subsidies and plans for the community. It has initiated planning to support broadband expansion in counties including Clay, Early, Miller, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Terrell, and Webster. It has been selected as a host for the American Connection Corps Broadband Program. The Fellow supports applicants to the ACP, conducts a leadership forum, organizes workshops for builders and construction leadership for broadband, serves as a	x	x	x		x	x		x

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	public advocate, educates consumers on broadband access, and other duties. The Fellow also works to establish a similar group with county administrators in the region.								
Fort Valley State University (FVSU)	With a \$3 million dollar Connecting Minority Communities grant received in 2023 from NTIA for its “Communi-versity: Piloting an Ecosystem for Digital Equity” project, FVSU will work with community organizations to expand broadband connectivity and provide digital skills training for students and residents in Peach County, including establishing local “broadband hubs” staffed with TechNavigators.	x						x	x
Fulton County Schools	The U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) Digital Equity & Opportunity vision ⁴⁶ includes providing devices to students, teaching digital literacy, and creating an open education ecosystem populated by instructional materials that are not subject to copyright laws, proprietary systems, or other access barriers. Now supported by the U.S. DOE, Fulton County Schools, serving approximately 96,000 students, has since 2014 been developing a “Student-focused Learning” ⁴⁷ plan that includes providing digital devices to every student, subject to a Readiness Assessment.	x				x	x	x	
Georgia 4-H	The 4-H Tech Changemakers project uses an adult-youth partnership model to empower teens as		x						x

⁴⁶ “Priorities,” U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Technology, <https://tech.ed.gov/priorities/>.

⁴⁷ “Student Focused Learning,” Fulton County Schools, <https://www.fultonschools.org/studentfocusedlearning>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	teachers of digital literacy in areas lacking broadband internet access. Georgia 4-H Tech Changemakers held 91 hands-on classes, workshops, and trainings led by 88 trained 4-H’ers from 15 counties during the 2021-22 grant cycle. The most popular topics included responsible online behavior, email communication, online safety tips and video conference communication. Partners include Microsoft and UGA Extension. ⁴⁸								
Georgia Center of Innovation	The Georgia Center of Innovation helps startups in telehealth and related areas to increase innovation. ⁴⁹		x			x			
Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC)	GDC provides digital skills and literacy, data privacy and cybersecurity, devices (laptops, computers, tablets), and broadband access to incarcerated individuals in state prisons. It provides training for teachers of broadband skills and digital literacy, as well as developing and distributing accessible content directed at populations with specific needs.			x					
Georgia Department of Education	The Georgia Department of Education provides support for the ACP, devices, hotspots, digital skills and digital literacy training, and digital accessibility to its clients. GaDOE also provides funding to support programs that provide broadband infrastructure, devices, and/or subsidies to support broadband	x				x	x	x	x

⁴⁸ “Digital Ambassadors,” Georgia 4-H, <https://georgia4h.org/programs/focus-areas/agriculture-stem/science-technology-engineering-math/digital-ambassadors/>.

⁴⁹ “Digital Health Support & Training in Georgia,” Center of Innovation, <https://www.georgia.org/center-of-innovation/areas-of-expertise/information-technology/digital-health>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	affordability. In addition, GaDOE has 17 career clusters that provide paths for districts to use with their students.								
Georgia Department of Education – Georgia Standards	GaDOE maintains a free, public website, GeorgiaStandards.Org (GSO), ⁵⁰ delivering access to Georgia’s educational standards, including standards for digital literacy for school-age children. ⁵¹	x				x	x	x	x
Georgia Department of Education – Restart Guide for Connectivity and Devices	Georgia’s Restart Guide for Connectivity and Devices supplied school districts and teachers with important information to address digital and hybrid learning environments.	x				x	x	x	x
Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	The Chamber promotes and supports the domestic and international economic development of Hispanic businesses and individuals and serves as a link between non-Hispanic entities and the Hispanic market. ⁵² It offers numerous relevant programs including “CRECER para mujeres” (growth for women), a program to support small businesses owned by women. ⁵³						x	x	

⁵⁰ “Georgia Standards of Excellence,” Georgia Department of Education, <https://www.georgiastandards.org/>.

⁵¹ “K-5 Digital Literacy,” Georgia Department of Education, <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Pages/ELA-K-5-Webinar-Digital-Literacy.aspx>; “6-12 Digital Literacy,” Georgia Department of Education, <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Pages/ELA-6-12-Webinar-Digital-Literacy.aspx>.

⁵² “About GHCC,” GHCC, <https://ghcc.org/en/about-ghcc/>.

⁵³ “CRECER para Mujeres,” GHCC, <https://ghcc.org/en/crecer-para-mujeres/>; translated page at <https://ghcc-org.translate.goog/en/crecer-para-mujeres/? x tr sl=auto& x tr tl=en& x tr hl=en>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
Georgia Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled	Georgia Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (GLS) promotes the use of assistive technology and accessible reading materials for those who are blind or whose physical abilities require the use of books and magazines in audio format or in braille.					x			
Georgia Public Library Service	The Georgia Public Library Service offers statewide programs to address internet availability and affordability, as well as providing digital literacy, data privacy and cybersecurity, and online accessibility and inclusivity programs. With a budget of under \$25,000, it served over 100 people in 2022 and has a target of serving over 500 people over the life of the project.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Global Partnership for Telehealth (GPT)	GPT, a nonprofit, offers simple and affordable telehealth technology solutions that bring much-needed healthcare resources to urban and rural communities. GPT supports clinical and nonclinical sites in 10 states as well as international projects through its telehealth platform Pathways, training, and other services. The organization facilitates roughly 40,000 telehealth engagements per year. ⁵⁴	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Goodwill of North Georgia	Goodwill of North Georgia supports internet availability and affordability by providing digital literacy training; desktop computers, laptops, or tablets; and technical support. The program serves all covered populations except seniors. It has a budget of between \$250,000 and \$499,999 and served over 100	x		x	x	x	x	x	x

⁵⁴ Global Partnership for Telehealth, <https://gpth.org/>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	people in 2022, with a target of serving over 500 people over the life of the project.								
Inspiredu	Inspiredu is an Atlanta-based empowerment organization whose offerings include digital literacy programs. It drives digital inclusion and literacy for Georgia families, communities, and schools. The Learning Spark Initiative partners with Georgia schools to facilitate interactive workshops that leverage technology to help families responsibly access and utilize digital tools for learning. This program also helps families learn about and apply for internet subsidies like the ACP. The program provides digital literacy support; desktop computers, laptops, or tablets; and technical support for individuals who primarily reside in a rural area, members of a racial or ethnic minority group, and individuals who live in a covered household (i.e., household income is below 150 percent of the poverty level). The statewide program has a budget of over \$600,000 and served over 100 people in 2022, targeting over 600 people for the life of project.	x	x			x	x	x	x
Integrity Transformations Community Development Corporation (CDC)	Atlanta-based Integrity CDC's Digital Skills Development class is an entry-level course designed to introduce users to basic computer principles and requires little to no previous experience. The class provides basic information technology (IT) literacy and ensures one understands the different terminology and the functionality of the basic Microsoft Office Suite. Students learn how to access the software and	x	x	x					

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	their documents from a desktop, laptop, or their personal phone.								
Latin American Association (LAA)	The Latino Digital Equity Centers Program provides ESL, digital literacy, digital skills, and workforce development programs to Latino communities. LAA also offers courses and workshops for girls and young women through the Tech4Girls program, designed to encourage the pursuit of careers in STEM and provide female entrepreneurs with digital skills to grow their businesses. ⁵⁵						x	x	
Legacy Harvest Foundation	Equips communities across Georgia with the financial resources, economic development, and career coaching they need to break down barriers of opportunity. Provides Digital Skills @ 50+ AARP Foundation, in collaboration with Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), Step Into Your Future (SIYF)-Youth Program (16-24 Year Olds), and workforce apprenticeship programs.	x	x						
Lift Zones	Lift Zones, located throughout the state, combine 1 Gbps connectivity to over 20 community centers with digital equity programming. ⁵⁶ (For the full list, see Table 38 in Appendix A: Asset inventory – additional assets.)	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Literacy Action	Based in Atlanta, digital literacy skills and other literacy skills and workforce training. Success Center located in the Peachtree Center is a digitally focused,	x	x		x		x		

⁵⁵ “Computer Classes,” Latin American Association, <https://thelaa.org/computer-literacy-classes/>.

⁵⁶ “Lift Zones,” Comcast, <https://corporate.comcast.com/impact/digital-equity/lift-zones>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	student-centric adult literacy campus. Provides OATS programs for digital inclusion.								
Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM)	MSM received a \$4.2 million dollar Connecting Minority Communities grant in 2023 from NTIA to understand the impact increasing technological access and literacy will have on digital health equity. The overall goal of the “From Survivor to Innovator: Digital Health Equity and Community Impact” project is to lead and advance digital health equity. ⁵⁷	x				x		x	x
Northstar Digital Literacy	Northstar Digital Literacy is a program that defines the basic skills needed to use a computer and the internet in daily life, employment, and higher education. Northstar Digital Skills classes are offered both in-person and online. There are over 75 Northstar locations across the state. (See Appendix A: Asset inventory – additional assets for the full list.)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Partnership for Inclusive Innovation (PIN)	PIN is a public-private coalition that has galvanized long-term commitments across public and private resources. It serves all of Georgia from urban centers to rural communities. Its definition of “inclusive innovation” increases access and expands geographic, racial, gender and socioeconomic equity and opportunity for all. It combines grantmaking with hands-on program operation.	x						x	x

⁵⁷ NTIA, “Biden-Harris Administration Announces More Than \$175 Million in Internet for All Grants to 61 Minority-Serving Colleges and Universities,” Internet For All, February 23, 2023, <https://www.internetforall.gov/news-media/biden-harris-administration-announces-more-175-million-internet-all-grants-61-minority>.

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
Piedmont Regional Library System	The Piedmont Regional Library System offers computer training and device checkout at all 10 libraries in the regional system. Its programs address digital literacy, device access, and online accessibility and inclusivity. With a budget of under \$25,000, it served over 100 people in 2022.	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Technical College System of Georgia	TCSG provides technical training certification for fiber optics technicians and other programs available through the 22 TCSG schools throughout the state. For example, Wiregrass Technical College provides a certified Fiber Optic Technician (CFOT) Certification.	x			x		x	x	x
Technology Association of Georgia Education (TAG-Ed)	TAG-Ed provides professional development and workforce development programs statewide.	x			x	x	x	x	x
Thrive Regional Partnership	Thrive Regional Partnership serves five counties in Northwest Georgia (Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, and Murray). Through both the Regional Broadband Alliance and the Connected Communities program, Thrive promotes the availability and affordability of internet, digital literacy, and online accessibility and inclusivity. It served over 100 people in 2022, with a target of over 500 people over the life of the project.	x	x						x
Thrive Regional Partnership – Connected Communities	Connected Communities programs address availability and affordability of internet for individuals who live in a covered household (i.e., household income is lower than 150 percent of the poverty level). With a budget of under \$25,000, the organization served 26-50	x							x

Asset name	Description	Low-income	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural
	people in 2022 and has a target to serve 101-250 people over the life of the project.								
University of Georgia Cooperative Extension	UGA Extension provides a wide range of programs for youth development, families, and those living in rural areas. The Extension began offering select programming virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to host online classes available to participants statewide and nationally. ⁵⁸ It is also a partner in 4H Tech Changemakers program.	x							x
Urban League of Greater Atlanta	The Urban League provides computer training and workforce development programs. ⁵⁹							x	

⁵⁸ Joshua Paine and Maria Lameiras, “Extension sees high demand for digital delivery,” University of Georgia news release, June 4, 2020, <https://news.uga.edu/extension-high-demand-online-programs/>.

⁵⁹ “Computer Training,” Urban League of Greater Atlanta, <https://ulgatl.org/computer-training/>.

3.1.2 Existing digital connectivity plans

Numerous plans by cities in Georgia address the need for broadband connectivity either directly or indirectly as an enabler for economic, education, health, and quality of life goals. As discussed in Section 2, Georgia began requiring communities to include a broadband element in their comprehensive plans in 2018, and by the end of 2022 nearly all had done so. As of June 2023, 56 communities in the State have received the Broadband Ready designation, indicating that their comprehensive plan promotes broadband deployment. Many communities that have not yet been designated as Broadband Ready stated that recognition is a goal, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is providing outreach to directly assist those seeking the designation.

Several of Georgia's Regional Commissions reference the need for increased connectivity in recent regional planning documents, but do not include specific goals for digital connectivity. Multiple plans identify broadband infrastructure expansion as a priority need, such as the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Regional Plan (2022)⁶⁰ and the Coastal Georgia Regional Commission's Georgia Coastal Regional Plan 2022.⁶¹ Some Commissions are taking steps to support or encourage broadband deployment. The Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission, for example, notes that it has helped several counties "acquire funding for broadband" as of 2023,⁶² and the Heart of Georgia-Altamaha Regional Commission states in its 2022 Regional Plan Annual Report⁶³ that it plans to host a broadband summit in 2023.

At the municipal level, the City of Tucker, located within the Atlanta metro area, includes Digital Media as a subsector of the Professional Services industry to target for workforce development in its Economic Development Strategic Plan (2023).⁶⁴ While several counties have programs and initiatives for digital equity (see Table 6. Existing digital connectivity programs), comprehensive county-level plans for digital equity have not yet been developed, with the exception of Clayton County.

Many public housing authorities and county and city public school districts throughout the state also address the need for broadband connectivity, equity, and digital inclusion in strategic plans.

⁶⁰ "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) and Regional Plan 2022-2026," Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/files/ugd/c74cd0_094dd45d45144c8da4246abe327c7326.pdf.

⁶¹ "Coastal Georgia Regional Plan 2022," Coastal Georgia Regional Commission, <https://crc-planning-hub-segrass.hub.arcgis.com/documents/34dec8321f4a418ebfccc4417e45a148/explore>.

⁶² "Draft 2023 Regional Work Program Update," Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission, https://csrarc.ga.gov/sites/default/files/csrarc/planning/2023_regional_work_program_update_-_draft.pdf.

⁶³ "Regional Plan Annual Report 2022," Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/hogarc_regional_plan_annual_report_2022_adopted.pdf.

⁶⁴ "City of Tucker Economic Development Strategic Plan," City of Tucker, https://cms7files.revize.com/tucker/document_center/economic-dev/Tucker%20EDSP%202023.pdf.

The table below, which is a representative rather than exhaustive list, highlights key plans that contain strategies for improved broadband connectivity and/or digital inclusion at a city, county, or statewide level. These plans, which have informed the preparation of this Plan, include:

Table 5. Existing digital connectivity plans

Plan author and name	Description
Atlanta Public Schools Strategic Plan (2020-2025)	The Atlanta Public Schools’ strategic plan ⁶⁵ emphasizes equity as at the core of its plan, has developed an equity policy guiding document, and created the Center for Equity and Social Justice (which includes the Office of Equity Strategy & Coherence) to support this goal, with digital equity as a component. ⁶⁶
Atlanta Housing – Atlanta Housing Strategic Plan (2023)	Atlanta Housing’s strategic plan highlights its Achieving Connectivity to Create Equity and Self Sufficiency (ACCESS) digital inclusion program, which connects those in need to training from private partners and highlights digital literacy training for seniors as part of the continuum of care. ⁶⁷
Clayton County Office of Digital Equity – County Digital Equity and Broadband Strategic Plan	Clayton County (population: 297,100; 18.9 percent of population in poverty) ⁶⁸ has an Office of Digital Equity ⁶⁹ and is creating a county-level Broadband and Digital Equity Plan. ⁷⁰
City Schools of Decatur Five-Year Strategic Plan (2023-2028)	As part of its equity-focused strategic plan, ⁷¹ City Schools of Decatur plan to implement “future-ready classrooms” to “ensure every student and employee has equitable access to technology resources.” ⁷²
Decatur County Schools Board of Education Strategic Plan (2016-2023)	Decatur County Schools’ strategic plan, updated annually, includes technology to support teaching and learning as a strategic goal area, with an objective to ensure “all students

⁶⁵ “Atlanta Public Schools Strategic Plan 2020-2025,” Atlanta Public Schools, <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/strategicplan>.

⁶⁶ “Equity,” Atlanta Public Schools, <https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/equity>.

⁶⁷ “Atlanta Housing Strategic Plan: FY2023-2027,” Atlanta Housing, <https://www.atlantahousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Strategic-Plan-Fiscal-Year-2023-2027.pdf>.

⁶⁸ U.S. Census, “QuickFacts: Clayton County, Georgia,” <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/claytoncountygeorgia>.

⁶⁹ “Clayton County’s Digital Equity Initiative,” Clayton County, <https://digitalequity.claytoncountyga.gov/>.

⁷⁰ “Clayton to Create Digital Equity Plan and Celebrate Digital Inclusion Week,” Clayton County news release, September 26, 2022, https://digitalequity.claytoncountyga.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2022_0926-News-Release-Digital-Inclusion-Week.pdf.

⁷¹ “CSD Strategic Plan 2023-2028,” City Schools of Decatur, <https://www.csdecatur.net/Page/5133>.

⁷² “Strategic Plan: Our How,” City Schools of Decatur, <https://www.csdecatur.net/Page/5135>.

Plan author and name	Description
	have access to technology and use it to be actively engaged in the learning process.” ⁷³
Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Georgia Technology Authority – Georgia Broadband Annual Report (2022)	GTA conducted a six-month engagement with industry experts which included dozens of meetings with Georgia stakeholders to update the State’s strategy. Many of the findings and recommendations from this effort are summarized within this report. ⁷⁴
Georgia Technology Authority – Georgia Broadband Strategy (2022)	GTA developed this statewide broadband strategy as a tool for understanding Georgia’s broadband needs and effectively using public resources to narrow broadband gaps. The strategy considers the potential short- and long-term effects on free-market conditions, with a particular goal of ensuring that the State’s efforts facilitate and support private market outcomes and create opportunity for private sector entities.
Lowndes County School System Strategic Plan (2023-2028)	Lowndes County Schools plan to convene a committee to create a PreK-12 digital literacy plan by May 2024, to be implemented by August 2025. The district’s strategic goals around technology also include providing technology classes for families in the district and creating “makerspaces” in school media centers. ⁷⁵

3.1.3 Existing digital connectivity programs

Some municipal and regional entities across the state are engaged in initiatives related to digital connectivity as documented in Table 4 and Table 38. The table below includes municipal digital connectivity programs; and existing State policies, mapping, and other technological resources used to inform broadband-related activities.

Table 6. Existing digital connectivity programs

Program name	Description
ACP Act Now campaign	In May 2023, GTA launched a statewide initiative in partnership with EducationSuperHighway and 100 coalition partners to promote enrollment in the FCC’s Affordable Connectivity

⁷³ “Decatur County Schools Board of Education Strategic Plan 2016-2023,” Decatur County Board of Education, <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1653349204/boedcboecom/ou5tc9vvmkl4egqbijfv/DCBOEStrategicPlan2016-2023.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Available for download from DCA website: <https://broadband.georgia.gov/media/35/download>.

⁷⁵ “Lowndes County School System Strategic Plan 2023-2028,” Lowndes County School System, https://cdnsm5-ss19.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_111657/Image/System%20Information/Lowndes%20County%20Strategic%20Plan%202023-2028.pdf.

Program name	Description
	Program (ACP). The program includes an online tool available in four languages to aid ACP enrollment. ⁷⁶
ARPA-funded broadband grant program	The State used part of its allocation of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to address the lack of broadband service infrastructure in Georgia through a competitive program. Almost \$408 million in preliminary awards were announced in 2022, representing more than \$738 million when matching funds are contributed. The projects targeted with the awards could serve 183,615 locations, of which 132,050 are currently unserved based on State data.
Broadband Ready Community Certification	Demonstrates that a local unit of government has taken steps to reduce obstacles to broadband infrastructure investment by amending its comprehensive plan to include the promotion of the deployment broadband services and adopting a model ordinance created by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). 56 communities have achieved Broadband Ready status across the State as of June 2023.
Capital Projects Fund Grant Program	Provides funding for Broadband Infrastructure Projects that reliably meet or exceed download and upload speeds of 100 Mbps (unless impracticable) to unserved homes and businesses in Georgia. Over \$234 million in preliminary grant awards were announced in January 2023; when combined with capital matches from the awardees, almost \$455 million will be invested to serve over 76,000 locations. A second round of grant program awardees was announced in June 2023, with approximately \$15 million allocated.
Clayton County Office of Digital Equity	The Office helps county residents access the ACP and also offers computer training and is creating a strategic plan for the County (see Table 5).
DeKalb County School District (DCSD)	DCSD's equity framework focuses on providing students with access to high quality, relevant, and engaging instruction. Connecting students and families to internet access is a key enabler to this. Digital Dreamers, a comprehensive technology program that provides laptops and devices to every student in the school system. ⁷⁷
Fulton County Digital Ambassadors Program	Fulton County's Digital Ambassadors Program is a public-private initiative to promote broadband sign-ups through the ACP.

⁷⁶ [1] "Georgia Technology Authority launches statewide initiative to increase Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) adoption," GTA press release, May 19, 2023, <https://gta.georgia.gov/news/2023-05-19/georgia-technology-authority-launches-statewide-initiative-increase-affordable>.

⁷⁷ "Digital Dreamers," DeKalb County School District, <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/digital-dreamers/>.

Program name	Description
	Digital Navigators through the program spread awareness of the ACP and help get residents enrolled around Fulton County. ⁷⁸
Fulton County Mobile Career Center	The Workforce Fulton Mobile Career Center uses a van to bring Wi-Fi, computers, and printers to neighborhoods around Fulton County to assist with digital literacy, job searching, job applications, and virtual job fairs. ⁷⁹
Georgia Broadband Advisory Committee	In 2018, an advisory committee was formed to aid Georgia’s broadband deployment efforts, consisting of a representative group of providers, local governments, electric cooperatives, and state agencies ⁸⁰ and coordinated by GTA. ⁸¹ This collaboration has contributed to streamlining local ordinances, developing the broadband availability map, designing state grant frameworks, as well as providing valuable insights on various state and federal policy matters. ⁸²
Georgia Broadband Availability Map – Broadband Explorer	An internal, interactive map of broadband availability in the state that has robust mapping regarding funding and federal programs, maintained by GTA and updated monthly.
Georgia Broadband Availability Map – Public	A public, interactive map of broadband availability in the state, created by DCA from data submitted by ISPs. Georgia was the first state to map broadband availability at the address level; these data are used to identify the state’s unserved locations and identify eligible project areas for broadband grant funding.
Georgia Broadband Program online speed test	Hosted by DCA to equip individuals with the clearest picture possible of internet connectivity quality in Georgia. ⁸³
Georgia Cyber Center	GTA is responsible for partner coordination at the Georgia Cyber Center, a State-owned facility designed to promote modernization in cybersecurity technology for both the private and public sectors through unique education, training, research, and practical applications. The center is the single largest investment in a cybersecurity facility by a state government to date, with the goal to “provide our State and the nation with a decisive advantage in cyberspace.” ⁸⁴

⁷⁸ “Fulton County Announces Launch of Digital Ambassador Program to Connect 20,000 Households with Free Broadband Access,” Fulton County, <https://www.fultoncountyga.gov/news/2022/05/20/launch-of-digital-ambassador-program>; “Digital Ambassadors Program,” Fulton County, <https://www.fultoncountyga.gov/acp>.

⁷⁹ “Mobile Career Center,” Select Fulton, <https://selectfultoncounty.com/mobilecareercenter>.

⁸⁰ “Georgia’s Approach to Rural Broadband,” GTA, <https://gta.georgia.gov/georgias-approach-rural-broadband-1>.

⁸¹ “About Georgia Broadband,” GTA, <https://gta.georgia.gov/broadband/about-georgia-broadband>.

⁸² “Georgia’s Approach to Rural Broadband,” GTA, <https://gta.georgia.gov/georgias-approach-rural-broadband-1>.

⁸³ “Speed Test,” Department of Community Affairs, <https://broadband.georgia.gov/speed-test>.

⁸⁴ “Vision/Mission,” Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center, <https://www.gacybercenter.org/about/vision-mission/>.

Program name	Description
Georgia Department of Education – K-12 Connectivity Program	GaDOE provides ACP enrollment support services to school districts through the K-12 Connectivity Program. Districts can perform their own outreach using resources provided by the GaDOE or utilize a call center created through the program; the call center also runs an ACP enrollment support hotline for families.
Georgia Department of Education – Office of Rural Education and Innovation	In 2021, the Department also established an Office of Rural Education and Innovation, which will work with low-wealth school districts in high poverty/distressed regions of Georgia to tackle barriers that impact academic outcomes and opportunities for students—including lack of broadband access. ⁸⁵
Georgia Department of Education – STEM/STEAM Georgia	Local Education Agencies (LEA) in the state can apply for grant funding through GaDOE to implement a STEM/STEAM program as developed by GaDOE’s Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) division, which involves an integrated curriculum that is project based and student centered. ⁸⁶
Georgia Digital Connectivity Advisory Committee	In 2022, GTA formed an advisory committee to identify digital connectivity needs and gaps and to support the State’s digital connectivity planning and capacity development. Members were selected based on proximity to covered populations, per National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) and NTIA guidance, and subject matter experts in areas and for populations. This group advises the State on the creation of its digital connectivity vision and objectives and will assist with creating the State’s digital connectivity capacity grant program.
Georgia Student Connect Program	As part of GaDOE’s K-12 Connectivity program, the first phase of the Georgia Student Connect Program connected students by providing hotspots with free internet service to households with a K-12 student living in low-income housing. The program is now expanded to help families enroll in the ACP ⁸⁷ by providing support services to school districts—including a call center that can conduct outreach to families and runs an ACP support hotline. Through the GaDOE program and the FCC’s Emergency Connectivity Fund, more than 144,000 hot spots with data plans were deployed to students. ⁸⁸

⁸⁵ “Rural Education and Innovation,” GaDOE, <https://www.gadoe.org/rural>.

⁸⁶ “STEM/STEAM Georgia,” GaDOE, <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/CTAE/Pages/STEM.aspx>.

⁸⁷ “Georgia Student Connect,” Georgia Department of Education, <https://gastudentconnect.org/>.

⁸⁸ “Georgia K-12 Connectivity,” Georgia Department of Education, <https://www.gadoe.org/Technology-Services/Pages/K-12-Connectivity.aspx>.

3.1.4 Broadband adoption

The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) tracks internet adoption and device ownership. Per the most recent ACS five-year estimates, 13.8 percent of households in Georgia do not subscribe to an internet service, and 6.8 percent do not have a computer.⁸⁹ Given the total number of households in the state,⁹⁰ these percentages represent approximately 536,181 households and 264,205 households, respectively.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic underscored the criticality of reliable, high-speed connectivity for students to learn remotely and complete schoolwork at home, the State has worked to ensure that students have the connectivity they need. As part of GaDOE’s K-12 Connectivity program, the initial phase of the Georgia Student Connect Program provided hotspots with free internet service to households with a K-12 student living in low-income housing. The Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) also provided approximately 480,000 connected devices, including hotspots, to 121,000 students in Georgia.⁹¹

Several school districts in the state provide desktop computers, laptops, and/or tablets as well as technical support to students, such as the Gilmer County Board of Education’s Chromebook 1-to-1 program(see Table 4 and Table 38).

Recognizing that many students in the state’s rural areas lack adequate access to broadband, technology, and devices, GaDOE’s Office of Rural Education and Innovation (established in 2021) has made connectivity one of its key priorities. The Office’s initiatives include increasing broadband access and adoption through awarding technology grants to rural school districts and promoting ACP enrollment, providing cybersecurity training and tools, and ensuring equitable access to 21st century learning and devices.⁹²

Aided by these efforts, the State had an overall student-to-device ratio of 67:100 for the 2022 school year.⁹³

⁸⁹ “QuickFacts: Georgia,” U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/GA,US/PST045221> (accessed March 28, 2023).

⁹⁰ “QuickFacts: Georgia,” U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/GA,US/PST045221> (accessed March 28, 2023).

⁹¹ “The American Rescue Plan’s Impact on Georgia on Two-Year Anniversary,” White House Briefing Room, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ARP-State-by-State_Georgia.pdf.

⁹² “Rural Education and Innovation presentation,” GaDOE, https://shealy-my.sharepoint.com/:p/g/personal/bronwyn_ragan-martin_doe_k12_ga_us/EVNQvk9O94NijLoS2WyDpJoB9aT8i7wSHHuoawUlx03vw?e=II8NPA.

⁹³ “Technology Inventory,” GaDOE, <https://georgiainsights.gadoe.org/Dashboards/Pages/Technology-Inventory.aspx>.

The State’s public libraries also serve as an important resource for residents to access the internet, with some—such as Clayton County Public Libraries and the Piedmont Regional Library System—offering devices for checkout and technology skills training. The Georgia Public Library Service (the State agency for libraries) offers statewide programs to address internet availability and affordability, digital literacy, and online accessibility. Individuals who are blind or whose physical abilities require the use of books and magazines in audio format or in braille can access assistive technology and accessible reading materials through the Georgia Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (GLS).

3.1.5 Broadband affordability

In Georgia, 576,430 households were enrolled in the ACP as of March 2023,⁹⁴ out of a total 1,571,000 eligible (based on a 2022 estimate).⁹⁵ Therefore, 36.7 percent of households who could potentially receive the subsidy are participating in the program.

In May 2023, GTA launched a statewide initiative with the nonprofit EducationSuperHighway and more than 100 coalition partners—including local governments, community organizations, businesses, and service providers—to raise awareness about the ACP and promote enrollment.⁹⁶

GTA will use its outreach channels to raise awareness about the ACP, as well as collaborating with municipalities and trusted community organizations and institutions to overcome trust, awareness, and other barriers that can prevent eligible households from enrolling in the program.

GTA is partnering with EducationSuperHighway to train community members as ACP enrollment specialists through a free virtual certification course that will equip participants to assist with enrolling in the subsidy and selecting an internet plan. In May 2023, in partnership with EducationSuperHighway, GTA hosted a virtual ACP Enrollment Certification Drive with over 100 partners, recruiting 200 participants,⁹⁷ and resulting in 40 newly certified enrollment counselors. EducationSuperHighway also provided outreach tools to help with the enrollment process, including a virtual mobile assistant⁹⁸ that provides support in four languages.

Recognizing that school districts are also well-positioned to assist in this process as they have established relationships with parents, GaDOE’s Georgia Student Connect program has

⁹⁴ “ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker,” USAC, last updated March 27, 2023, <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/ACP-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/> (accessed March 28, 2023).

⁹⁵ “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Fact Sheet: Georgia,” White House Briefing Room, July 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Georgia-BIL-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

⁹⁶ “ACP Pre-Enrollment Wizard,” <https://getacp.org/Georgia>.

⁹⁷ “Georgia Technology Authority launches statewide initiative to increase Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) adoption,” GTA website, <https://gta.georgia.gov/news/2023-05-19/georgia-technology-authority-launches-statewide-initiative-increase-affordable>.

⁹⁸ Available at <https://getacp.org/Georgia>.

transitioned to providing support services to school districts to help enroll families in the ACP. Services include a call center that can conduct outreach to households and act as an “ACP hotline” to assist with the enrollment process.

Further showing its commitment to affordable broadband, GTA required all awarded grantees under Georgia’s Capital Projects Fund grant program to participate in the ACP. In addition, GTA provided additional points to CPF grant applicants who committed to providing a low--cost offering. GTA is considering using similar practices for its upcoming BEAD grant program.

The table below identifies a sampling of ISPs’ discounted service and device programs for low-income subscribers and related broadband affordability assets in the State. The full list of ISPs in the State that participate in the ACP is included in Appendix A: Asset inventory – additional assets.

Table 7. Broadband affordability assets

Asset name	Description
Access from AT&T plan	Eligible low-income households can receive up to 100 Mbps symmetrical speeds ⁹⁹ through the Access from AT&T plan for \$30 per month, or at no cost with the ACP subsidy. ¹⁰⁰ Qualifying DSL customers who have speeds of 10 Mbps or less available may be able to get this plan at a lower cost (\$5 to \$10 per month, with a data cap.) ¹⁰¹
Comcast Internet Essentials program	Comcast, an ISP, offers the Internet Essentials plan, priced at \$9.95 per month, which is available to qualifying low-income and other households in Georgia. ¹⁰² Comcast Internet Essentials delivers speeds up to 50 Mbps and Comcast Internet Essentials Plus delivers up to 100 Mbps for \$29.95 per month. ¹⁰³ Households that subscribe to Internet Essentials can purchase a new Dell laptop or Chromebook for \$149.99 plus tax. ¹⁰⁴
Cox Communications ConnectAssist and Connect2Compete plans	Cox Communications (Cox) offers two low-cost plans for qualifying low-income customers: ConnectAssist for any eligible household, and Connect2Compete for eligible households with at least one K-12

⁹⁹ “New ‘Access from AT&T’ Plan + New Federal Benefit = Free Internet,” AT&T News Release, February 7, 2022, <https://about.att.com/story/2022/new-access-plan-plus-new-federal-benefit.html>.

¹⁰⁰ “Access from AT&T – Low-Cost Internet Service,” AT&T, <https://www.att.com/internet/access/>.

¹⁰¹ “New ‘Access from AT&T’ Plan + New Federal Benefit = Free Internet,” AT&T News Release, February 7, 2022, <https://about.att.com/story/2022/new-access-plan-plus-new-federal-benefit.html>.

¹⁰² Comcast, application for Internet Essentials plan, <https://apply.internetessentials.com/>.

¹⁰³ Comcast, “Internet Essentials,” <https://www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service/internet-essentials>.

¹⁰⁴ Comcast, “Low-Cost Computer,” <https://internetessentials.com/low-cost-computer>.

Asset name	Description
	student. ConnectAssist offers up to 100/3 Mbps for \$30 per month, effectively \$0 with the application of the ACP subsidy. Connect2Compete offers the same speeds for \$9.95 per month (effectively at no cost with the ACP subsidy). ¹⁰⁵ Both plans also offer access to educational resources through Cox Digital Academy. ¹⁰⁶
GaDOE ACP enrollment support	GaDOE provides ACP enrollment support services to school districts through the K-12 Connectivity Program. Districts can perform their own outreach using resources provided by GaDOE or utilize a call center created through the program; the call center also runs an ACP enrollment support hotline for families.
Spectrum Internet Assist plan	Spectrum Internet Assist offers qualifying low-income customers 30/4 Mbps service for \$19.99 per month, or no cost with the ACP subsidy. ¹⁰⁷

3.2 Needs assessment

The State’s comprehensive partner outreach program included extensive efforts to identify the needs of all Georgians with an emphasis on those belonging to covered populations. Outreach and data collection efforts were made to assess the baseline from which the State is working and to identify the barriers to digital connectivity faced generally and by each of the covered populations in Georgia.

The State’s research and analysis are based on available and relevant data from the American Community Survey (ACS), NTIA’s Internet Use Survey (administered as a supplement to the Current Population Survey), and the FCC’s National Broadband Map. Analysis was undertaken to benchmark Georgia against national averages, and to benchmark its residents belonging to covered populations against those that do not belong to covered populations.

The data and analysis are intended to facilitate understanding of the extent to which:

1. Broadband internet service is available to and adopted by residents

¹⁰⁵ “Affordable Internet Options from Cox,” Cox Communications, <https://www.cox.com/residential/internet/low-cost-internet-plans.html>.

¹⁰⁶ “Which Affordable Internet Program Are You Eligible For?” Cox Communications, <https://www.cox.com/residential/articles/things-to-know-about-affordable-internet.html>.

¹⁰⁷ “Low Income Internet Service | Spectrum Internet Assist Program,” Spectrum, <https://www.spectrum.com/internet/spectrum-internet-assist>.

2. Residents are confidently performing various digital skills
3. Residents are aware of and impacted by online security and privacy concerns
4. Computer devices are abundant and adequate for meaningful internet use
5. Online government resources and services are accessibly built and maintained

In brief, a key reason cited by Georgia households that do not subscribe to broadband is the issue of affordability of service. Notably, no respondents claimed that online security or privacy concerns prevented them from home internet use. While data suggests Georgians perform relatively well in many associated metrics of digital connectivity, data specific to members of covered populations indicate that barriers may still exist even when survey respondents do not cite them in their responses.

The data indicate that Georgia’s digital connectivity needs encompass access to affordable broadband services, increased enrollment in broadband service subsidy programs, device access, and digital literacy training. The table below summarizes key barriers for each covered population identified through this assessment. Blank cells indicate there was no discovered need or barrier found for the covered population through available data.

Table 8. Key barriers and obstacles for covered populations

Covered population	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
<i>Low-income households</i>	It is likely that very-low-income households are disproportionately less covered by broadband	Low-income populations display the most urgent needs for more affordable broadband ¹⁰⁸	Low-income individuals indicate need for digital skills and telemedicine training ¹⁰⁹	Low-income individuals report needs for increased awareness of and confidence in protecting themselves from online security and privacy threats ¹¹⁰	Low-income populations display the most urgent needs for increased device access ¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021 (CPSPUM 2021) (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹¹⁰ CPSPUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Covered population	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
<i>Aging populations</i>	Aging individuals are less likely to be served by broadband ¹¹²	Aging individuals display needs for greater internet adoption ¹¹³	Aging individuals indicate the most urgent need for digital skills and telemedicine training ¹¹⁴	Aging individuals report needs for increased confidence in protecting themselves from online security and privacy threats ¹¹⁵	Aging individuals display a need for greater device adoption ¹¹⁶
<i>Incarcerated individuals</i>	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs	While no data are currently available in these areas, Georgia is endeavoring to develop relevant data in partnership with other state agencies			
<i>Veterans</i>	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs	Veterans lag non-veterans in internet adoption ¹¹⁷	Older veterans need digital skills and telemedicine programming ¹¹⁸	Veterans report needs for increased confidence in protecting themselves from online security and privacy threats ¹¹⁹	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs
<i>Individuals with disabilities</i>	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs	Individuals with disabilities display a need for greater internet adoption ¹²⁰	Individuals living with disabilities indicate need for digital skills and telemedicine training ¹²¹	Individuals with disabilities report needs for increased confidence in protecting themselves from online security and privacy threats ¹²²	Individuals living with disabilities display a need for greater device adoption ¹²³
<i>Individuals with language barriers</i>	Individuals with significant language barriers are disproportionately unserved by broadband ¹²⁴	While no data are currently available in these areas, Georgia is endeavoring to develop relevant data in partnership with other state agencies			

¹¹² U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹¹⁴ CPSUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹¹⁵ CPSUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 16, 2023).
¹¹⁸ CPSUM 2021 (accessed August 17, 2023).
¹¹⁹ CPSUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹²¹ CPSUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹²² CPSUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹²³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).
¹²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

Covered population	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
<i>Individuals who are English learners (alone)</i>	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs	English language learners display a need for greater internet adoption ¹²⁵	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs	English language learners report needs for confidence in protecting themselves from online security and privacy threats ¹²⁶	English language learners display a need for greater device adoption ¹²⁷
<i>Individuals who have low levels of literacy (alone)</i>	It is likely that individuals with low levels of literacy are disproportionately unserved by broadband ¹²⁸	While no data are currently available in these areas, Georgia is endeavoring to develop relevant data in partnership with other state agencies			
<i>Racial and ethnic minorities</i>	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs	Barriers faced by this group are the same as those faced by other Georgians with similar needs	Racial and ethnic minorities indicated need for telemedicine training ¹²⁹	Racial and ethnic minorities report needs for increased awareness and confidence in protecting themselves from online security and privacy threats ¹³⁰	Racial and ethnic minorities display a material gap in desktop or laptop ownership ¹³¹
<i>Rural residents</i>	Rural individuals are in the most urgent need of increased broadband availability ¹³²	While no data are currently available in these areas, Georgia is endeavoring to develop relevant data in partnership with other state agencies	Rural individuals indicate need for digital skills and telemedicine training ¹³³	Rural individuals report needs for increased awareness and confidence in protecting themselves from online security and privacy threats ¹³⁴	While no data are currently available in these areas, Georgia is endeavoring to develop relevant data in partnership with other state agencies

3.2.1 Covered population needs assessment

To understand the challenges of digital connectivity for “covered populations,” it is necessary to define those groups. Due to the unique constraints of each data source, various analyses focus

¹²⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹²⁶ CSPUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹²⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹²⁹ CSPUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹³⁰ CSPUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹³¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹³² U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹³³ CSPUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹³⁴ CSPUM 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

on different subsets of covered populations. Based on the availability of reliable data,¹³⁵ the covered populations analyzed in this needs assessment are listed in the following table.

Table 9: Covered populations needs assessment

Covered population	Covered definition	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
Low-income households	Any individual in a household earning less than 150 percent of the federal poverty line	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aging populations	Any individual who is 60 years of age or older	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Incarcerated individuals	Any individual currently or formerly incarcerated in a non-federal correctional facility	✓				
Veterans	Any individual formerly on active duty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individuals with disabilities	Any individual living with a self-identified physical or mental disability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individuals with language barriers	Any individual that either reports an English language	✓				

¹³⁵ This Plan relies on rigorously collected and reliable data to make statistically significant conclusions regarding each covered population. The data used include those collected by the U.S. Census Bureau through the American Community Survey. Where the data are not available, the Plan does not attempt to speculate.

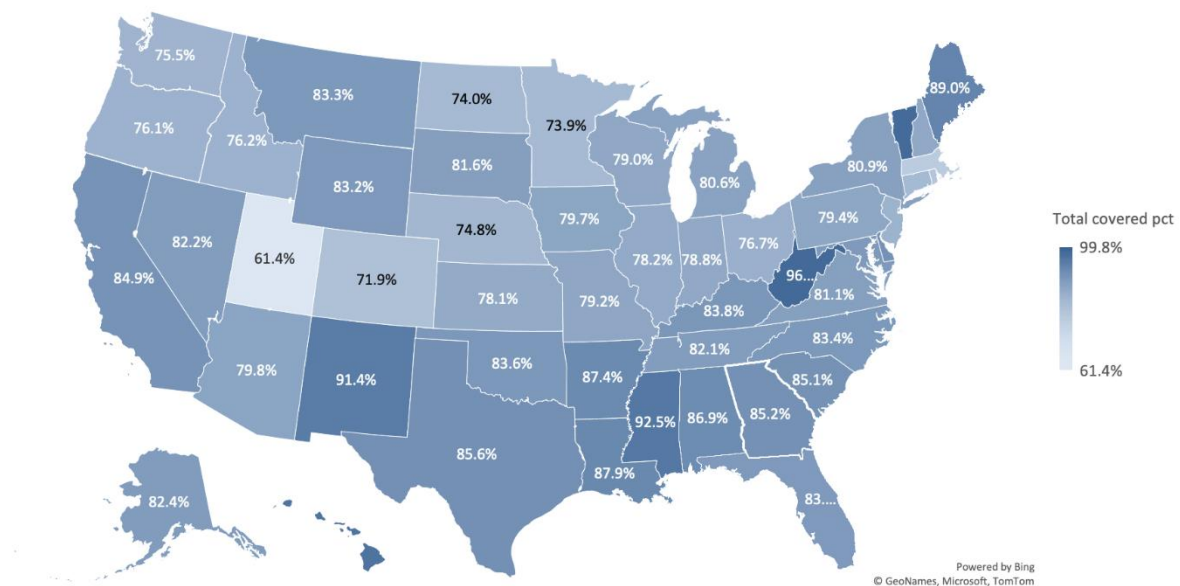
Covered population	Covered definition	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
	proficiency less than “very well” or with a literacy level beneath that of a grade 6 student ¹³⁶					
Individuals who are English learners (alone)	Any individual that either reports an English language proficiency less than “very well”	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individuals who have low levels of literacy (alone)	Any individual with a literacy level beneath that of a grade 6 student	✓				
Racial and ethnic minorities	Any individual that is not white (non-Hispanic) alone	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rural inhabitants	Any individual living outside of an urban area ¹³⁷	✓		✓	✓	

¹³⁶ Grade 6 has been adopted as a reasonable threshold for practical purposes. Neither NTIA nor the U.S. Census Bureau define low literacy. Census has developed probabilistic estimates using National Center for Education Statistics data assigning “low literacy” to Level 1 (i.e., the lowest out of five levels). See “2019 State Total Covered Populations Under the Digital Equity Act of 2021: Quick Guide,” U.S. Census Bureau, NTIA. 2022, https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/technical-documentation/community-resilience/state_total_covered_populations_quick_guide.pdf.

¹³⁷ Urban is defined according to the U.S. Census (based on the 2010 Decennial Survey) as urbanized areas, which contain 50,000 or more people, and urban clusters, which have at least 2,500 people but fewer than 50,000 residents.

In Georgia, a relatively large portion of the state belongs to covered populations, with 85.2 percent¹³⁸ belonging to a covered population. This implies that the interests of covered populations closely align to those of the whole state: Georgia as a whole and its covered populations are not likely to have misaligned priorities because the latter make up the vast majority of the former. Therefore, by planning to increase digital connectivity for covered populations, the State is taking meaningful steps to address the entirety of its digital connectivity needs. The portion of Georgia belonging to at least one covered population is contextualized in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

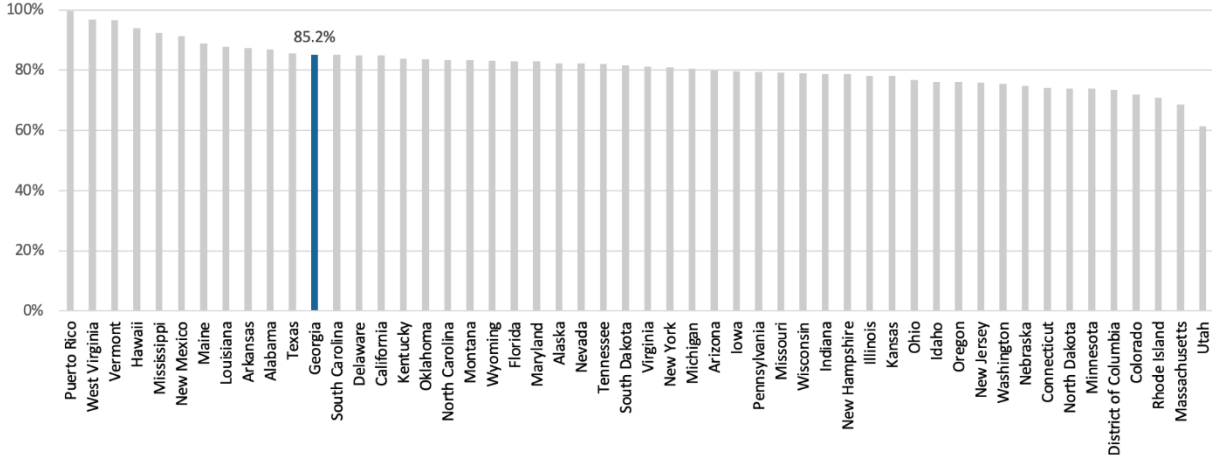
Figure 1. Portion of State populations belonging to a covered population (map)¹³⁹



¹³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹³⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

Figure 2. Portions of State populations belonging to a covered population (chart)¹⁴⁰



Within Georgia, most individuals belonging to covered populations live in rural areas, are racial or ethnic minorities, have a relatively low income, are older than 59 years old, and/or have low levels of literacy. These covered populations are much larger in the state than those defined by incarceration status, English language proficiency, and veteran status. Perhaps most notable is the size of Georgia’s racial or ethnic minority population: An estimated 48.2 percent is either a racial or ethnic minority (as opposed to only 40.6 percent nationally). Georgia and national demographics are illustrated in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Portion of Georgia and U.S. in various covered populations^{141, 142}

Covered group	Georgia	Nation	Gap
Any covered group	85.2%	81.5%	3.7%
Low income	22.3%	20.1%	2.2%
Aging	20.1%	22.9%	-2.8%
Incarcerated	0.9%	0.6%	0.3%
Veteran	5.8%	5.3%	0.5%
Disabled	12.9%	13.3%	-0.4%
Language barrier	20.2%	21.4%	-1.2%
English language learner	5.4%	8.4%	-3.0%
Low literacy	23.6%	21.9%	1.7%
Minority	48.2%	40.6%	7.6%
Rural	34.6%	28.5%	6.1%

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁴¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁴² These data are sourced from the Census Bureau’s Digital Equity Act of 2021 collection, which includes ACS and NTIA Internet Use Survey data as well as imputations from external data sources such as the National Center for

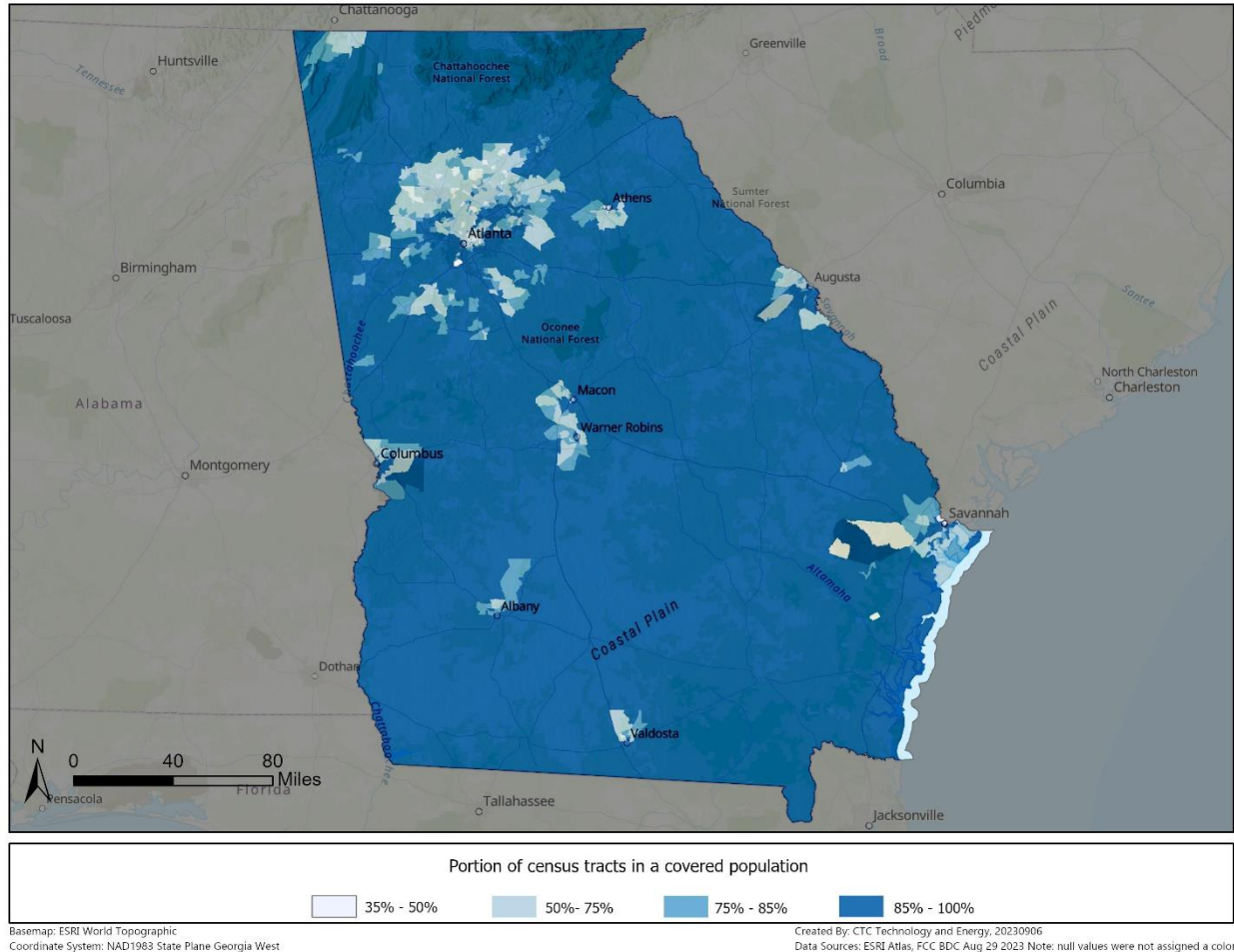
The demographic groups illustrated above are not mutually exclusive and many individuals belonging to a covered population belong to multiple covered populations; for example, many individuals living in rural areas are also low-income. Further, many of these traits are related, and possibly causally so—for example, individuals living with disabilities have higher tendencies to be on fixed incomes because of their disabilities. In this case, their presence in one covered population (individuals living with disabilities) directly affects their likelihood to appear in another covered population (individuals living in lower-income households). Additionally, individuals living with disabilities are in many cases more likely to be precluded from meaningful use of the internet by their relatively low income as opposed to their disability. Therefore, caution is urged in attributing causes of broadband outcomes to the nature of the affected covered populations.

This implies an unintuitive idea that digital connectivity interventions may not be most impactful by targeting the covered population that appears in most urgent need. To continue the example, individuals living with disabilities might present in some cases as the covered population with the most urgent needs, but tailoring support to low-income households and lowering the costs of broadband acquisition may be the most effective path toward impacting individuals living with disabilities.

Individuals belonging to covered populations are present throughout the entirety of Georgia, and, definitionally, they are uniformly present outside of urban and suburban environments. The geographic distribution of covered populations is shown in Figure 3 below.

Education Statistics to create the most comprehensive set of covered populations data. However, the data set is slightly outdated, sourcing ACS data from 2019 (most recent) to as far back as 2015. Additionally, the full data set is difficult to update given the limited documentation on the imputations performed. Therefore, for many of the remaining sections wherein analysis is performed on more specific broadband barriers rather than wholistic demographic statistics, more easily repeatable analysis is performed on more up-to-date data from ACS and the NTIA Internet Use Survey (via the Current Population Survey). As a tradeoff with the increased data quality and useability, some insight into covered populations is lost, especially regarding formerly incarcerated individuals and individuals with low levels of literacy.

Figure 3. Map of covered populations in Georgia¹⁴³



3.2.2 Broadband adoption

Access to broadband service is the primary prerequisite for broadband adoption and using the internet meaningfully to participate in the increasingly digital economy and world. For that reason, the State has completed a robust geographic analysis of broadband service offerings, a regression analysis of covered population presence and broadband availability, a comparative analysis of internet adoption rates across covered populations, and an analysis of ACP uptake and eligibility to understand resident’s remaining needs in terms of access to broadband internet service and broadband adoption. These analyses show:

1. Georgia outperforms the nation in availability of highest speed broadband (which is likely concentrated in urban areas).
2. Individuals living in rural areas face the most urgent needs for broadband availability.

¹⁴³ U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023).

3. Georgia outpaces the nation in all indicators of internet adoption and subscription rates.
4. Covered populations in Georgia are uniformly adopting the internet less frequently than individuals that do not belong to a covered population. This gap is largest when compared across incomes.
5. Georgia outperforms the national average for the percentage of eligible households enrolled in the ACP subsidy program, but Georgia still has a large opportunity for enrollment growth. (See Section 3.2.3 for more details.)



































Of all Georgia households that do not use internet at home, an estimated 3 percent¹⁴⁴ claim that a main reason for their lack of internet use is a lack of available internet service. While this is not the most frequently cited cause, the availability of service is an absolute condition for all other digital connectivity needs, and therefore deserves substantial attention.

Georgia largely aligns with the rest of the nation in indicators of broadband availability. When considering all internet delivery technologies (including those that are known to be less reliable such as satellite-based services), the FCC reports that Georgia and the nation are entirely served through speeds of 25/3 Mbps (which is the federal threshold for broadband service of any kind). However, Georgia has 2 percentage points fewer units served by speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps than the nation. At higher speeds, such as 1,000/100 Mbps, the gap reverses, with Georgia outpacing the national average by over 10 percentage points.

Georgia appears even more well-positioned once service is limited to wireline technologies which are known to be more reliable than other internet-delivering technologies. 90.9 percent of units in Georgia are within a coverage footprint for wireline internet delivering 25/3 Mbps, as opposed to 89.8 percent nationally. Across every speed reported by the FCC, Georgia outpaces the nation in wireline coverage. The same does not hold for licensed fixed wireless, which can be helpful for delivering service to areas that present difficulty for wireline construction, however Georgia is not far behind the nation in these regards.

¹⁴⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

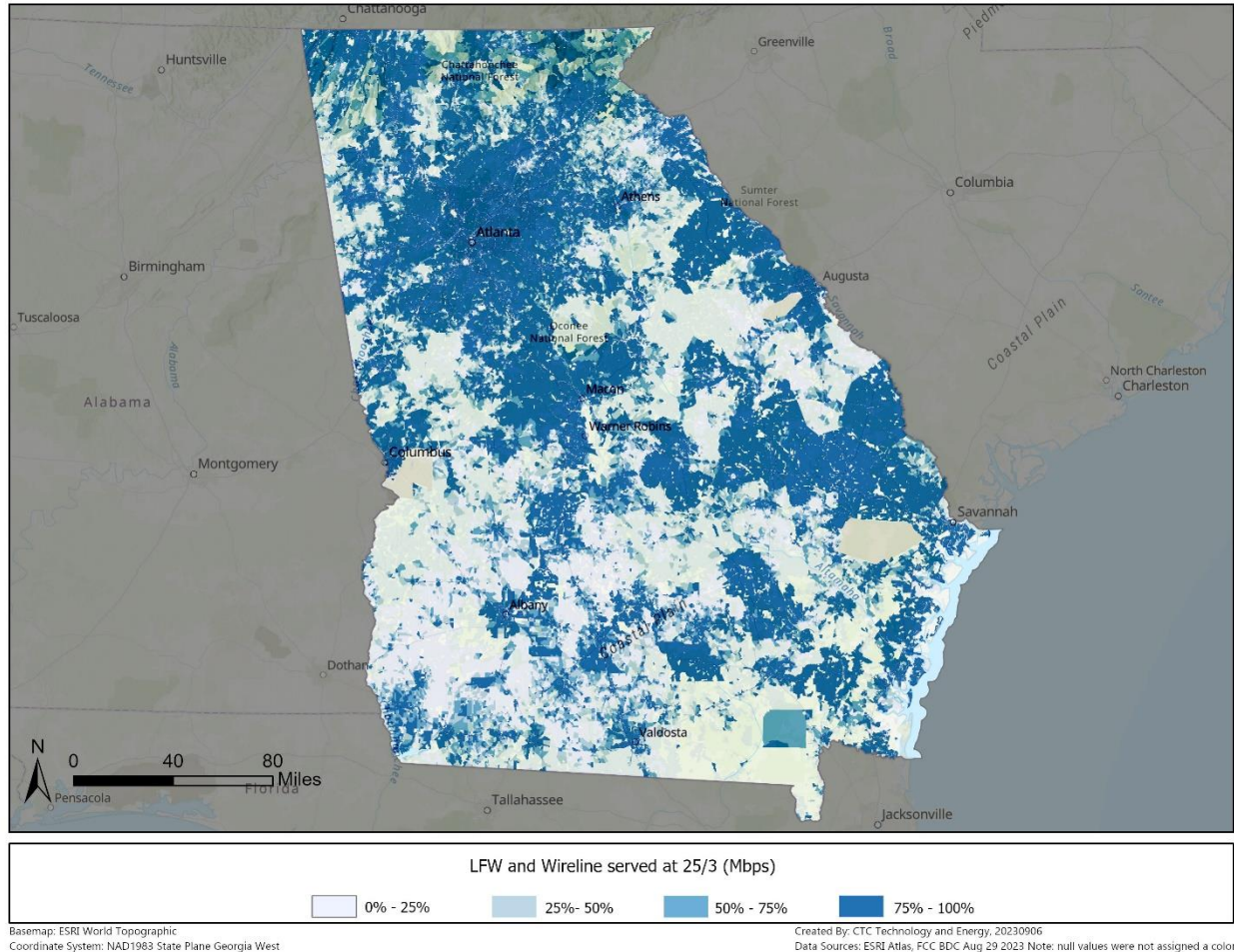
Table 11. Portion of units served with internet at various speeds in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁴⁵

	Coverage (in Mbps)	Georgia	Nation	Gap
	All technologies	0.2 / 0.2	100.0% 	100.0% 
10 / 1		100.0% 	100.0% 	0.0%
25 / 3		100.0% 	100.0% 	0.0%
100 / 20		90.2% 	92.1% 	-2.0%
250 / 25		88.1% 	87.2% 	0.9%
1000 / 100		43.2% 	33.2% 	10.1%
Wireline	Coverage (in Mbps)	Georgia	Nation	Gap
	0.2 / 0.2	95.3% 	93.4% 	1.9%
	10 / 1	93.7% 	91.7% 	2.1%
	25 / 3	90.9% 	89.8% 	1.1%
	100 / 20	89.5% 	88.4% 	1.1%
	250 / 25	88.1% 	86.6% 	1.4%
	1000 / 100	43.2% 	32.3% 	10.9%
Licensed fixed wireless	Coverage (in Mbps)	Georgia	Nation	Gap
	0.2 / 0.2	80.0% 	79.5% 	0.5%
	10 / 1	53.1% 	54.9% 	-1.8%
	25 / 3	50.7% 	51.7% 	-1.0%
	100 / 20	18.1% 	19.2% 	-1.2%
	250 / 25	1.5% 	2.6% 	-1.1%
	1000 / 100	0.0%	0.2%	-0.2%

Certain areas of Georgia see low levels of coverage because private ISPs choose to invest elsewhere, where return on investment will presumably be greater. The availability of wireline or robust licensed fixed wireless broadband service in Georgia tends to correlate with the density of population. In more densely populated areas, there are more potential customers relative to construction costs. As a result, consistent with patterns throughout the United States, service in Georgia is frequently spotty in rural areas, as shown below for speeds of 25/3 Mbps (Figure 4), and 100/20 Mbps (Figure 5).

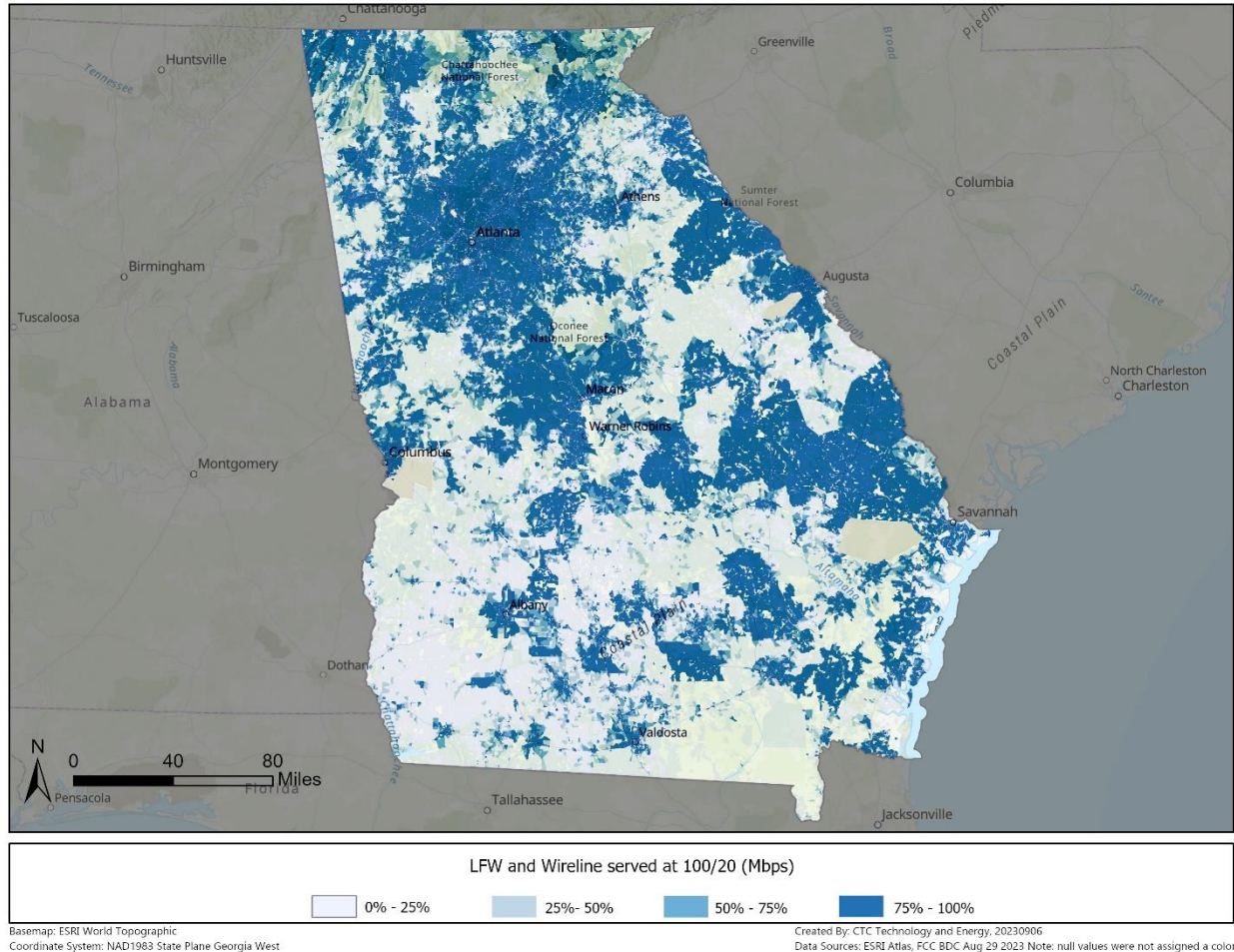
¹⁴⁵ FCC, National Broadband Map, last updated August 16, 2023 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Figure 4: Map of units served by 25/3 Mbps¹⁴⁶



¹⁴⁶ FCC, National Broadband Map, last updated August 9, 2023 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Figure 5: Map of units served by 100/20 Mbps¹⁴⁷



A regression analysis was undertaken by comparing the prevalence of various covered populations in each census tract in Georgia with the portion of units unserved by at least one broadband internet option with speeds of 25/3 Mbps or greater. The resulting correlation was relatively weak, with an R^2 value of 0.44. However, the analysis does further underline the relationship between rurality and broadband availability, as it was the most statistically significant correlation of all covered populations by a wide margin.

In addition to individuals living in rural areas, aging individuals and those facing language barriers (including low levels of literacy) also were statistically significantly, positively correlated, meaning that the presence of these groups indicated a decrease in available broadband. It is possible that individuals with low levels of literacy align with areas of extremely low income, which are not viable for private investment in broadband.

¹⁴⁷ FCC, National Broadband Map, last updated August 9, 2023 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Only two other covered populations achieved statistical significance in relation to availability: The portions of a census tract made up of racial or ethnic minorities, and English language proficiency. In both cases, the correlation was negative, meaning there was increased broadband availability. These results are possibly due to racial or ethnic minorities and English language learners being concentrated in urban areas where broadband is more likely to be available.

The full results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Regression analysis of portion of census tract belonging to covered populations and portion of units unserved¹⁴⁸

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.660
R Square	0.436
Adjusted R Square	0.432
Standard Error	0.163
Observations	1244

Variables	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Statistically significant
Intercept	-0.067	0.022	-3.034	0.002	✓
Income	-0.019	0.044	-0.445	0.656	
Aging	0.228	0.077	2.967	0.003	✓
Incarceration status	-0.052	0.081	-0.639	0.52	
Veteran status	-0.243	0.191	-1.269	0.205	
Disability status	-0.199	0.120	-1.662	0.097	
Language barrier (including low literacy)	0.827	0.104	7.924	5.09E-15	✓
English proficiency	-0.699	0.107	-6.541	8.91E-11	✓
Race and ethnicity	-0.102	0.026	-3.954	8.12E-05	✓
Rurality	0.220	0.013	16.490	2.30E-55	✓

Neither broadband availability nor many of these demographic characteristics are uniform throughout census tracts or binary in nature. For example, extremely low-income groups tend to cluster in areas much smaller than census tracts, and they face distinct availability obstacles to other individuals that still belong to the “low-income” covered population. It is overwhelmingly likely that low-income households are less well served than higher-income households, although those trends have not appeared statistically when evaluating this exact partitioning of the State. It is possible that a more granular study would reveal more informative relationships between various covered populations and service availability.

¹⁴⁸ Portion of census tract populations belonging to various covered populations from U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html> (accessed August 29, 2023). Portion of units served in each census tract from FCC’s National Broadband Map (accessed August 29, 2023). A number of outlier tracts were removed.

Ultimately, Georgians would benefit greatly from investment in increased service availability. For rural residents specifically, additional service availability could have significant impacts on digital connectivity.

3.2.2.1 Overview of broadband adoption needs

Of all Georgia households that do not use internet at home, an estimated 15 percent¹⁴⁹ claim that a main reason for their lack of internet use at home is an inability to afford service. For the State of Georgia this is the second most reported barrier, suggesting challenges relating to the cost of service and the closely linked concept of reliability seem to be substantial obstacles to digital connectivity for many Georgians.

According to the American Community Survey, 92.3 percent of Georgia residents have a home internet subscription of any kind. This is close to the national rate of 90.3 percent. Georgia residents also have similar adoption of reliable broadband when comparing against the nation. 77.2 percent of Georgia residents have a wireline home internet subscription, whereas the national rate is 75.5 percent. Wireline internet subscriptions tend to be more reliable than others, and therefore can represent a more meaningful measure of useful internet adoption.

Even though Georgia performs similarly to the nation in internet adoption, there is still opportunity for improvement as the national figures mostly help contextualize the State’s positionality in a broader context rather than serve as the ceiling for achievement. Accordingly, 12.7 percent of Georgia residents rely on a cellular data plan alone for the home internet service, which is insufficient to realize the many benefits of broadband. Mobile-only individuals typically cite affordability, their smartphone being good enough, and/or having access to broadband somewhere else as the reasons for not having home internet connectivity.

Table 13. Internet adoption rates in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁵⁰










Internet in the house	Georgia	Nation	Gap
Internet subscription of any kind	92.3%	90.3%	2.0%
Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	77.2%	75.5%	1.7%
Only subscription via cellular data plan	12.7%	10.9%	1.8%

90.2 percent of individuals belonging to a covered population report having a home internet subscription as opposed to 97.9 percent of those outside of covered populations. The gap widens for wireline internet connections, for which 73.8 percent of individuals belonging to covered populations claim adoption compared to 86.1 percent of non-covered populations.

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁵⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Table 14. Internet adoption rates in covered and non-covered populations¹⁵¹

Internet in the house	Covered groups	Non covered groups	Gap
Internet subscription of any kind	90.2% 	97.9% 	-7.7% 
Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	73.8% 	86.1% 	-12.3% 
Only subscription via cellular data plan	13.6% 	10.3% 	3.3% 

Individuals living in low-income households constitute the covered population with the largest adoption gaps. Low-income individuals are 15.6 percentage points less likely than higher-income individuals to have a home internet subscription, 21.9 percentage points less likely to have a wireline internet subscription, and 4.8 percentage points more likely to only subscribe to a cellular data plan. Aging individuals, people with disabilities, and English language learners constitute three more groups with meaningful adoption gaps; they were 10.7, 12.3, and 9.4 percentage points, respectively, less likely to have a wireline internet subscription than their non-covered population counterparts. Full breakdowns of each covered population’s adoption rates are included in Table 15.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁵² This Plan follows the U.S. Census Bureau’s standards on reporting data related to the terms “minority” and “white.” See: “About the topic of race,” U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>.

Table 15. Internet adoption rates in various covered populations¹⁵³

Income	Internet in the house	Low income	Higher income	Gap
	Internet subscription of any kind	80.6%	96.1%	-15.6%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	60.7%	82.5%	-21.9%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	16.3%	11.5%	4.8%
Race	Internet in the house	Minority	White alone	Gap
	Internet subscription of any kind	91.7%	92.9%	-1.2%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	76.1%	78.2%	-2.1%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	12.9%	12.5%	0.3%
Age	Internet in the house	Aging	Younger	Gap
	Internet subscription of any kind	86.7%	93.8%	-7.1%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	68.7%	79.4%	-10.7%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	14.8%	12.1%	2.6%
Disability	Internet in the house	With disabilities	Without disabilities	Gap
	Internet subscription of any kind	84.7%	93.5%	-8.8%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	66.5%	78.8%	-12.3%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	15.1%	12.3%	2.8%
English proficiency	Internet in the house	English learner	Fluent	Gap
	Internet subscription of any kind	87.4%	92.6%	-5.1%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	68.3%	77.7%	-9.4%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	16.3%	12.5%	3.9%
Veteran status	Internet in the house	Veteran	Non-veteran	Gap
	Internet subscription of any kind	92.1%	92.3%	-0.2%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	76.1%	77.3%	-1.2%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	13.0%	12.7%	0.4%

In addition to the considerable gap between low- and higher-income individuals in internet adoption, the reported frequency of inability and unwillingness to pay for home internet use suggests that the State has substantial needs for interventions to bring down the cost of home internet subscriptions and use.

3.2.2.2 Digital literacy needs

Meaningful use of the internet necessitates confidence and practice with performing a variety of digital skills. Although some individuals may have internet service and a working computer, they can frequently be functionally limited by their inability to navigate the internet effectively. In Georgia, 52 percent of residents without home internet use cite a lack of need or interest in the internet as a reason why they do not use internet in the home. This suggests digital skills programming may be the most impactful intervention for increasing internet usage in the State.

Both findings suggest the possibility that some Georgians do not understand the value of having fluency in various digital skills. Therefore, the State of Georgia has used data from the Current Population Survey and the NTIA Internet Use Survey to evaluate the extent to which various covered populations engage in key online activities. These key findings are as follows:

¹⁵³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023). Note: Data for incarcerated individuals were not available.

1. Georgia performs similarly to the nation in frequency of online digital skill use and members of covered populations underperform compared to non-covered populations in the State.
2. Individuals living in low-income households, at or above 60 years of age, living with disabilities, or living in rural areas express the most urgent need for digital skills programming.
3. Georgia underperforms compared to the nation across almost all measured telemedicine-related online activities. Similarly, members of covered populations universally underperform across measured telemedicine-related activities compared to non-covered populations.
4. Individuals living in low-income households, racial or ethnic minorities, and individuals living in rural areas express the most urgent need for telemedicinal digital skills programming.

Georgia residents regularly perform online activities at similar rates to the nation. The gap is largest for activities such as watching videos online, in which only 64.1 percent of Georgia residents regularly engage, compared to the national average of 70.1 percent. However, despite almost meeting the national figures, Georgia residents might still benefit from further emphasis upon digital literacy in the state.

Table 16. Digital literacy in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁵⁴

Online activity	Georgia	Nation	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	93.6%	93.3%	0.3%
Uses email	92.2%	91.8%	0.4%
Uses online social networks	75.0%	74.6%	0.4%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	71.2%	74.1%	-2.9%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	73.0%	74.3%	-1.3%
Watches videos online	64.1%	70.1%	-6.0%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	63.5%	65.6%	-2.1%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	55.9%	60.0%	-4.1%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	40.5%	43.0%	-2.5%
Accessing government services	36.0%	38.4%	-2.4%
Takes class or participates in job training online	25.7%	25.7%	0.0%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	22.2%	22.3%	-0.2%
Telecommutes using the internet	25.6%	27.7%	-2.0%
Searches for a job online	19.7%	21.3%	-1.6%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	20.4%	17.0%	3.4%
Uses the internet to sell goods	8.9%	10.5%	-1.6%
Offers services for sale via the internet	9.7%	8.8%	1.0%

Individuals belonging to covered populations almost uniformly practice digital skills at a lower rate than those that do not belong to covered populations. Here, the largest gaps can be found in using online financial services like banking, investing, or paying bills (20.3 percentage point

¹⁵⁴ NTIA, 2021 Internet Use Survey (accessed August 29, 2023).

gap), telecommuting using the internet (17.8 percentage point gap), and requesting services provided by others via the internet (15.2 percentage point gap).

The only digital skill for which individuals in covered populations outpace their counterparts is in posting or uploading blog posts, videos, or other original content, which only 20.6 percent of those in covered populations performed recently compared to a rate of 18.8 percent for non-covered populations.

Table 17. Digital literacy in Georgia covered populations¹⁵⁵

Online activity	Covered group	Non-covered group	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	92.1%	97.8%	-5.7%
Uses email	90.4%	98.3%	-8.0%
Uses online social networks	71.0%	85.9%	-14.8%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	67.8%	82.1%	-14.4%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	68.7%	89.0%	-20.3%
Watches videos online	60.9%	73.9%	-13.0%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	60.4%	72.1%	-11.7%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	52.6%	66.5%	-13.9%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	36.9%	52.0%	-15.2%
Accessing government services	34.0%	42.4%	-8.4%
Takes class or participates in job training online	25.0%	29.1%	-4.1%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	20.0%	28.7%	-8.7%
Telecommutes using the internet	21.5%	39.2%	-17.8%
Searches for a job online	18.2%	24.8%	-6.6%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	20.6%	18.8%	1.8%
Uses the internet to sell goods	8.7%	9.9%	-1.2%
Offers services for sale via the internet	8.5%	13.9%	-5.4%

The digital skills discrepancies are greatest for individuals who are at or above 60 years of age. For this covered population, not a single online activity is more frequently practiced by aging individuals compared to younger individuals. Additionally, individuals living with disabilities, living in rural areas, and living in low-income homes trailed measurably behind higher-income individuals. The consistent degree to which these covered populations underperform in key digital skills illustrates the urgent need for digital skills training for all four groups.

¹⁵⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Table 18. Digital literacy in aging and younger populations¹⁵⁶

Online activity	Aging	Younger	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	83.4%	97.1%	-13.7%
Uses email	82.6%	95.5%	-13.0%
Uses online social networks	55.1%	81.8%	-26.7%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	58.9%	75.5%	-16.6%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	62.7%	76.5%	-13.8%
Watches videos online	38.8%	72.7%	-34.0%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	44.7%	69.9%	-25.2%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	28.4%	65.3%	-36.8%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	23.4%	46.3%	-22.9%
Accessing government services	32.1%	37.3%	-5.2%
Takes class or participates in job training online	9.6%	31.2%	-21.6%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	17.1%	23.9%	-6.8%
Telecommutes using the internet	12.0%	30.3%	-18.3%
Searches for a job online	6.4%	24.2%	-17.8%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	9.9%	23.9%	-14.1%
Uses the internet to sell goods	4.2%	10.6%	-6.4%
Offers services for sale via the internet	4.7%	11.4%	-6.7%

Table 19. Digital literacy in people with disabilities and people without disabilities¹⁵⁷

Online activity	People with disabilities	People without disabilities	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	83.2%	94.8%	-11.6%
Uses email	84.3%	93.1%	-8.9%
Uses online social networks	61.0%	76.6%	-15.6%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	51.0%	73.6%	-22.6%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	61.0%	74.4%	-13.3%
Watches videos online	51.0%	65.6%	-14.6%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	49.4%	65.1%	-15.7%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	40.3%	57.7%	-17.4%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	28.0%	41.9%	-13.9%
Accessing government services	34.2%	36.2%	-1.9%
Takes class or participates in job training online	14.3%	27.0%	-12.8%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	14.8%	23.0%	-8.2%
Telecommutes using the internet	6.6%	27.8%	-21.2%
Searches for a job online	7.5%	21.1%	-13.5%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	11.5%	21.4%	-9.9%
Uses the internet to sell goods	10.2%	8.8%	1.4%
Offers services for sale via the internet	4.7%	10.3%	-5.6%

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁵⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Table 20. Digital literacy in rural and metropolitan populations¹⁵⁸

Online activity	Rural	Metropolitan	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	90.5%	94.1%	-3.6%
Uses email	86.4%	93.3%	-6.9%
Uses online social networks	67.6%	76.3%	-8.7%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	67.2%	72.0%	-4.7%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	65.3%	74.4%	-9.2%
Watches videos online	65.7%	63.8%	1.9%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	48.5%	66.1%	-17.6%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	54.0%	56.2%	-2.2%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	21.6%	43.9%	-22.3%
Accessing government services	23.3%	38.2%	-14.9%
Takes class or participates in job training online	24.7%	25.9%	-1.2%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	12.3%	23.9%	-11.7%
Telecommutes using the internet	15.4%	27.5%	-12.1%
Searches for a job online	24.2%	18.9%	5.4%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	23.7%	19.8%	3.9%
Uses the internet to sell goods	3.1%	10.0%	-6.9%
Offers services for sale via the internet	4.2%	10.7%	-6.5%

Table 21. Digital literacy in low and higher-income populations¹⁵⁹

Online activity	Low income	Higher income	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	89.8%	94.7%	-5.0%
Uses email	86.3%	94.1%	-7.8%
Uses online social networks	74.3%	75.2%	-1.0%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	55.4%	76.1%	-20.7%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	55.5%	78.3%	-22.9%
Watches videos online	58.3%	65.8%	-7.5%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	51.9%	67.0%	-15.1%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	52.2%	57.1%	-4.9%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	28.1%	44.2%	-16.1%
Accessing government services	26.7%	38.8%	-12.1%
Takes class or participates in job training online	20.7%	27.3%	-6.6%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	12.3%	25.2%	-12.9%
Telecommutes using the internet	12.1%	29.8%	-17.7%
Searches for a job online	22.5%	18.8%	3.7%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	19.6%	20.6%	-1.0%
Uses the internet to sell goods	4.8%	10.2%	-5.4%
Offers services for sale via the internet	5.8%	10.9%	-5.2%

Veterans and racial or ethnic minorities were also evaluated for digital skills use, although neither group illustrates a particularly urgent need for skills training as both groups almost uniformly outperform their non-covered counterparts. The frequency of online activity performance does not necessarily imply competence or success in those activities. Therefore, digital skills training still may have a meaningful impact on both groups.

¹⁵⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Table 22. Digital literacy in veteran and non-veteran populations¹⁶⁰

Online activity	Veteran	Non-veteran	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	95.9%	93.2%	2.7%
Uses email	93.2%	92.3%	0.9%
Uses online social networks	70.1%	74.9%	-4.8%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	76.8%	71.8%	5.0%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	87.1%	74.1%	12.9%
Watches videos online	68.6%	63.5%	5.1%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	61.4%	63.8%	-2.5%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	52.4%	56.2%	-3.8%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	41.7%	41.6%	0.1%
Accessing government services	43.1%	35.8%	7.3%
Takes class or participates in job training online	26.1%	26.0%	0.2%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	28.0%	22.3%	5.7%
Telecommutes using the internet	25.9%	26.5%	-0.6%
Searches for a job online	21.3%	20.1%	1.3%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	19.0%	20.3%	-1.2%
Uses the internet to sell goods	15.7%	8.7%	6.9%
Offers services for sale via the internet	12.2%	9.9%	2.3%

Table 23. Digital literacy in racial/ethnic minority and white populations¹⁶¹

Online activity	Minority	White alone	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	96.0%	92.0%	4.1%
Uses email	91.7%	92.6%	-1.0%
Uses online social networks	76.5%	74.0%	2.5%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	71.4%	71.2%	0.2%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	66.2%	77.6%	-11.3%
Watches videos online	67.8%	61.6%	6.1%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	67.7%	60.7%	7.0%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	57.9%	54.6%	3.4%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	46.9%	36.2%	10.7%
Accessing government services	33.7%	37.5%	-3.7%
Takes class or participates in job training online	28.3%	24.0%	4.3%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	21.7%	22.5%	-0.7%
Telecommutes using the internet	25.8%	25.6%	0.2%
Searches for a job online	21.6%	18.4%	3.2%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	26.2%	16.5%	9.7%
Uses the internet to sell goods	12.5%	6.6%	5.9%
Offers services for sale via the internet	10.4%	9.3%	1.1%

3.2.2.3 Telemedicine needs

Increasingly, there is a use and need for a distinguished set of digital skills involved in telemedicine and remote health care. These activities include communicating with health professionals over the internet, researching health information online, using an electronic health monitoring device (for example, sending data to a provider from a smart watch or pacemaker), and accessing health or health insurance records online.

¹⁶⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁶¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Table 24. Telemedicinal digital literacy in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁶²

Telemedicine activity	Georgia	Nation	Gap
Communicates with a health professional over the internet	40.3%	48.1%	-7.8%
Researches health information online	44.8%	52.9%	-8.2%
Uses an electronic health monitoring service	8.5%	8.4%	0.1%
Accesses health or insurance records online	42.1%	53.1%	-11.0%

Among Georgians belonging to covered populations, telemedicine is less frequently practiced compared to non-covered populations. These gaps are especially prevalent in communicating with a health professional over the internet (13.5 percentage point gap), researching health information online (10.9 percentage point gap), and accessing health or insurance records online (16.8 percentage point gap).

Table 25. Telemedicinal digital literacy in covered and non-covered populations¹⁶³

Telemedicine activity	Covered groups	Non-covered groups	Gap
Communicates with a health professional over the internet	36.9%	50.4%	-13.5%
Researches health information online	41.9%	52.8%	-10.9%
Uses an electronic health monitoring service	8.2%	9.9%	-1.7%
Accesses health or insurance records online	38.1%	54.9%	-16.8%

Among the covered populations, individuals living in low-income households and individuals living in rural areas exhibit the most urgent needs for increased telemedicine skills—based on both their reported frequency of participation in telemedicine (which is notably low) and given the difficulties in traveling long distances and at inconvenient times for rural and lower-income individuals.

Georgia residents that are racial or ethnic minorities also participate less in telemedicine activities. Given how well racial or ethnic minorities perform compared to other individuals for non-telehealth-related online activities, one would not expect this kind of a discrepancy. Therefore, these data indicate that racial or ethnic minorities in Georgia might benefit from a concerted focus upon further education in digital skills related to telemedicine, and additional care may be required to market and deploy this programming in ways that build communal trust.

Adults at or above 60 years of age may also benefit from specific telemedicine education given their increased risk for medical needs, however this group does not report a particular lack in telemedicine participation. Rather, aging individuals just outperform younger individuals across all measured telemedicine activities.

¹⁶² U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁶³ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Two other covered populations, people with disabilities and veterans, outperform their non-covered counterparts, perhaps suggesting that telehealth resources in Georgia are accessible for people with disabilities and the efficacy of Georgia’s Veteran’s Affairs health care facilities.

Table 26. Telemedicinal digital literacy in various covered populations¹⁶⁴

Telemedicine activity		Low income	Higher income	Gap
Income	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	23.2%	45.5%	-22.3%
	Researches health information online	26.1%	50.4%	-24.4%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	7.0%	9.0%	-2.0%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	20.7%	48.6%	-27.9%
Telemedicine activity		Aging	Younger	Gap
Age	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	41.4%	39.9%	1.5%
	Researches health information online	47.1%	43.9%	3.2%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	9.2%	8.3%	1.0%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	42.9%	41.8%	1.2%
Telemedicine activity		Veteran	Non-veteran	Gap
Veteran status	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	60.4%	39.3%	21.1%
	Researches health information online	61.1%	43.9%	17.2%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	7.8%	8.7%	-0.9%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	60.8%	41.1%	19.7%
Telemedicine activity		With disabilities	Without disabilities	Gap
Disability	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	49.7%	39.3%	10.4%
	Researches health information online	51.1%	44.0%	7.1%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	11.1%	8.2%	2.9%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	44.8%	41.8%	3.0%
Telemedicine activity		Minority	White alone	Gap
Race	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	33.5%	44.9%	-11.4%
	Researches health information online	37.7%	49.5%	-11.8%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	9.2%	8.0%	1.2%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	34.9%	46.9%	-12.0%
Telemedicine activity		Rural	Metropolitan	Gap
Rurality	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	22.0%	43.6%	-21.6%
	Researches health information online	29.8%	47.4%	-17.6%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	2.2%	9.7%	-7.5%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	22.9%	45.5%	-22.6%

3.2.2.4 Online security and privacy needs

Theft, fraud, phishing, and misinformation are all commonplace on the internet, and fully realizing digital connectivity in Georgia requires users to be safe from such online risks. In the past year, 13.1 percent of individuals in covered populations in Georgia report having been the victim of an online security or privacy breach. Therefore, the State of Georgia has used data from the Current Population Survey and the NTIA Internet Use Survey to evaluate the extents to which various covered populations perceive and feel confident in their ability to disarm online security and privacy threats. The key findings are as follows:

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023). Note: Data for incarcerated individuals and individuals with language barriers were not available.

1. Compared to the nation, Georgia residents are consistently less concerned about online security and privacy concerns.
2. Identity theft and credit card fraud are the two online security breaches that are concerning to most Georgia residents.
3. Covered populations demonstrate similar concerns of online security and privacy concerns compared to non-covered populations in Georgia.
4. Members of covered populations do not appear meaningfully more dissuaded than non-covered populations to undertake various online activities because of security or privacy concerns.

Identity theft and credit card fraud were the two online security risks that concerned the most Georgia residents. This is in line with the national ranking. Other concerns such as third-party tracking, government tracking, and online threats were of less concern.

Table 27. Main online security or privacy concerns in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁶⁵

(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Georgia	Nation	Gap
Identity theft	44.0%	50.7%	-6.7%
Credit card fraud	33.3%	42.1%	-8.8%
Third party tracking	18.6%	26.4%	-7.8%
Government tracking	16.7%	19.0%	-2.3%
Online threats	16.9%	23.1%	-6.2%
Other	10.4%	13.1%	-2.7%

Covered populations and non-covered populations are similarly concerned about online security and privacy risks in the State of Georgia. However, concern over online security and privacy does not necessarily correlate to an ability to effectively combat online risks, and, as such, covered populations could still benefit from additional educational programming.

Table 28. Main online security or privacy concerns in covered and non-covered populations¹⁶⁶

(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Covered groups	Non-covered groups	Gap
Identity theft	44.4%	43.1%	1.3%
Credit card fraud	34.2%	31.3%	2.9%
Third party tracking	18.7%	18.1%	0.6%
Government tracking	17.7%	13.3%	4.3%
Online threats	17.1%	16.3%	0.8%
Other	10.9%	7.8%	3.1%

Among the specific covered populations, people with disabilities, veterans, and individuals at or above 60 years of age tend to be the most concerned about these risks. Lower-income and racial or ethnic minorities express the least concern over these issues. Similarly, while it is not

¹⁶⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁶⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

inherently beneficial to increase concern around privacy and security, online security education may increase awareness of these concerns in a positive way, especially for lower-income households and racial or ethnic minorities.

Table 29. Main online security or privacy concerns in various covered populations¹⁶⁷

	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Low income	Higher-income	Gap
Income	Identity theft	39.0%	45.6%	-6.6%
	Credit card fraud	25.4%	35.8%	-10.4%
	Third party tracking	14.6%	19.9%	-5.3%
	Government tracking	14.1%	17.4%	-3.4%
	Online threats	13.7%	17.9%	-4.3%
	Other	8.2%	11.1%	-2.9%
Age	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Aging	Younger	Gap
	Identity theft	51.9%	41.4%	10.5%
	Credit card fraud	45.4%	29.2%	16.1%
	Third party tracking	26.4%	16.0%	10.3%
	Government tracking	20.0%	15.5%	4.5%
	Online threats	19.8%	16.0%	3.9%
Other	14.2%	9.1%	5.0%	
Veteran status	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Veterans	Non-veterans	Gap
	Identity theft	67.8%	42.4%	25.4%
	Credit card fraud	59.4%	32.0%	27.4%
	Third party tracking	41.2%	17.0%	24.2%
	Government tracking	38.6%	15.0%	23.7%
	Online threats	31.4%	15.9%	15.6%
Other	12.4%	10.1%	2.3%	
Disability	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	With disabilities	Without disabilities	Gap
	Identity theft	51.3%	43.2%	8.1%
	Credit card fraud	48.1%	31.7%	16.4%
	Third party tracking	32.1%	17.1%	15.0%
	Government tracking	25.3%	15.7%	9.6%
	Online threats	29.1%	15.6%	13.5%
Other	24.0%	8.9%	15.2%	
Race	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Minority	White alone	Gap
	Identity theft	43.4%	44.5%	-1.1%
	Credit card fraud	31.0%	34.9%	-3.9%
	Third party tracking	15.1%	21.0%	-5.8%
	Government tracking	14.7%	18.0%	-3.3%
	Online threats	14.1%	18.8%	-4.7%
Other	7.9%	12.1%	-4.3%	
Rurality	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Rural	Metropolitan	Gap
	Identity theft	39.0%	44.9%	-5.9%
	Credit card fraud	24.8%	34.9%	-10.1%
	Third party tracking	16.7%	19.0%	-2.2%
	Government tracking	18.3%	16.4%	2.0%
	Online threats	16.7%	17.0%	-0.3%
Other	14.7%	9.6%	5.1%	

¹⁶⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023). Note: Data for incarcerated individuals and individuals with language barriers were not available.

It may be more meaningful for the identification of barriers to examine the impacts of concern rather than level of concern. An estimated 14.0 percent of Georgia residents chose not to buy goods or services online in the past year because of concerns regarding privacy or security. Similarly, 10.7 percent chose not to post photos or other information to social media for these reasons. Georgia residents appear less dissuaded from online activities because of security concerns than the rest of the nation. While the goal is for all individuals to feel safe and confident in their performance of online activities, it remains possible that these data are more suggestive of a lack of information or awareness rather than increased capacity for self-protection.

Table 30. Portion of individuals dissuaded from performing online activities by privacy or security concerns in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁶⁸

Concerns about privacy or security stopped someone in your household from:	Georgia	Nation	Gap
Conducting financial transactions online	1.7%	3.2%	-1.5%
Buying goods or services online	14.0%	18.0%	-4.0%
Posting photos or other information to social media	10.7%	13.5%	-2.9%
Expressing an opinion on a controversial or political issue online	9.3%	13.7%	-4.4%
Searching for information on a web search engine	7.4%	13.0%	-5.6%

Members of covered populations do not meaningfully differ from non-covered populations by these metrics. Therefore, it is likely that security and privacy-based educational programming may be similarly beneficial to covered and non-covered populations.

Table 31. Portion of individuals dissuaded from performing online activities by privacy or security concerns in covered and non-covered populations¹⁶⁹

Concerns about privacy or security stopped someone in your household from:	Covered populations	Non-covered populations	Gap
Conducting financial transactions online	1.8%	1.4%	0.4%
Buying goods or services online	13.4%	16.5%	-3.0%
Posting photos or other information to social media	9.7%	14.1%	-4.5%
Expressing an opinion on a controversial or political issue online	9.6%	8.7%	0.9%
Searching for information on a web search engine	7.4%	7.9%	-0.5%

3.2.2.5 Device adoption needs

Meaningful use of the internet requires the meaningful use of internet-enabled devices such as desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and, in some instances, smartphones. While only 3

¹⁶⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

¹⁶⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

percent of Georgia residents who do not use internet at home self-identified adequate computer device access as a barrier to their households’ connectivity, other data suggest a computer device ownership gap among covered populations. Therefore, the State of Georgia has used data from the American Community Survey to evaluate the extent to which Georgia residents as a whole, and various covered populations specifically, have access to computer devices in their homes. The key findings are as follows:

1. Georgia very slightly outperforms the nation in desktop or laptop access rates.
2. Device access rates are uniformly lower for members of covered populations compared to non-covered populations.
3. Low-income households are in the most urgent need for increased desktop or laptop computer access, and racial or ethnic minorities, individuals at or above 60 years of age, individuals living with a disability, and English language learners also lag their non-covered counterparts to varying degrees.

The State of Georgia performs similarly to the nation in computer device ownership of any kind, with 94.6 percent of individuals claiming to have access to a computer in the house compared to 95.0 percent nationally. However, these devices are not uniformly capable. While tablets and smartphones are increasingly effective for many online tasks, they are still ultimately not adequate for full realization of digital connectivity. In Georgia 82.9 percent of individuals have access to a desktop or laptop in their home, which is 2.4 percentage points above the national rate of 80.5 percent, but still leaves opportunity for growth. Device adoption statistics for the state and nation are presented in Table 32 below:

Table 32. Device adoption rates in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁷⁰

Computer in the house	Georgia	Nation	Gap
Computer device of any kind	94.6%	95.0%	-0.4%
Desktop or laptop	82.9%	80.5%	2.4%
Tablet	69.6%	63.8%	5.8%
Smartphone only	7.3%	9.1%	-1.8%

Device ownership is reportedly stratified by membership in covered populations. For example, 99.2 percent of individuals not belonging to a covered population have access to a computer at home, while only 92.7 percent of individuals belonging to covered populations report the same access. This device gap grows when limiting the inquiry to desktop or laptop devices and tablets, to which members of covered populations are reportedly 13.6 and 13.8 percentage points less likely to have access at the home, respectively.

¹⁷⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Additionally, 8.5 percent of members of covered populations (compared to 4.1 percent of non-covered populations) report only having access to a smartphone at home. While this is technically counted as a computer device of any kind, a smartphone alone is insufficient for a myriad of key online activities. These data suggest that device ownership is still a meaningful barrier to connectivity for members of covered populations in Georgia.

Table 33. Device adoption rates in Georgia covered populations¹⁷¹

Computer in the house	Covered groups	Non-covered groups	Gap
Computer device of any kind	92.9%	99.2%	-6.3%
Desktop or laptop	79.1%	92.7%	-13.6%
Tablet	65.8%	79.6%	-13.8%
Smartphone only	8.5%	4.1%	4.5%

Among covered populations, individuals living in low-income households display the most urgent needs for adequate computer devices. Low-income individuals underperform every other covered population in ownership of computer devices of any kind, desktop or laptop computers, and tablet computers.

People with disabilities and aging individuals also demonstrate somewhat urgent needs for adequate computer devices—with gaps between people with disabilities and people without disabilities of 13.3 percentage points and gaps between aging and younger individuals of 9.5 percentage points for laptop or desktop device ownership. These gaps might be explained by accessibility concerns regarding various devices. As such, accessibility concerns regarding devices themselves serve to reemphasize the need for *adequate* devices.

English language learners also exhibit a need in device adoption. In addition to a 10.3 percentage-point-gap between English language learners and fluent speakers, a notably outsized portion of English language learners only use a smartphone at the home (14.8 percent). This is related to their tendency to only subscribe to cellular data plans, although it is unclear which factor influences the other. In either case, smartphone only use is not sufficient for fully realizing the benefits of internet use.

¹⁷¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023).

Table 34. Device adoption rates in various covered populations¹⁷²

Income	Computer in the house	Low income	Higher income	Gap
	Computer device of any kind	84.5%		97.9%
Desktop or laptop	63.8%		89.1%	-25.3%
Tablet	52.9%		75.1%	-22.2%
Smartphone only	13.2%		5.4%	7.9%
Race	Computer in the house	Minority	White alone	Gap
	Computer device of any kind	94.2%		95.1%
Desktop or laptop	80.4%		85.2%	-4.8%
Tablet	68.8%		70.5%	-1.7%
Smartphone only	8.6%		6.0%	2.6%
Age	Computer in the house	Aging	Younger	Gap
	Computer device of any kind	90.4%		95.8%
Desktop or laptop	75.4%		84.8%	-9.5%
Tablet	57.7%		72.8%	-15.1%
Smartphone only	9.5%		6.7%	2.8%
Disability	Computer in the house	With disabilities	Without disabilities	Gap
	Computer device of any kind	87.6%		95.7%
Desktop or laptop	71.4%		84.6%	-13.3%
Tablet	57.3%		71.5%	-14.2%
Smartphone only	10.3%		6.8%	3.4%
English proficiency	Computer in the house	English learner	English fluency	Gap
	Computer device of any kind	94.9%		94.6%
Desktop or laptop	73.0%		83.4%	-10.3%
Tablet	58.2%		70.2%	-12.0%
Smartphone only	14.8%		6.9%	7.9%
Veteran status	Computer in the house	Veteran	Non-veteran	Gap
	Computer device of any kind	94.8%		94.6%
Desktop or laptop	84.7%		82.8%	1.9%
Tablet	66.7%		69.8%	-3.1%
Smartphone only	6.3%		7.4%	-1.1%

3.2.2.6 Online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services needs

Without accessible online content and resources, many individuals will be precluded from meaningfully using the internet. In addition to the above, experts consider the accessibility of online content and services to be an essential measurement for benchmarking digital connectivity. Unfortunately, no robust data sets currently exist.

For accessibility to be measured, a finite choice of websites and online resources must be selected, and for accessibility best practices to be actualized, web developers from each of those

¹⁷² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021 (accessed August 29, 2023). Note: Data for incarcerated individuals were not available.

(assumedly) diverse sources must play key roles. In practice, measuring or coordinating holistic web accessibility is not realistic, but localities can ensure all online government resources and services are accessible to residents.

An audit of government websites would organize, document, and measure the accessibility of the various resources and services offered online. There are low-burden means by which state or local agencies can review individual websites via online accessibility calculators. These calculators examine source code for websites to check against the most recent WCAG 2.1¹⁷³ online accessibility standards. These standards include best practices for content perceivability, resource operability, information understandability, and tool robustness.

3.2.3 Broadband affordability

Perhaps the most widely known and used intervention to lower the cost of internet access is the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The ACP subsidizes up to \$30 per month (or \$75 for Tribal applicants) for broadband for qualifying households and may include a one-time subsidy toward buying a laptop or tablet. However, despite the benefit of the subsidy, the ACP is known to be chronically undersubscribed. In Georgia, an estimated 38.3 percent of eligible households have enrolled, a rate slightly higher than the estimated national level of 36 percent, but still leaving significant opportunity for growth.

Table 35. ACP enrollment in Georgia and the U.S.¹⁷⁴

	Georgia	Nation
Households enrolled	664,919	19,903,735
Households estimated eligible	1,734,313	55,266,900
Portion of eligible households enrolled	38.3%	36%

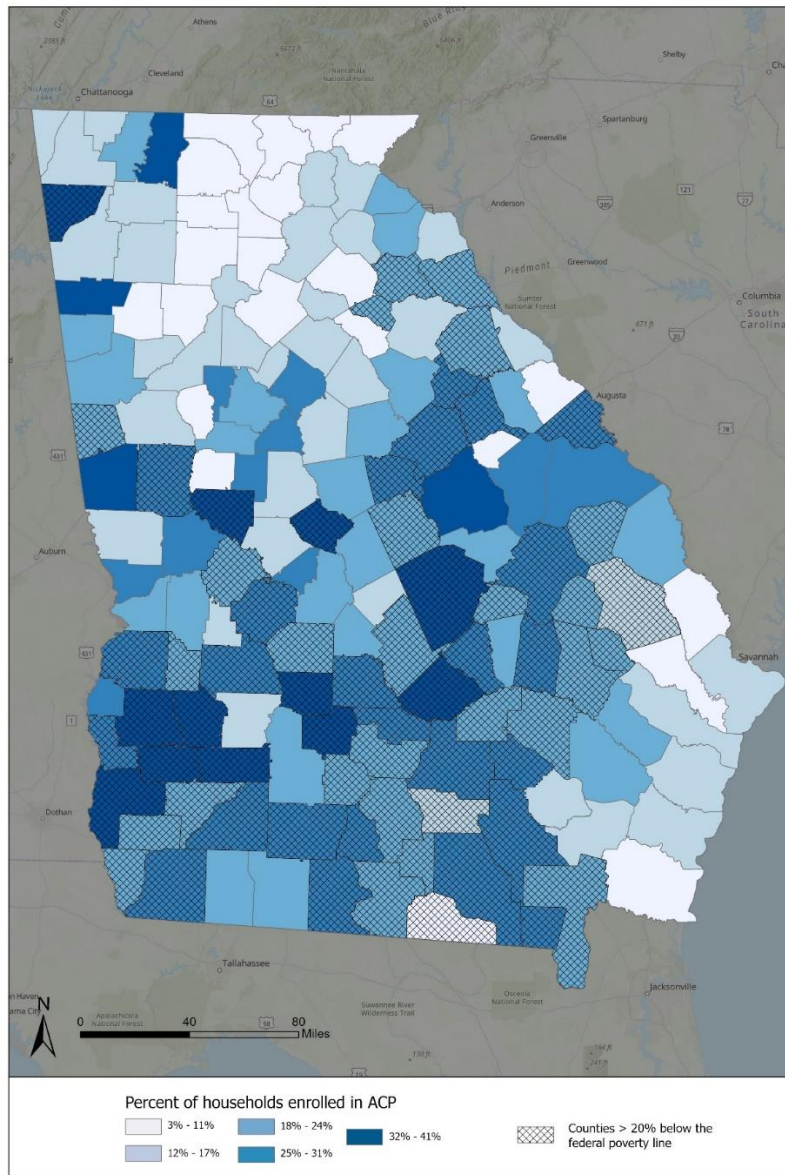
Households can be determined to be eligible through many criteria, including if they earn up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level or participate in one of many federal or state support programs (for example, the National School Lunch Program). As a result, eligibility for the program is highly aligned with members of covered populations. An estimated 50 percent of individuals belonging to covered populations are eligible for the ACP.

¹⁷³ W3C, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/> (accessed August 19, 2023).

¹⁷⁴ Enrollment counts from USAC's ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker, accurate as of August 28, 2023, <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/> (accessed August 29, 2023). Estimates of eligible households based on proprietary model that uses American Community Survey Public Use Microdata to estimate number of households qualifying for ACP via several of its eligibility criteria.

The percentage of ACP enrollment by county shows that participation is highest throughout the southwestern, south-central, and central regions of the state and lowest in the north central, northeast, and coastal regions (Figure 6).

Figure 6: ACP enrollment in Georgia by county



Please [click here to submit](#) your public comments and contribute to the development of the plan.

[Click here](#) to include your organization in our state's Community Connection Map, our asset inventory collection tool.

4 Collaboration and partner engagement

4.1 Coordination and outreach strategy

The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) developed a strategy to engage a fully diverse and comprehensive set of stakeholders throughout the State of Georgia. GTA's approach to collaborating with key constituencies and partners has been inclusive, extensive, and transparent. At each stage of planning and engagement, GTA implements several strategies to ensure that the State's broadband and digital connectivity goals are inclusive and feedback-driven:

1. In 2022, GTA hired a full-time Digital Connectivity Manager who leads digital connectivity strategy development, planning, and outreach efforts for the State.
2. GTA leverages a wide range of modalities for outreach and engagement, including:
 - a. Public listening sessions (winter and spring 2023)
 - b. Facilitated workshops with stakeholder organizations (spring 2023)
 - c. Regionally based statewide phone survey to understand residents' internet-related needs and challenges, with an emphasis on the needs of covered populations (spring 2023)
 - d. Online surveys and inventory tools to gather information about stakeholder organizations' capacity and program assets related to digital connectivity, perceptions about the needs of covered populations they serve, and needs for broadband access to achieve their mission
 - e. Regional roundtable sessions with stakeholder organizations and members of the public about lived experience (fall 2023)
 - f. Cross-region and cross-cutting action planning sessions (fall 2023)
 - g. Statewide digital connectivity symposium (fall 2023)
 - h. One-on-one and small group engagements with stakeholder organizations (ongoing)
 - i. Monthly meetings with its 30+ member statewide Digital Connectivity Advisory Committee, which includes organizations representing covered populations as well as state agencies, universities, faith-based organizations, civil rights organizations, housing authorities, service providers, and civic associations (ongoing)

- 3. GTA creates multi-channel communications about events and initiatives, participation in statewide conferences, and other external meetings related to broadband and digital connectivity.

When engaging the public, GTA takes specific steps to collect meaningful data on covered populations. Public engagements are held in person at local CAIs to encourage community participation by hosting events in familiar and accessible locations. GTA is also available to attend additional organization and community meetings in all parts of the state on a requested basis.

For more details about GTA’s outreach efforts conducted in the winter and spring of 2023, see the State of Georgia’s BEAD Five-Year Action Plan.

Table 36. Digital connectivity outreach goals and objectives

Goal	Approach	Measurable objective	Desired outcome
Inclusively enhance the State Digital Connectivity Plan	Participants will review the Plan, provide constructive feedback, and enhance it with their unique perspectives. GTA’s planning process will accurately reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of the communities served, ultimately contributing to a more equitable digital landscape.	Incorporate feedback and recommendations from at community members across diverse stakeholders into the Plan by the end of December 2023.	The Plan outlines actionable steps developed through collaborative efforts addressing core areas of digital connectivity such as broadband affordability, device ownership and technical support, accessibility, cybersecurity, and digital literacy/skills training.
Develop actionable steps for improved digital connectivity	Participants will identify gaps and areas for improvement within the ecosystem. This involves comprehensive discussions around the core areas of digital connectivity, such as broadband affordability, device ownership, accessibility, cybersecurity, and digital literacy/skills training. By	Incorporate inputs on gaps, areas for improvement, and actionable steps community members across diverse stakeholders into the Plan by the end of December 2023.	The Plan includes identified gaps and areas for improvement from community members and stakeholders and actionable steps on these.

Goal	Approach	Measurable objective	Desired outcome
	<p>the end of this initiative, GTA and its stakeholder partners will have a collection of actionable steps that will effectively enhance the implementation strategy in our plan.</p>		
<p>Empower future funding opportunities</p>	<p>Through coordinated efforts with partners, Georgia stakeholder organizations will be strategically positioned for future funding opportunities. They will be equipped with the tools and knowledge to effectively navigate the funding landscape and leverage resources that advance their digital connectivity initiatives, effectively addressing digital equity challenges in their communities.</p>	<p>Prepare and enable local entities and organizations to effectively navigate the funding landscape by the end of the initiative.</p>	<p>Empower entities to strategically leverage resources for future funding opportunities.</p>
<p>Through state symposium and roundtable engagements, strengthen service-based interrelationships among stakeholder organizations</p>	<p>Through engagements, strengthen service-based interrelationships and develop capacity among stakeholder organizations to develop framework for a future digital connectivity consortium or network.</p>	<p>Initiate the formation of a future digital connectivity consortium or network, supported by the State’s digital connectivity capacity program.</p>	<p>Digital connectivity consortium or network functions to help to sustain digital connectivity efforts in Georgia beyond the State’s digital connectivity capacity program.</p>

4.1.1 Ongoing engagement

4.1.1.1 Community roundtables

- Scope: Engage with diverse community members with lived experience across each of the covered populations in Georgia's 12 regions, including low-income households,

aging individuals, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

- Potential partners: Members of the covered populations, Regional Commission, Georgia Community Action Agency, UGA Extension Centers, Family Connections Partnerships, local municipalities, local faith-based organizations, organizations that serve and support the covered populations.
- Goal: Provide a platform for community members to discuss their anticipated digital connectivity experiences and concerns.
- Potential outcomes: Digital connectivity initiatives informed by genuine community feedback.

4.1.1.2 Regional action planning

- Scope: Foster collaboration among stakeholders within the state's regions to reduce and eliminate silos.
- Potential partners: Regional Commission, Georgia Community Action Agency, Family Connections Partnerships, local municipalities, UGA Extension Centers, K-12 school leaders, post-secondary school leaders, non-profits, local coalitions, business organizations, etc.
- Goal: Devise region-specific digital connectivity plans that offer a comprehensive approach to addressing the digital divide.
- Potential outcomes: A local digital connectivity plan with actionable strategies tailored to the digital connectivity needs of each region.

4.1.1.3 Statewide digital connectivity symposium

- Scope: Launch a combined virtual and on-site event to present the State Digital Connectivity Plan.
- Potential partners: state agencies, state government, educational institutions, health organizations, philanthropic organizations, civil rights organizations, and all other stakeholders, including members of covered populations and organizations that serve them.
- Goal: Engage attendees in panels, sessions, and capacity-building workshops.
- Potential outcomes: Equip participants with the tools and insights necessary for effective program development and plan implementation.

4.1.1.4 Virtual and in-person community engagements

- Scope: Conduct virtual or in-person sessions, targeting diverse populations and specialized stakeholders.
- Partners: Public housing authorities, civil rights organizations, local government agencies, educational institutions, and all stakeholders interested in engaging in digital connectivity.
- Goal: Obtain direct insights and feedback on digital connectivity from communities and to help to inform community on specialized digital connectivity topics and best practices.
- Potential outcomes: Increased knowledge of digital connectivity programs and initiatives.

4.1.1.5 Scientific survey

- Scope: Conduct various surveys targeting Georgia residents.
- Potential partners: Universities and research institutions, state agencies.
- Goal: Capture data related to digital connectivity plan KPIs, gaps, and impact.
- Potential outcomes: Refined strategies based on direct community feedback.

4.1.1.6 Stakeholder organization engagements

- Scope: Engage stakeholders from various sectors.
- Potential partners: Workforce development organizations, ISPs, and community-based organizations representing covered populations.
- Goal: Understand sector-specific challenges in promoting digital connectivity.
- Potential outcomes: A plan that acknowledges and addresses sectoral constraints and opportunities.

With each engagement, our specific aim is to glean insights about the unique needs of covered populations. By partnering with the right stakeholders, we aspire to address the diverse needs of covered populations comprehensively and effectively.

4.1.1.7 Statewide digital connectivity advisory committee

The Digital Connectivity Advisory Committee (DCAC) plays an instrumental role in fortifying Georgia's commitment to promoting digital equity and inclusion. Established in February 2023, the DCAC was instituted to pinpoint Georgia's needs and gaps, enhancing the State's approach to digital connectivity planning and capacity building.

Composition and purpose: The 30 members of the DCAC align with the guidelines set forth by NTIA. The members have proximity to the “covered populations” and are deeply familiar with the unique challenges and requirements of the communities they represent. The DCAC convenes every month and has made significant contributions to this Plan in the following ways:

Drafting the vision and objectives: Members actively helped formulate the digital connectivity plan's foundational vision and objectives. Drawing from their extensive experience and insights, they ensured that the plan is both aspirational and grounded in the needs of Georgia's diverse communities.

Supporting outreach during listening sessions: The DCAC played a pivotal role during the spring and summer listening sessions. Members provided valuable feedback and facilitated open communication channels with various community groups, ensuring that diverse voices were represented and heard.

Event participation and collaboration: Several DCAC members extended invitations to the State's broadband team to be part of their events, such as meeting with the Atlanta Black Chamber of Commerce, GA Municipal Associations Broadband Summit, and over 4,000 AARP members on a Tele-Townhall. This facilitated a symbiotic exchange of ideas and showcased the State's commitment to enhancing digital connectivity at grassroots levels.

Making key connections: Recognizing the importance of broad-based support, the DCAC introduced the digital connectivity team to influential stakeholders within their networks. This helped amplify the State's message and fostered collaborations that will be instrumental in the Plan's success.

In their commitment to enhancing digital connectivity in Georgia, the DCAC has proven to be an invaluable partner—translating their expertise into actionable strategies and fostering community engagement at every step.

Engaging the Committee for Implementation

The State envisions a dynamic collaboration with the entire DCAC and its individual organizations to realize the digital connectivity objectives. A pivotal strategy in this direction will be crafting a holistic digital skills framework with inter-agency partners. The framework will serve as a guidepost for educational institutions and training centers and address skillsets from basic to advanced.

Leveraging the Committee's Diverse Expertise: The broad representation within the DCAC—spanning from academic institutions to civil rights organizations and ISPs to faith-based entities—

offers a multitude of avenues for collaboration and outreach. Educational entities can shape curriculum and drive digital literacy initiatives, while community groups enhance our grassroots connectivity efforts. Private companies can offer technology capability and volunteers, and faith and civic entities extend our reach to less-accessible communities. Concurrently, state agencies ensure our alignment with statewide objectives, and specialized groups bring distinct community trust and outreach to the table.

Strategic Coordination Approach: A structured and collaborative coordination mechanism is vital to realizing our vision of comprehensive digital connectivity. The diversity within the DCAC ensures a multi-faceted approach to planning and implementation. Through regular meetings, feedback loops, and transparent communication channels, we aim to maximize the potential of each member organization and ensure our efforts are synergistic and effective.

Expanding the Committee with Interagency Partners: As our initiatives in digital connectivity evolve, so must the DCAC. Expanding the committee to include additional interagency partners is a strategic step toward ensuring that our strategies remain comprehensive and in line with the broad spectrum of Georgia's resources. These interagency collaborations will help address specific challenges, identify opportunities, and ensure that our efforts remain synchronized with the larger statewide objectives. Each agency will bring unique insights, resources, and expertise, further enhancing the depth and breadth of the committee.

Leveraging Existing Members for Consortium Development: Creating a statewide consortium for digital connectivity is a massive undertaking that requires everyone's help. Our current DCAC members are vital to this effort. By strategically utilizing their strengths, networks, and expertise, we can establish a strong foundation for the consortium.

4.1.2 Targeted outreach efforts

GTA is at the forefront of driving the state's digital transformation. Recognizing the paramount importance of digital connectivity for every Georgian, we've outlined a strategic blueprint for targeted outreach. We aim to ensure that every individual, community, and stakeholder is informed, engaged, and empowered in this digital evolution.

Broadband affordability outreach and training campaign

Working closely with Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) outreach grantees, stakeholder organizations, ISPs, and local municipalities, GTA will intensify outreach initiatives using digital and traditional media platforms for the entirety of the ACP program's existence. Should the ACP program conclude, GTA remains committed to continuously updating the community about affordable internet packages and alternatives to ensure uninterrupted services for community members who want to connect. This strategy is poised to engage households directly, heightening their awareness about broadband and its benefits. Central to our efforts are training

and resources provided by the FCC and organizations like EducationSuperHighway. The vision is to transform community leaders and their teams into digital champions, guiding their constituencies toward digital connectivity. Equipped with this expertise, they'll be instrumental in assisting their communities to subscribe to high-speed internet services and fully capitalize on the advantages of ACP.

Championing FCC challenges

GTA persistently supports individual and community-based challenges to the FCC broadband map to ensure that every Georgian's connectivity needs are met. This includes demonstrating the map and providing a 'map challenge' one-pager to address any discrepancies or gaps in broadband coverage, leading to more accurate and effective infrastructure planning.

Storytelling and story-mapping

Beyond just numbers and statistics, individual stories paint the true picture of digital connectivity. GTA is passionate about creating platforms where people can share their digital experiences, whether the challenges they face or the progress they've witnessed. These efforts lift our community members' lived experiences to the forefront and humanize activities that could be considered just about the devices and infrastructure. These storytelling efforts are about people and how connectivity affects them, their families, and their community and provide invaluable insights for future strategies.

Digital connectivity insights portal

GTA's website will continue to be a repository of insights, updates, resources, and best practices on digital connectivity. This portal will serve as a one-stop portal for stakeholders, communities, and individuals to stay informed and participate actively in our digital journey.

Presence in conferences and meetings

GTA will actively participate in several state and nationwide conferences and meetings to foster broader collaboration and dissemination of our initiatives. This includes the Statewide Accessibility Conference, Georgia Municipal Associations Summits, Government Technology Summit, and other industry related events and meetings both locally and nationally to continue to contribute to the closing the digital divide. Our presence in these events signifies our commitment to transparency, collaboration, and community-centric solutions.

Our targeted outreach efforts are a blend of mass communication campaigns, digital media marketing, and personalized community-centric engagements. With every Georgian at the heart of our mission, we are steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that connectivity outreach initiatives leverage our state's resources to inform and empower all.

4.1.3 Partnerships for implementation

Comprehensive, continued engagement with partners has informed the development of this Plan and will be key to its implementation. As discussed in Section 5, we will connect, convene, and leverage partnerships with workforce agencies, labor organizations, and institutions of higher learning to implement workforce policy as a means of building equity into digital connectivity efforts.

Through its outreach, GTA has identified relevant workforce development, training, and certification programs offered by higher education institutions and ISPs in the state; these are catalogued in detail in the asset inventory in the State's Five-Year Plan.

Communications Workers of America, a union that participated in the State's outreach efforts, has indicated that it has training resources and is willing to partner with ISPs for training. Southeast Lineman Training Center, a nationally recognized lineworker training school located in Georgia, also indicated interest in supporting efforts by the State to expand the skilled workforce.

ISPs, K-12 and higher education institutions, trade and technical schools, community organizations, and government entities provided information on their needs, goals, and interest in potential partnerships with GTA around workforce development through stakeholder organization surveys. Most respondents (approximately 71 percent) who indicated that they are not currently engaged in workforce development for the communications industry were interested in developing programs.

In implementing this Plan, the State will seek to strengthen relationships between ISPs and training programs (including technical/professional training and certification programs and programs by high schools and technical colleges) to support placing new or retrained workers in viably paying jobs. Alignment between key stakeholders will help ensure programs provide training based on the skills required by employers, ISPs can lend effective support through apprenticeship and scholarship programs, and workers are prepared for in-demand jobs.

As described in Section 2.2, this Plan is aligned with the efforts and priorities of Georgia's higher education and workforce agencies, including the Technical College System of Georgia. It works closely with the Technical Association of Georgia; Georgia Telecommunications Association; Fiber Network Alliance; Workforce Evolved; Fiber Broadband Association; Southeast Lineman Training Center and other workforce organizations.

Please [click here to submit](#) your public comments and contribute to the development of the plan.

[Click here](#) to include your organization in our state's Community Connection Map, our asset inventory collection tool.

5 Implementation

This section of the Plan describes, at a high level, the implementation strategy and potential future initiatives that relate to each of the key strategies of the Plan, as well as potential timelines.

Digital connectivity in Georgia will likely involve multiple initiatives and efforts associated with each strategy and objective. GTA anticipates the opportunity to use its Digital Equity Capacity Grant to support and develop further digital connectivity capacity in Georgia, in partnership with the many local and regional entities that have participated in GTA’s community and stakeholder engagement work over the past year.

At the same time, GTA notes that the ability to develop and sustain these initiatives is dependent on the availability of resources and the many other priorities policymakers have for those resources. For that reason, these potential initiatives are offered as examples of what may be possible if resources are available.

Consistent with its longtime efforts to expand broadband, GTA has designed these initiatives in the most pragmatic way possible—to be actionable, measurable, and sustainable—rather than risk designing more ambitious initiatives that are not financially or practically actionable.

5.1 Implementation strategy and key activities

The following are potential strategies, planned activities, and timelines tied to each digital connectivity challenge described Section 2.3.

5.1.1 Key challenge: Lack of broadband availability

Strategy 1: Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Execute Capital Projects Fund Program	Extend last-mile broadband infrastructure throughout the state.	2023 to 2026 (consistent with ARPA requirements)
Execute BEAD Program	Extend last-mile broadband infrastructure throughout the state.	2023 to 2030 (consistent with IJJA BEAD requirements)
Invest in the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure.	Expand broadband access in unserved areas that are hub zones, federal opportunity zones, and communities densely populated with low-income individuals.	2023 to 2030 (consistent with IJJA BEAD requirements)

Strategy 2: Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Award points for connecting CAIs	Support extension of symmetrical gigabit capabilities to CAIs that provide internet access to covered populations by including points for such commitments in BEAD Program scoring.	2023 to 2026 (consistent with ARPA requirements)
Pending BEAD funding availability, execute connectivity to qualifying CAIs	Extend symmetrical gigabit capabilities to CAIs throughout the State.	2023 to 2030 (consistent with IJJA BEAD requirements)
Facilitate local workforce talent in broadband infrastructure deployment projects and tech roles	Partner with local employers and educational organizations to integrate newly trained community members into broadband infrastructure and tech initiatives. Establish a seamless pathway from skills development to local employment, thereby strengthening the community’s digital ecosystem.	2023 to 2030 (consistent with IJJA BEAD requirements)
Use public access channels and Georgia Broadcast Radio Services to disseminate information about digital connectivity initiatives	Leverage existing public media networks, including public access channels and Georgia Broadcast Radio Services, to broadcast timely and relevant information about broadband expansion projects, digital literacy initiatives, and available resources for the community.	2025 and thereafter
Utilize innovative solutions for target groups that are difficult to reach	Expand community engagement for unconnected communities to engage with constituents using mobile, telecom and virtual platforms, enabling multi-lingual public outreach and communication.	2023 and thereafter

5.1.2 Key challenge: Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services, devices, and technical support

Strategy 1: Partner with ISPs and community stakeholders for improved broadband affordability and device accessibility

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Develop educational materials	Provide content and support for educational campaigns among organizations that focus on ACP and low-cost ISP programs as well as for localities, CAIs, and nonprofits that have not previously worked to extend ACP and ISP-offered discount program enrollment.	Ongoing (initiated in 2022)
Encourage ISP partnerships for ACP enrollment drives	Encourage ISPs to partner with localities, CAIs, and nonprofits to develop ACP and low-cost ISP program enrollment drives and initiatives.	2023 and thereafter
Fund library- and other CAI-based ACP enrollment drives	Provide funding for libraries and other CAIs that offer ACP/low-cost program enrollment drives for eligible households.	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Require grantee low-cost offerings	Build requirements and enhanced scoring for affordable service offerings into all broadband infrastructure grant programs.	2023 to 2025, with monitoring and enforcement thereafter
Encourage ISP low-cost offerings	Work with ISPs throughout the state to encourage adoption and expansion of low-cost offerings for lower-income households.	Ongoing (initiated in 2020)

Strategy 2: Expand device ownership initiatives

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Develop an ecosystem for devices	Create an ecosystem where new and used devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, desktops) can be collected, refurbished, and distributed. This involves partnerships with manufacturers, retailers, private and public industry, and device refurbishers to make the device lifecycle sustainable and accessible for all community members.	2024 and thereafter

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Provide technical support for device maintenance	Establish a dedicated helpline and online support center manned by tech volunteers and professionals. This will serve the double purpose of job training and providing essential support to new device owners to ensure the longevity of their devices. Include multilingual support to serve non-English speakers.	2025 and thereafter
Provide device access for the incarcerated population and justice-impacted individuals	In collaboration with the Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Public Safety, and related entities, provide secure internet-enabled devices to incarcerated and other individuals impacted by the justice system. These devices will support educational modules, facilitate virtual mental health appointments, and enable access to resources for effective societal reintegration. This targeted approach prioritizes education, healthcare, and resource accessibility, utilizing technology to meet essential objectives efficiently.	2025 and thereafter

Strategy 3: Leverage CAIs to expand community-level device access

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Support ACP device benefit enrollment	Work with partners to assist eligible households in obtaining laptops, desktops, or tablets at a subsidized rate through ACP, ensuring affordable access to essential devices.	Ongoing (was initiated in 2022)
Fund library-based tech support	Provide funding for libraries to offer technical support for library users.	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Develop device lending program partnerships	These Anchor Institutions will serve as accessible distribution points for loaner devices, enabling cost-effective technology access and fostering digital literacy among	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
	Georgians, regardless of personal device ownership.	
Support device access and technical support for aging individuals	In partnership with Anchor Institutions such as senior centers and libraries, make internet-enabled devices available to individuals, including those with disabilities. These hubs will also offer digital literacy training, enabling members of covered populations to navigate telehealth services, stay socially connected, and access essential online resources. This streamlined approach ensures that technology is not just distributed but effectively utilized, reinforcing our commitment to comprehensive digital inclusion for all age groups and abilities.	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant

Strategy 4: Prioritize and prepare for broadband and digital inclusion in counties with highest digital inequities

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Develop a weighted scoring model to analyze and identify areas of intersection of multiple factors	A weighted scoring model will help to pinpoint areas where layered socioeconomic challenges amplify the digital divide. By deeply understanding these intricacies, we can tailor our digital connectivity program development, ensuring that our initiatives directly address the nuanced needs of these specific communities.	2023 and thereafter
Implement a "Train-the-Trainer" model using expertise	Connect localities with experts for mutual training and knowledge sharing. Engage a full range of partners in varied areas of digital connectivity, including its intersecting factors like income, housing, health, and education to enable these communities to address multifaceted challenges and optimize community-wide digital engagement.	2023 and thereafter
Fund community-based digital skills training	Provide funding for libraries to offer digital skills training, based on standardized and tested curricula that reflect cultural	2024 to 2029, based on availability of

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
	appropriateness.	Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Amplify outreach through comprehensive resource distribution	Disseminate informational materials, toolkits, and playbooks across various marketing channels to share expertise, best practices, and guidance. Emphasize marketing and outreach of programs and services, ensuring even the hardest-to-reach communities gain access and awareness of available digital connectivity resources.	2023 and thereafter

5.1.3 Key challenge: Covered populations need support to develop digital skills

Strategy 1: Develop a foundational digital skills framework for all Georgians

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Create a digital skills guidebook with digital competency benchmarks	Compile a comprehensive guidebook that will outline the standardized digital competency benchmarks, providing a practical reference for educational institutions, training centers, and individuals for digital skill assessment and development.	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Develop a toolkit for residents and nonprofits for accessing internet-related resources	Provide guidance regarding best practices, expertise, and partnership opportunities to localities and nonprofits to develop and expand existing programs that provide free devices to lower-income households.	2024 and thereafter
Integrate digital financial literacy into the statewide digital skills framework	Integrate digital financial literacy into digital skills framework to address the growing importance of online financial management. Through partnerships with financial institutions and content experts, this initiative aims to ensure that all Georgians are equipped to manage their personal finances safely and effectively in a digital environment.	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Standardize cybersecurity and privacy guidelines in the	Integrate a cybersecurity and privacy section into the digital skills framework, covering topics like strong passwords, phishing scams,	2024 to 2029, based on availability of

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
digital skills framework	and secure browsing. Collaborate with local experts for content, utilizing resources from the National Cyber Security Alliance and Georgia Cyber Center.	Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Integrate digital civic engagement within the digital skills framework	Introduce digital civic engagement principles into the digital skills framework, highlighting its role in informed community participation. Utilize adaptable resources and case studies to underscore the real-world impact of digital civic involvement, ensuring diverse populations understand and harness the power of inclusive digital citizenship.	2024 and thereafter

Strategy 2: Empower covered populations with digital healthcare skills

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Expand regional telehealth capacity and accessibility	This multi-stakeholder initiative aims to enhance the accessibility and efficacy of telehealth services in areas with limited healthcare access by pooling expertise from a variety of organizations, university health organizations, health-focused nonprofits, and state agencies. Through targeted outreach, equip low-income and aging populations with the skills needed to effectively access and use telehealth services, improving healthcare quality and access.	2025 and thereafter
Develop specialized literacy programs focusing on HIPAA-compliant digital skills	Develop and launch specialized digital literacy workshops that include training on HIPAA-compliant skills for using electronic health records, patient portals, and telehealth platforms. Through partnerships, government agencies, health-based nonprofits and healthcare providers can ensure content is both accurate and in line with compliance requirements, thereby safeguarding the privacy and security of health information.	2026 and thereafter
Support essential health information access for	Establish a secure platform to grant transient populations like justice-impacted individuals	2026 and thereafter

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
transient populations such as justice-impacted individuals and housing insecure veterans	and housing-insecure veterans’ access to essential health information. In collaboration with state agencies, offer digital navigation assistance to help these groups effectively manage their healthcare needs, all while adhering to privacy regulations.	
Support tech-enabled health literacy partnerships	Collaborate with educational and healthcare stakeholders to amplify health literacy, especially on preventative care, chronic disease management, nutrition, heart disease, and diabetes. Harness technology through webinars, kiosk info-stations, mobile health units, tailored apps, interactive websites, and virtual workshops to make critical information accessible and engaging.	2026 and thereafter

Strategy 3: Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Fund community-based training	Provide funding for community organizations to offer training regarding online safety and privacy, based on standardized and tested curricula that reflect cultural appropriateness.	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Utilize statewide cybersecurity resources for integrated digital skills training	Use Georgia's position as a cybersecurity hub to create a workforce that is prepared for cyber threats. By partnering with cybersecurity companies, educational institutions with Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (CAE) designations, and military cyber units like the Army Cyber Command at Fort Gordon, we can provide integrated digital skills training. This will not only improve safety online for those we serve but also help grow Georgia's \$2.6 billion cybersecurity sector by developing a highly skilled workforce.	2025 and thereafter
Run a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity and online	Initiate a public awareness campaign that promotes safe and informed digital engagement by highlighting important aspects of cybersecurity and online privacy. The	2024 to 2029, based on availability of

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
privacy	campaign utilizes educational materials and digital media platforms to reach a wider audience, with the goal of mitigating potential risks and improving security awareness among the covered populations.	Digital Equity Capacity Grant

Strategy 4: Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Establish collaborative digital literacy and technology certification programs with educational Institutions	Partner with HBCUs, minority-serving institutions, technical colleges, workforce nonprofits and K-12 CTAE departments to offer customized digital literacy and tech certification courses. This collaborative effort leverages the strengths of diverse educational organizations, ensuring multi-generational digital skill-building across Georgia’s varied communities.	2025 and thereafter
Reinforce existing initiatives and identify partnership opportunities	Leveraging the state digital skills framework, facilitate partnerships among local organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies to ensure a coordinated and scalable approach to digital literacy.	2026 and thereafter
Provide wraparound services with digital literacy training through partnerships	Complement digital literacy training with wraparound services by working with partners who provide services such as mental health support, childcare, and transportation. By offering a holistic approach, this activity aims to remove barriers to digital connectivity, ensuring that individuals not only acquire digital skills but also have the support needed to apply them effectively.	2026 and thereafter
Launch community digital literacy bootcamps	Organize intensive, short-term Digital Literacy Bootcamps hosted by local organizations that focus on imparting essential digital skills. These bootcamps will use hands-on, participatory learning methods to help participants from all age groups understand how to navigate the digital landscape, including online security and privacy measures.	2026 and thereafter
Develop a Digital	Establish a volunteer network comprising tech-	2026 and

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Navigator volunteer corps	savvy individuals and professionals who can offer in-person or virtual support for digital literacy activities. This corps will assist local organizations in running workshops and troubleshooting sessions, particularly aimed at covered populations, to help them overcome unique and intersectional digital challenges.	thereafter
Implement flexible learning spaces for inclusive access	Utilizing wireless capabilities and remote learning tools in local learning spaces can offer flexible educational opportunities and promote digital literacy initiatives in underserved communities. . This approach can be scaled to accommodate individuals with different constraints, such as reliance on smartphones, physical abilities, or transportation. Having a physical resource that can be accessed both in-person and virtually is an asset as it establishes a statewide presence and creates the potential for collaboration and support with a wider range of communities throughout the state.	2027 and thereafter

Strategy 5: Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Leverage STEM and Computer Science as platforms for digital literacy enhancement	Integrate STEM and Computer Science, guided by the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) for Computer Science, into in-school and out-of-school programs. By providing equipment, curriculum, and support, this will enhance digital literacy skills, including computational thinking and digital citizenship, among youth and adults.	2027 and thereafter
Leverage Georgia’s thriving arts and media sectors to boost digital literacy across generations	Partner with Georgia’s thriving creative industries and Department of Economic Development to support programs that resonates with both youth and adults and boost digital literacy. For youth, the focus is on sparking interest in tech through digital arts, tapping into their native “digital language.” For adults, it’s about upskilling and reskilling with a	2027 and thereafter

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
	creative twist, aligning with career opportunities in the \$62.5 billion creative economy.	
Establish community-driven peer-to-peer digital skill-building opportunities	Low-income households, English learners, aging populations, and racial and ethnic minorities can especially benefit from peer learning. This is because it fosters trust, relatability, and a sense of community. With digital skills, peer learning can reduce fear, as learners often feel more comfortable and less intimidated when guided by someone with whom they can relate and share common experiences. These experiences can evolve into leadership opportunities, with peers becoming trainers and leaders themselves. This model ensures skills are both gained and passed on.	2027 and thereafter
Integrate digital skills curricula and assessments into existing job training and job placement services	Tailored programs will equip low-income individuals, incarcerated population, individuals with low literacy, and English learners with essential digital skills, alongside traditional job training, to ensure holistic career development and economic advancement.	2027 and thereafter

5.1.4 Key challenge: Ensuring digital inclusivity as Georgia advances in digital services

Strategy 1: Improve universal design and accessibility in public digital resources

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Develop and distribute accessibility guidance	Provide guidance to state and local agencies regarding best practices for website design and maintenance that align with accessibility standards and that enable cost-effective use of critical support tools.	2023 and thereafter (effort already underway)
Improve universal design and accessibility in public digital resources	In collaboration with GTA Digital Services, state agencies, and elected officials, conduct audits to improve website accessibility and ensure universal design standards are met.	2023 and thereafter (effort already underway)

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
	This initiative aims to provide a seamless digital experience for all Georgians across various internet-enabled devices.	
Enhance accessibility and awareness of assistive technology	Leveraging existing resources like the Georgia Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (GLS), as well as other assistive and information technology assets to forge partnerships with nonprofits and interagency collaborators, to broaden the reach and impact of assistive technologies. This multifaceted strategy prioritizes not just technological access but also robust outreach and awareness programs, facilitating seamless adoption and effective use by individuals with disabilities and the aging population.	2025 and thereafter

Strategy 2: Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Partner with community-based organizations to employ Digital Navigators	Deploy a network of Digital Navigators in key community spaces such as libraries, schools, and healthcare facilities. These navigators will guide individuals through digital resources, helping to close digital gaps and enhance community-wide digital literacy.	2026 and thereafter
Develop specialized Training for Digital Navigators	Develop and implement a targeted training program for Digital Navigators, focusing on the unique needs of veterans, the aging population, and other covered populations. These specialized navigators will offer tailored support to overcome barriers and enhance digital literacy.	2026 and thereafter
Develop Digital Navigators with specialized IT support skills	Leverage Georgia’s existing resources and partnerships to equip individuals with specialized IT support skills for roles in community helpdesk services. Targeting covered populations, this initiative aims to develop a cadre of Digital Navigators proficient in delivering culturally competent and effective IT support. The program offers	2027 and thereafter

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
	a two-fold benefit: increasing digital literacy and problem-solving skills in underserved communities, while simultaneously creating viable employment opportunities in the expanding helpdesk support sector.	

5.1.5 Key challenge: Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital connectivity efforts

Strategy 1: Build collaboration among state, local, and nonprofit entities

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Develop comprehensive digital connectivity ecosystem	Unify state agencies, regional planning commissions, local governments, and nonprofits to establish a comprehensive ecosystem that enhances digital connectivity across Georgia. This initiative will consolidate human, physical, and technological resources, ensuring equitable high-speed internet access and promoting digital literacy among all Georgians, especially in underserved communities.	2025 and thereafter
Local digital connectivity plan development and implementation	Leverage the collaboration among state agencies, regional planning commissions, local governments, and nonprofits in the digital connectivity ecosystem to support the development and implementation of local digital connectivity plans.	2025 and thereafter
Convene partners	Build structures for stakeholders to work together across the state and across different demographics to share best practices, lessons learned, digital connectivity expertise, and resources to support those who face the greatest barriers to digital connectivity as well as to help organizations leverage capabilities and help partners that serve particular regions or specific covered populations.	2024 and thereafter
Establish community-	Localities and local community organizations	2026 and

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
driven support networks and services to assist individuals in connecting, learning, and troubleshooting digital issues	are the lifeblood of work in digital connectivity. It is at the local level that community needs are best understood—and community members are best able to effect change. We therefore seek to support development at the local level of expertise and staffing to work on digital connectivity initiatives and to enable communities to prioritize the efforts and goals that are best suited to their unique circumstances.	thereafter

Strategy 2: Support and develop local capacity through a statewide consortium

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Fund local Fellows	Provide funding for local and/or regional Digital Connectivity Fellows, hosted by GTA to enable development of local plans and initiatives.	2024 to 2029, based on availability of Digital Equity Capacity Grant
Convene and connect funding stakeholders for digital connectivity	Bring together community stakeholders with funders to support initiatives that close the digital divide. This collective approach facilitates a deeper understanding of digital connectivity needs, and in turn, engages philanthropic, social investment organizations, and foundations to contribute resources and funding for programs across the state.	2024 and thereafter
Provide grant writing support	Provide grant writing support and technical assistance to localities, nonprofits, and Anchor Institutions that seek to compete for NTIA’s Digital Equity Competitive Grant funds in 2025	2025
Integrate digital connectivity objectives into existing strategies	Align state agencies and local municipalities by incorporating digital connectivity goals into existing plans. This unified approach optimizes Georgia’s resources, ensuring high-speed internet access for all while fostering cohesive, statewide digital connectivity efforts.	2027 and thereafter

Strategy 3: Sustain and grow the State’s efforts in digital connectivity

Georgia’s commitment to digital connectivity means a significant commitment of resources to sustain the initiatives contemplated in this Plan. To sustain these efforts over time, Georgia will require resources beyond what NTIA will provide under the Digital Equity Capacity grant program. GTA alongside the State Collective will seek to develop strategy for continuing the work launched under this Plan by partnering with philanthropy and seeking other funding sources, and by tracking the impact of Georgia’s digital connectivity efforts to quantify the business case for further investment in digital connectivity programs.

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Infuse broadband and digital connectivity considerations into related areas	Develop materials to enable understanding of how to use digital connectivity as a lens when making program decisions and prioritizing investments.	2024
Adapt and secure funding for emerging digital connectivity needs	Engage community stakeholders and funding partners in an ongoing dialogue to anticipate and adapt to the ever-evolving digital landscape. By integrating state and local budgets, as well as tapping into federal grant opportunities, we ensure Georgia's digital connectivity initiatives are not only current but also sustainably funded. This collaborative approach attracts consistent support from philanthropic, social investment organizations, and foundations, empowering Georgia to stay at the forefront of digital connectivity advancements.	2025 and thereafter
Collect, analyze, and publish relevant data to demonstrate changes in digital connectivity metrics and outcomes	Publish relevant data analytics to guide nonprofits, ISPs, and philanthropy regarding potential impactful investments.	2023 and thereafter (this effort is already underway)
Provide grant writing resources	Provide grant writing support and technical assistance to localities, nonprofits, and Anchor Institutions that seek to compete for NTIA’s Digital Equity Competitive Grant funds in 2025.	2025
Fund research and development and invest	Employ an evidence-based approach to identify and invest in digital connectivity best	2026 and thereafter

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
in best practices for digital connectivity	practices. Utilizing data and insights, we will collaborate with local initiatives to make informed, transparent decisions that can be scaled statewide.	

Strategy 4: Create a repository of digital connectivity insights

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Provide map information	Develop a digital connectivity dashboard, using digital connectivity data and the Georgia Broadband Map to serve as a dynamic resource for policymakers, researchers, and community leaders to better understand and address the state’s digital landscape.	2023 and thereafter
Provide asset information	Our asset inventory is a comprehensive catalog that lists and categorizes available technology resources, labs and hubs, digital literacy programs, partner organizations, and best practices. Periodically updating this inventory ensures that communities have current and accurate information to identify potential collaborators and adopt effective strategies.	2023 and thereafter
Develop education and informational resources	Work with collaborators to design and share data and informational resources promoting internet safety, ACP and ISP-offered low-cost program awareness, and device donation and refurbishment, and develop online resources on digital connectivity best practices for reference by partners statewide	2023 and thereafter

Strategy 5: Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement

Implementation activity	Description	Timeline
Support technology certification programs	Partner with Georgia’s private sector, MBEs, nonprofits, and educational institutions to offer technology certification programs. This	2026 and thereafter

	initiative specifically targets covered populations like low-income households, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities, aiming to upskill them in high-demand, emerging tech sectors.	
Establish workforce development programs that recruit and train individuals for broadband-related occupations	Coordinate with state agencies, educational institutions, and employers, targeting unserved and underserved communities, this initiative will equip local participants with both the technical and soft skills required for success in broadband-related occupations. Recognizing the unique skill sets needed in this industry—from cloud support to customer service— this initiative will prepare candidates for immediate roles but also for long-term career growth within broadband and adjacent sectors. The goal is to match candidates’ existing and future value to job requirements, providing an economic ladder right in the communities where they live.	2023 to 2030 (consistent with IJA BEAD requirements)
Build partnerships with industry, government, and education sectors for technology-based economic development	Optimize existing resources, such as grants, infrastructure, and expertise within Georgia’s technology ecosystem, to spur technology-driven economic growth. Aligning with state agencies and local businesses, we will identify and scale innovative projects that promise high economic yield. The focus will be on nurturing startups, upskilling the workforce, and facilitating public-private partnerships, particularly in underserved areas. The goal is to transform digital inclusion into sustainable economic development.	2027 and thereafter
Expand post-secondary opportunities	Leverage Georgia's digital platforms like gafutures.org, to streamline post-secondary preparation. These platforms, supported by state-endorsed resources and departments, provide essential guidance on academic pathways, technical education, and special needs accommodations. By focusing on self-advocacy and providing tools for adaptation, these opportunities help students be well-prepared for a smooth transition to higher education and beyond.	2026 and thereafter

<p>Provide resources for digital financial literacy</p>	<p>In collaboration with local agencies and community organizations, we will initiate a Digital Financial Literacy effort focused on aiding Georgians in navigating the costs associated with digital connectivity. The initiative aims to directly contribute to individual economic stability and career opportunities by fostering informed and provide targeted information and resources to help individuals make cost-effective choices for internet and device options, while also encouraging broader financial stability.</p>	<p>2027 and thereafter</p>
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5.2 Timeline

Phase 1 (2024 – 2025): Implement, evaluate, and engage

- Allocate grant funds to support and enhance current digital inclusion work, initiating tailored pilot programs in regions with the greatest need for digital connectivity.
- Establish a continuous impact tracking and evaluation system.
- Maintain continuous community engagement and establish a feedback system that informs and shapes each phase of the program.

Phase 2 (2026 – 2027): Support, adapt, and sustain

- Provide technical assistance and funding expand successful pilots and established digital inclusion programs.
- Adjust implementation strategies based on data-driven insights, stakeholder feedback, and evolving community needs.
- Formulate a framework for long-term program sustainability, informed by progress metrics and impact analysis.

Phase 3 (2028 – 2029): Expand, grow, and communicate

- Continue to support the strategic expansion of programs.
- Conduct future planning to for sustained growth and program effectiveness, while adapting to evolving community needs and emerging digital connectivity challenges.

- Prepare and share reports with internal and external stakeholders, communicating the program's impact, lessons learned, and plans for sustained digital connectivity efforts.

Please [click here to submit](#) your public comments and contribute to the development of the plan.

[Click here](#) to include your organization in our state's Community Connection Map, our asset inventory collection tool.

Table 37: Implementation timeline

Challenge	Strategy	Key Activities	Phase 1			Phase 2		Phase 3			
			2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Lack of broadband availability	Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure	Execute Capital Projects Fund Program									
		Execute BEAD Program									
		Invest in the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure									
	Expand collaborative efforts as broadband progresses	Award points for connecting CAIs									
		Pending BEAD funding, execute connectivity to qualifying CAIs									
		Facilitate local workforce talent in broadband infrastructure deployment projects and tech roles									
		Use public access channels and Georgia Broadcast Radio Services to disseminate information about digital connectivity initiatives									
		Utilize innovative solutions for target groups difficult to reach									
Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services, devices, and technical support	Partner with ISPs and community stakeholder for improved broadband affordability and device accessibility	Develop educational materials	ongoing								
		Encourage ISP partnerships for ACP enrollment drives									
		Fund library- and other anchor-based ACP enrollment drives									
		Require grantee low-cost offerings									
	Expand device ownership initiatives	Encourage ISP low-cost offerings	ongoing								
		Develop an ecosystem for devices									
		Provide technical support for device maintenance									
	Leverage community anchor institutions to expand community-level device access	Provide device access for the incarcerated population and justice-impacted individuals									
		Support ACP enrollment	ongoing								
		Fund library-based tech support									
		Develop device lending program partnerships									
	Prioritize and prepare for broadband and digital inclusion in counties with highest digital inequities	Support device access and technical support for aging individuals									
		Develop a weighted scoring model to analyze and identify areas of intersection of multiple factors									
		Implement a "Train-the-Trainer" model using expertise									
		Fund community-based digital skills training									
			Amplify outreach through comprehensive resource distribution								

Challenge	Strategy	Key Activities	Phase 1				Phase 2		Phase 3		
			2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Covered populations need support to develop digital skills	Develop a foundational digital skills framework for all Georgians	Create a digital skills guidebook with digital competency benchmarks									
		Develop a toolkit for residents and nonprofits for accessing internet-related resources									
		Integrate digital financial literacy into the statewide digital skills framework									
		Standardize cybersecurity and privacy guidelines in the digital skills									
		Integrate digital civic engagement within the digital skills framework									
	Expand opportunity to learn online safety and privacy	Expand regional telehealth capacity and accessibility									
		Develop specialized literacy programs focusing on HIPAA-compliant digital skills									
		Support essential health information access for transient populations									
		Support tech-enabled health literacy partnerships									
	Foster online safety and privacy awareness within digital literacy	Fund community-based digital training									
		Utilize statewide cybersecurity resources for integrated digital skills training									
		Run a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity and online privacy									
	Empower community organizations for comprehensive digital literacy	Establish collaborative digital literacy and technology certification programs with educational institutions									
		Reinforce existing initiatives and identify partnership opportunities									
		Provide wraparound services with digital literacy training through partnerships									
		Launch community digital literacy bootcamps									
		Develop a Digital Navigator volunteer corps									
		Implement flexible learning spaces for inclusive access									
	Enhance digital literacy through youth and adult education platforms	Leverage STEM and Computer Science as platforms for digital literacy enhancement									
		Leverage Georgia’s thriving arts and media sectors to boost digital literacy across generations									
Establish community-driven peer-to-peer digital skill-building opportunities											

Challenge	Strategy	Key Activities	Phase 1				Phase 2		Phase 3		
			2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Ensuring digital inclusivity as Georgia advances in digital services	Improve universal design and accessibility in public digital resources	Develop and distribute accessibility guidance									
		Improve universal design and accessibility in public digital resources									
		Enhance accessibility and awareness of assistive technology									
	Train Digital Navigators specialized in assisting covered populations	Partner with community-based organizations to employ Digital Navigators									
		Develop specialized Training for Digital Navigators									
		Develop Digital Navigators with specialized IT support skills									
Local communities lack resources and expertise for Digital Connectivity efforts	Build collaboration among state, local, and nonprofit entities	Develop comprehensive Digital Connectivity ecosystem									
		Local Digital Connectivity plan development and implementation									
		Convene partners									
		Establish community-driven support networks and services to assist individuals in connecting, learning, and troubleshooting digital issues									
	Support and develop local capacity through a statewide consortium	Fund local Fellows									
		Convene and connect funding stakeholders for digital connectivity									
		Provide grantwriting support									
		Integrate digital connectivity objectives into existing strategies									
	Sustain and grow the state’s efforts in Digital Connectivity	Infuse broadband and Digital Connectivity considerations into related areas									
		Adapt and secure funding for emerging digital connectivity needs									
		Collect, analyze, and publish relevant data to demonstrate changes in Digital Connectivity metrics and outcomes									
		Provide grant writing resources									
		Fund research and development and invest in best practices for digital connectivity									
	Create a repository of Digital Connectivity insights	Provide map information									
		Provide asset information									
		Develop education and informational resources									
	Leverage digital connectivity to empower opportunities for workforce and economic advancement	Support technology certification programs									
		Establish workforce development programs that recruit and train individuals for broadband-related occupations									
		Build partnerships with industry, government, and education sectors for technology-based economic development									
		Expand post-secondary opportunities									
		Provide resources for digital financial literacy									

6 Conclusion

Our vision for a fully connected Georgia is to ensure that every Georgian has reliable and affordable access to the internet along with the necessary tools and skills to unlock opportunities for educational advancement, economic success, improved health, and strengthened social ties. This will create more connected, resilient, and prosperous communities and cultivate an environment across the State where our workforce can thrive, our infrastructure can support growth, and our industries can continue to lead the way.

However, digital connectivity barriers are found in Georgia as in much of the country, hindering equal access, skills development, and opportunity. The data show that one critical challenge faced by covered populations is they often lack reliable broadband infrastructure in their communities. Many areas struggle with limited internet access, hindering educational attainment, economic growth, and access to telehealth services. This divide exacerbates disparities in education, employability, and access to essential online resources and opportunities, and overall quality of life.

The affordability of broadband services and devices serves as another barrier. Low-income households may find it difficult to afford the costs of broadband subscriptions and necessary hardware, such as computers or tablets. As a result, individuals in these households face restricted access to online education, job opportunities, and crucial government services. This digital divide limits social mobility and access to the benefits of the digital world.

Furthermore, the data collected for this Plan show that digital literacy and skills gaps hinder digital connectivity in Georgia. Many residents lack the necessary skills to navigate digital platforms, protect their online security, and discern credible information from misinformation. This lack of digital skills leaves individuals susceptible to privacy breaches and exposes them to cyber threats. Moreover, certain demographic groups, such as seniors and minority populations, face additional barriers due to unfamiliarity with technology or language barriers. Addressing these challenges requires efforts that encompass infrastructure expansion, affordable access, digital skills training, and targeted support for underserved communities to ensure that all Georgians can participate fully in the digital economy.

The State of Georgia will aim to reduce these barriers to digital connectivity to create conditions that enable all Georgians to equitably access and use the internet.

In that envisioned future, all Georgians will have access to the following **five critical elements of digital connectivity**:

1. Access to affordable, reliable internet connectivity at home and in their community

2. A computing device and the opportunity to maintain it
3. Opportunity to learn and apply digital skills
4. Tools and practical knowledge for safe online engagement
5. Accessible and usable online government and community resources for all abilities

To achieve this vision, the State of Georgia will adopt the following framework principles for its digital connectivity efforts:

1. **Targeted impact on key populations for statewide growth:** In conjunction with our efforts for statewide broadband expansion, we recognize the need for specialized outreach, support, and investments aimed at covered populations, as designated by the Digital Equity Act of 2021. These populations include low-income households, aging populations, incarcerated individuals, veterans, people with disabilities, people with language barriers, racial and ethnic minorities, and rural inhabitants. To optimize impact and ensure efficient use of resources, focused investments will be directed toward initiatives aimed at enabling these populations for full participation in society and the digital economy. Through this targeted approach, we can nurture thriving, resilient communities in all four corners of Georgia that are conducive to both economic growth and robust full civic participation for all residents.
2. **Collaborate and strengthen our partnerships:** Digital connectivity work will require collaboration and partnerships. Our community, inclusive of members with lived experiences, regional and local governments, ISPs, workforce organizations, philanthropic entities, corporate partners, CAIs, and community-based organizations, will actively partner to solicit ideas, insights, priorities, and lessons learned to strengthen our digital connectivity ecosystem. Together, we will prioritize identifying and addressing gaps to ensure equitable digital access and inclusion across our diverse communities.
3. **Build on existing achievements and collaborations.** As a statewide community, we will leverage and benefit from the efforts of entities that have spent years developing expertise and capabilities in digital connectivity. Rather than attempt to replicate or re-create those capabilities, we will enhance coordination among state agencies, local governments, and nonprofit partners. By sharing timely data, focused support, and helpful resources we aim to align our collective initiatives with established local and regional digital connectivity plans. In this way, the State of Georgia will respect and amplify local and community experience and know-how, working to support its local government and nonprofit partners that have proven capabilities in digital connectivity.

4. **Prioritize data and rigorous information gathering:** Data will be our guide for informed and impactful actions. Through our united community, which includes local and regional governments, state agencies, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector, we recognize the value in using data as a roadmap for effective action. These entities are encouraged to leverage data to make wise investment decisions, focusing funding on the regions and communities that most urgently require digital access and skills. These efforts will be enhanced by continually gathering, synthesizing, and updating data through tools like the Georgia Broadband Map, periodic surveys, and technical assistance. This synthesized data will guide smart investments in addressing digital connectivity gaps in the communities where our covered populations live and interact.

5. **Smart growth and lasting impact:** Our aim is to support the development of programs that can expand and adapt, ensuring that all Georgians, including our covered populations, remain connected. These programs should be designed for long-lasting impact, aligning with our vision of educational advancement, economic success, and community resilience across Georgia. By thinking forward in this Plan, we are laying the groundwork for prosperous and resilient communities throughout our State.

Please [click here to submit](#) your public comments and contribute to the development of the plan.

[Click here](#) to include your organization in our state's Community Connection Map, our asset inventory collection tool.

Appendix A: Asset inventory – additional assets

Additional digital inclusion assets

The following table details additional entities that have digital connectivity assets including broadband adoption, digital literacy, workforce development, and/or related programs.

Table 38. Additional digital inclusion assets by covered population(s)

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Athens Community Council on Aging	Digital skills, education, workforce, and OATS training programs for older adults in addition to basic social services.	x							
Carroll County Schools	This program provides desktop computers, laptops, or tablets and technical support, as well as supporting online accessibility and inclusivity for students who lack devices. The budget is under \$25,000 and over 100 people were served in 2022, with a target of 101-250 people over the life of the project.								x
Clayton County Public Library	The Library provides access to Wi-Fi and devices, with PCs available at branches and devices available for checkout. The Library’s Bookmobile is outfitted with Wi-Fi. The Library offers one-on-one technical help for residents to learn how to use devices and software The Library provides hotspot devices for use with patron’s personal devices.	x		x	x	x	x		x
Clayton County Public Schools	Through a remote “extending learning beyond the classroom” program, County schools support college and career preparation.				x	x	x		x

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Clayton County Senior Services	Senior Services provides computer tablets for seniors' home use.	x							x
Cobb County Libraries	Cobb County Libraries offer Digital Literacy Workshops sponsored by AT&T on a variety of topics including cybersecurity, internet basics, and classes in software and on using devices.	x		x	x	x	x		x
Compudopt Atlanta	Programs serve to eliminate limited access to computers, facilitate growth in technical and digital literacy skills, help provide no- or low-cost high-speed internet options, and support the future of youth and their communities.								x
Designstyles & Co, Dream Center	Business incubator in Morrow, GA, designed with space amenities and resources that allow young people and adults in underserved communities. Provides youth programs and OATS digital skills training for adults 50 and over.	x							x
Divine Reach Education and Counsel	Adult literacy and other programs for youth and adults. Provides OATS programs for seniors.	x							
Dodge County	The County is developing a digital connectivity program for broadband access and technical support.	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Empower Southwest Georgia - American Connection Corps (ACC) Fellow	The ACC Fellow supports applicants to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), conduct a leadership forum, organize workshops for builders and construction leadership for broadband, serve as a public advocate, educate consumers on broadband access, host learning sessions, and assist local elected officials with planning and processing permits and							x	x

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	educating voters. The Fellow will also work to establish a similar group with the county administrators in the region								
Empower Southwest Georgia - broadband community outreach	Empower Southwest Georgia applied to the American Connection Corps (ACC) for a \$150,000 grant to develop paid staff consisting of three people—an intern, a manager, and a field director—to conduct community organizing and community outreach including for broadband. It also submitted a Host Organization application to ACC for an ACC Fellow.							x	x
Evans County Charter School System	The Wi-Fi on the Go program supports internet availability and affordability by providing parents of students and school employees with a hotspot and unlimited data for \$50 per month. ¹⁷⁵							x	x
Forsyth County Senior Services	Various programs for seniors. Provides OATS programs for digital inclusion.	x							
Fort Gaines, City of	The City of Fort Gaines in Clay County develops and distributes accessible online content directed at populations with specific needs, such as seniors, low-income residents, those with low-literacy, and those whose first language is not English.	x				x			x
Gainesville City Schools	Through Chromebooks for Students, City schools provide desktop computers, laptops, or tablets and technical support for individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners and/or have low levels of literacy. The school system					X			x

¹⁷⁵ “Wi-Fi on the Go,” Evans County Charter School System, <https://www.evans.k12.ga.us/article/506223>.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	also provides families with information about the ACP. With a budget of over \$500,000, the program served 100 people in 2022 and has a target to serve over 500 people over the life of the project.								
Georgia Department of Corrections - Washington State Prison	At the Washington State Prison, GDC provides cybersecurity training and training, equipment, subsidized services, or other resources to facilitate access to telehealth and telemedicine services. It also trains teachers of broadband skills and digital literacy and provides hotspots and free or subsidized internet access.		x		X				
Georgia State University	The Digital Learners to Leaders (DLL) program provides professional development opportunities to Georgia State students seeking both four-year and two-year degrees, including those at Perimeter College.								X
Gilmer County Board of Education	The Chromebook 1-to-1 program provides desktop computers, laptops, or tablets and technical support, and has a budget of between \$100,000 and \$249,999.				x	x	x		x
Lift Zones	21 Comcast Lift Zones located throughout the state combine 1 Gbps connectivity to community centers with digital connectivity programming, available to users at the following sites: ¹⁷⁶ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Las Plaza Americas Girls Inc Raising Expectations Inc, Washington Learning Pod 	x		x	x	x	x		x

¹⁷⁶ "Lift Zones," Comcast, <https://corporate.comcast.com/impact/digital-equity/lift-zones>.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys & Girls Club Saint Simons Island • Boys & Girls Club SE Georgia – Glynn Villa • Boys & Girls Club SE Georgia – Terry Thomas Club • Finish Strong Learning Pod Lift Zone at Siloam Church International • Inspiredu • Flint River Community Center Boys & Girls Club in Riverdale • Urban League of Great Atlanta – At Promise Youth Center • Gathering Place Community Center • Boys & Girls Club, E.W. Hagler Club in Augusta • Boys & Girls Club, Dogwood Terrace Club in Augusta • Boys & Girls Club, McDuffie County Club in Thomson • Paralyzed Veterans of America SE Chapter at Hephzibah • Frank Callen Boys and Girls Club Savannah, GA • Lost-N-Found Youth Center • Mercy Housing • Hosea Helps • Center for Pan Asian Community Services 								
Macon Housing Authority	The citywide Computer Classes program, which addresses internet availability and affordability, digital literacy, data privacy and cybersecurity, has a budget	x							x

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	of under \$25,000. It served 25 people in 2022, with a target to serve 500 people over the life of project.								
Macon-Bibb Mayor's Literacy Alliance	Its goal is to help increase the graduation rate, decrease the drop-out rate, and lower the adult illiteracy rate by 50 percent over the next 10 years.	x				x			
Morehouse College	In a partnership with Microsoft for the 2020-2021 academic year, Morehouse College, a historically black college or university (HBCU), provided newly enrolled students with Microsoft Surface 2-in-1 tablets.						x		
Northstar Digital Literacy	<p>Northstar Digital Literacy is a program that defines the basic skills needed to use a computer and the internet in daily life, employment, and higher education. Northstar Digital Skills classes are offered both in-person and online. There are over 75 Northstar locations across the state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 Black of Men of Atlanta Inc. • Albany Technical College • Albany Career Center • Athens Technical College Adult Education Program • Atlanta Public Schools Atlanta WorkSource Georgia, Adult Education Center • Augusta Technical College • Catholic Charities Chamblee Office • Center for Pan Asian Community Services • Central Georgia Technical College Bibb, Baldwin, Houston 	x		x	x	x	x	x	x

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chattanooga Goodwill – Mack Gaston Community Center • Chattahoochee Technical College – North Metro, Canton • Clayton County Adult Education • Coastal Pines Technical College • Cobb County Adult Education Center • DigitalCrafts • Georgia Piedmont Technical College – DeKalb, Newton, Starnes, South DeKalb • GNTC – Gordon County Adult Education, Whitfield Murray Adult Education, Floyd County Adult Education • Goodwill of North Georgia – Career centers as Smyrna, Old National, Stockbridge, Decatur, Woodstock, East Athens, Oakwood, Cornelia, Rome, Cartersville, Dawsonville • International Rescue Committee • Lanier Tech – Hall County, Wimberly Center (Barrow County) • Literacy Action • Midtown Career Center, Midtown Training Center • Newnan Career Center • North Georgia Technical College – East, West • Oconee Fall Line Technical College – North, South • Ogeechee Technical College 								

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Center at Goodwill SEGA • LaGrange Career Center • Savannah Technical College-Army Education Center, Effingham, White Bluff • South Georgia Technical College • Southeastern Technical College • Southern Regional Technical College – Thomasville • Thomas Crossroads Training Center • Valdosta Career Center, Valdosta Training Center • West Georgia Technical College Coweta, Douglas, Murphy, Troup • Wiregrass Georgia Technical College – Valdosta, Coffee, Ben Hill- Irwin 								
Northwest Georgia Housing Authority, Rome GA	<p>The Housing Authority is developing a digital connectivity program and wants to expand to provide programs for digital skills and literacy, devices (laptops, computers, tablets), Digital Navigators, and broadband access. Its Digital Skills +50 program, a citywide digital literacy program for residents over 50, has a budget of under \$25,000. It served under 25 people in 2022, with a target of over 50 people for the life of project.</p>	x							x
PCs for People	<p>This Atlanta-based national nonprofit social enterprise works to get low-cost quality computers and internet into the homes of individuals, families, and nonprofits with low income.</p>								X

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Savannah Public School System	Through various Countywide programs, schools provide desktop computers, laptops, or tablets and technical support; and address digital literacy, data privacy and cybersecurity, and online accessibility and inclusivity. The budget is over \$500,000, and programs offered to parents are free. Over 100 people were served in 2022, with a target of over 500 people over the life of the project.				x	x	x		x
Twin Oaks Elementary School	The school offers loans or donations of devices (i.e., computers, tablets) to access the internet, and trains teachers of broadband skills and digital literacy.								X
Westside Works	Westside Works is a neighborhood-based workforce collaborative looking to transform the Westside community and Greater Metro Atlanta through increased digital skills development.						x		x
Wheeler County School District	The Wheeler County School District offers hotspots for families and devices for students as needed. The countywide program has a budget of between \$50,000 and 99,999. It served up to 100 people in 2022 and is targeted to serve up to 500 people.							x	x

ISPs that participate in the ACP

The following table lists ISPs in the state (including mobile service providers) that participate in the ACP.¹⁷⁷ The table also indicates providers that offer a plan that provides service at effectively no cost with the application of the ACP subsidy (“no cost with ACP”), and whether the provider offers eligible customers the option to purchase a device at a discount.¹⁷⁸

Table 39. ISPs participating in ACP (including no-cost plans and device discounts)

Provider name	Service type	No cost with ACP	Device discount
AFNET, LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
Airtalk Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Alma Telephone Co, Inc.	Home Internet		
Altamaha Fiber	Home Internet		
Althea - Hawk Networks, Inc.	Home Internet		Yes
American Assistance and Your Call Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Assurance Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	
AT&T Mobility LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	
AT&T	Home Internet	Yes	
AT&T	Mobile Internet	Yes	
blazinghog	Mobile Internet		
Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation	Home Internet		
Boftech	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Boomerang Wireless, LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
Boost Mobile	Mobile Internet		Yes
Brightspeed	Home Internet		
Bulloch Solutions	Home Internet		
Cathect Communications, Inc	Home Internet		Yes
Cellspan Inc.	Mobile Internet		
Cintex Wireless, LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
City Communications, Inc	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
City Communications, Inc	Home Internet	Yes	Yes
City of Thomasville	Home Internet		
Clear Wireless, LLC	Home Internet		Yes
Clear Wireless, LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
CNSNext	Home Internet		
Coastal Electric Cooperative	Home Internet		
Comcast Xfinity	Home Internet	Yes	
Comcast Xfinity	Mobile Internet	Yes	

¹⁷⁷ Based on data provided to USAC by service providers, available at <https://cnm.universalservice.org/> (accessed September 6, 2023).

¹⁷⁸ Per USAC, customers must pay more than \$10 but not more than \$50 and must purchase the device through the provider; “Companies Near Me,” USAC, <https://cnm.universalservice.org/>.

Provider name	Service type	No cost with ACP	Device discount
Comlink Total Solutions Corp	Mobile Internet		
ComSouth Telecommunications, Inc.	Home Internet		
ComSouth Telenet, Inc.	Home Internet		
Conexon Connect LLC	Home Internet		
Connect Us Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	
Cox Communication	Home Internet	Yes	Yes
Cricket Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	
Crossbeam	Home Internet		
CTC	Home Internet		
Culture Wireless	Home Internet		Yes
Culture Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Daillytel Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Dalton Utilities	Home Internet		
Darien Telephone Company, Inc	Home Internet		
Digital Aid, LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
EARTHLINK, LLC	Home Internet		
Easy Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	
Echo Technologies	Home Internet		
ECOMOBILE, INC.	Home Internet		Yes
ECOMOBILE, INC.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Electric Power Board of Chattanooga	Home Internet		
Ellijay Telephone Company	Home Internet		
ETC Communications	Home Internet		
Excess Telecom, Inc.	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Flint Cable TV	Home Internet		
Forsyth CableNet	Home Internet		
Frontier Communications Corporation	Home Internet		
GAIA 5G	Home Internet	Yes	Yes
GAIA 5G	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Gen Mobile, Inc	Mobile Internet		Yes
GIGAFY	Home Internet		
Glenwood Telephone Company	Home Internet		
Global Connection Inc. of America	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
GO MD USA LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Go Technology Management, LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
Google Fiber Inc.	Home Internet		
GR8 CONNECT CORP.	Home Internet	Yes	Yes
GR8 CONNECT CORP.	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Hadodo Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Hargray of Georgia, Inc.	Home Internet		
Hello Mobile Telecom LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	
Heritage Wireless Group, Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Hoop Wireless, LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes

Provider name	Service type	No cost with ACP	Device discount
Hotwire Communication, Ltd.	Home Internet		
HTC	Home Internet		
Hughes Network Systems, LLC	Home Internet		
humanIT	Mobile Internet		Yes
IDT Domestic Telecom, Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
IgLou Internet Services	Home Internet		
IJ Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
IJ Wireless	Home Internet		Yes
Infiniti Mobile	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Insight Mobile, Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Integrated Path Communications, LLC	Home Internet	Yes	
InterConnection	Mobile Internet		Yes
K20 Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Liberty Mobile Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Life Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Lingo	Home Internet		
LTE Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Magnet Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Maxsip Telecom Corporation	Home Internet		
Mediacom LLC	Home Internet	Yes	
Metro by T-Mobile	Home Internet	Yes	
Metro by T-Mobile	Mobile Internet	Yes	
Metro Communications LLC	Home Internet		
NewPhone Wireless, LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Nextab, LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Nexus Telecom	Home Internet		Yes
Nexus Telecom	Mobile Internet		Yes
North American Local, LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Omnipoint Technology Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Paladin Wireless	Home Internet		
PCs for People	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Pembroke Telephone Company, Inc.	Home Internet	Yes	Yes
Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	Home Internet		
Plant Telephone Company	Home Internet		
Planters Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc	Home Internet		
Point Broadband Fiber Holding, LLC	Home Internet		
Progressive Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.	Home Internet		
Public Service Data	Home Internet		
Public Service Telephone Company	Home Internet		
Public Wireless, LLC	Home Internet		Yes
Q Link Wireless LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Red Pocket & FreedomPop	Mobile Internet		Yes

Provider name	Service type	No cost with ACP	Device discount
Rogue Mobile Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Rural4G	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
SafetyNet Wireless*	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Sage Telecom Communications, LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Sano Health LLC	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Sarver Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Selectel Wireless	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
SLYTEL	Home Internet		
Snapfon	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Southern Fiber Worx, LLC	Home Internet		
Spectrum (Charter Communications Operating, LLC)	Home Internet	Yes	
Spot On Networks, LLC	Home Internet		
SprintFone	Home Internet		Yes
Straight Talk, Total Wireless, Simple Mobile, Walmart Family Mobile, TracFone, Net10, Page Plus & Go Smart	Mobile Internet		Yes
SWA CONNECT	Mobile Internet		Yes
Tablet Mobile	Mobile Internet		Yes
TDS Telecommunications Corporation	Home Internet		
Telispire, Affinity Cellular, Club Cellular, Flex Cellular	Home Internet	Yes	Yes
Tempo Telecom, Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
The Ringgold Telephone Company, Inc.	Home Internet		
Thrive Mobile	Mobile Internet		Yes
TM Telecomm Corp	Home Internet		Yes
TM Telecomm Corp	Mobile Internet		Yes
TNC Communications	Home Internet		Yes
TOAST.net Internet Service	Home Internet		
Tone Communication Services LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
Torch Wireless	Mobile Internet		Yes
Trailwave Fiber, Inc.	Home Internet		
Tri-CoGo	Home Internet		
TruVista Communications, Inc. f/k/a The Chester Telephone Company	Home Internet	Yes	
Twigby	Mobile Internet		
U2 CONNECT NOW	Home Internet		
Unity Wireless Inc.	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Upward Mobile LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
US Connect	Mobile Internet		Yes
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Internet		

Provider name	Service type	No cost with ACP	Device discount
Verizon Wireless	Home Internet		
Via Wireless, LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
Viasat	Home Internet		
VOLT MOBILE INC.	Home Internet	Yes	Yes
VOLT MOBILE INC.	Mobile Internet	Yes	Yes
Vyve Broadband	Home Internet		
Waverly Hall Telephone, LLC	Home Internet		
WCFIBER	Home Internet		
Whoop Connect Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Wilkes Telephone & Electric Company, Inc	Home Internet		
Windstream Communications, LLC	Home Internet		
Wireless Brands Co	Mobile Internet		Yes
WOW! Internet Cable and Phone	Home Internet		
Wrizzle, Inc.	Mobile Internet		Yes
Xchange Telecom LLC	Mobile Internet		Yes
Z1 Wireless	Mobile Internet		
Zito West Holding, LLC	Home Internet		
Zoom Telcom, LLC	Home Internet		
Ztar Mobile, Inc	Mobile Internet		Yes

Appendix B: Organizations with which GTA collaborated in developing the Plan

This appendix includes a review of GTA’s outreach and engagement efforts and a listing of the partners and others who provided input and insights through a range of engagement mechanisms, including in-person meetings and online questionnaires, to inform this Plan.

In-person public listening sessions and other community engagements

GTA conducted 31 community engagement sessions throughout the state beginning in late winter 2023 with the purpose of sharing broadband and digital connectivity program/funding information and to hear directly from members of the public, organizations, and community leaders regarding individuals’ and communities’ needs and challenges in accessing and using the internet. Sessions included:

- 25 in-person “Let’s Connect Georgia” sessions from February through June 2023 across Georgia’s 12 planning regions
- Six virtual or audio sessions focused on covered populations and representative stakeholder organizations

Participants included state, county, and municipal government officials; regional planning commissions; technical colleges; universities; ISPs; industry, civic, and governance associations; local schools; regional and local libraries; regional and local housing authorities; regional and local nonprofits; digital connectivity organizations; organizations serving covered populations; and private citizens.

Stakeholder organization engagements

GTA conducted virtual sessions with expert stakeholders from governments, businesses, and statewide and community-based organizations including those representing covered populations. The sessions included:

- Workforce development organizations – including state agencies, technical colleges, workforce training organizations, labor unions, a fiber manufacturing company, industry associations, and ISPs
- ISPs – including Georgia Cable Association members, Georgia’s Rural Telephone and Broadband Association members, the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation and member cooperatives, and other independent ISPs
- Local and regional governments – including regional planning commissions, state government officials, county government officials, and municipal government officials

- CAIs and organizations providing access to computing devices, digital literacy and financial training, and health-related services – including state, county, and municipal governments and education leaders; and digital connectivity organizations providing access to computing devices, digital literacy and financial training, and health-related services

In addition to these sessions, GTA engaged stakeholder organizations from March through June 2023 to complete surveys and asset inventories (see Appendix E), promoting these through the GTA website and during events, in the areas of:

- Workforce development – organizations’ efforts to provide or facilitate job training in broadband-related fields
- Digital connectivity programs – organizations’ efforts in any of the five pillars of digital connectivity
- CAIs – organizations’ efforts to advance Georgians’ opportunities to use broadband to work, learn, receive health care, and participate in social and civic events
- Agency asset inventory – infrastructure-related assets that a government entity owns or manages and broadband-related workforce development efforts in place
- Covered population barriers – identifies unique obstacles to broadband access faced by vulnerable populations an organization serves
- ISPs – identifies recruiting and hiring for broadband-related positions, broadband development strategies, and collaboration with communities to close the digital divide

For more details about GTA’s stakeholder engagement and survey efforts, see the State of Georgia BEAD Five-Year Action Plan.

Organizations that attended meetings with GTA

Meeting name	Meeting date	Organizations
AARP Tele-townhall	5/8/2023	AARP
Andrew College	4/18/2023	Andrew College
Atlanta Digital Connections Symposium	3/23/2023	
Black Chamber of Commerce	5/3/2023	Black Chamber of Commerce
Community Organizations Stakeholder Session	3/30/2023	Bank On Georgia; Diversity Cyber Council; Henry County Government; Jones County Family Connection; Macon Black tech; United Way of Southwest Georgia
Community Organizations	3/31/2023	Bank On Georgia; Compudopt; Healing Bridge Clinic;

Meeting name	Meeting date	Organizations
Stakeholder Session		Outpost Plus; TechSmart for Seniors; United Way of Central Georgia
Digital Connectivity Advisory Committee Meetings	2/15/2023 3/30/2023 5/10/2023 6/13/2023 7/12/2023 8/8/2023 10/10/2023	
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Columbus Technical College	2/20/2023	Columbus Technical College (part of Technical College System of Georgia); Georgia State Assembly; Muscogee County Democratic Committee; NAACP – Georgia State Conference; River Valley Regional Commission
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Georgia Piedmont Technical College	3/22/2023	Black Churches 4 Digital Equity; DeKalb Neighborhood Association; Emory University Department of Emergency Medicine; FTE Leaders; Georgia Piedmont Technical College; Inspiritus; PCs for People; United Way Atlanta
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Buck Melton Community Center	3/21/2023	AARP; Accelecom; Fort Valley State University; Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning; Macon-Bibb Economic Development Office; Macon City Mayor’s Office; Macon Housing Authority; Macon Transit Authority; Meals on Wheels; Middle GA State University; Middle Georgia Regional Commission; PCs for People; Toombsboro City Mayor’s Office; Tri-County EMC; United Way Central GA; City of Warner Robins Mayor’s Office
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Southeastern Technical College	3/20/2023	Altamaha EMC cooperative; Evans County schools; Georgia Department of Corrections; Glenwood Telco; Southeastern Technical College; T-Cubed Thoroughbred Technology and Telecommunications – Norfolk Southern Railroad; Toombs County schools; University of West Georgia; U.S. Congressman Rick Allen
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Albany State University	3/16/2023	City of Albany fiber network; Albany State University; Albany Technical College; Connecting Kids; Dougherty County Commission; Dougherty County government; Dougherty County Public Library; Georgia Department Community Affairs; Georgia Department of Education – Rural Education and Innovation Office; Georgia Partnership for Telehealth; City of Meigs; Southwest Georgia Regional Commission; Sumter EMC; Turner County schools; U.S. Senator Warnock’s Office;
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Wiregrass Technical	3/15/2023	Accord Technologies; Association of County Commissions of Georgia; Berrien County schools; Echols County public schools; Goodwill; Governor Kemp’s

Meeting name	Meeting date	Organizations
College		Office; Lowndes County schools; South Georgia Regional Library; Thomas County schools; Valdosta City schools; Valdosta Times; Wiregrass Tech College
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Georgia State Library Accessibility Conference	3/14/2023	Attendee organizations included: Georgia Public Library Service; Gwinnett County Public Libraries; National Federation of the Blind of Georgia; Okefenokee Regional Library System; Reburn County Public Library
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Georgia Cyber Center	3/13/2023	Coastal Area Agency on Aging; Feiler Park Neighborhood; Live Oak Fiber; PAC Fiber; Pooler Chamber of Commerce; City of Savannah; Savannah Chatham Public School System; U.S. Congressman Rep. Buddy Carter
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – University of Georgia	3/9/2023	Accelecom; Athens Clarke County government; Charter Communications; Georgia Municipal Association; Habersham EMC; Relyant; Social Circle Schools; Trailways fiber; U.S. Department of Commerce, NTIA
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Lake Spivey Recreation Center	3/8/2023	Bank On Georgia; Clayton County Board of Commissioners; Clayton County government; Clayton County Library; Culture Wireless; E-Community Fiber; Goodwill of North Georgia; Inspiredu; City of Morrow; Partnership for Southern Equity; PCs for People; Rural4g; U.S. Department of Commerce, NTIA; U.S. FDIC
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Northwest GA Technical College	3/7/2023	Accelecom; BorderHawk; Calhoun Times; Chattooga County School District; Comcast; Dade County schools; Gordon County schools; Northwest Georgia Regional Commission; Northwest Georgia Technical College; Rome Floyd Chamber of Commerce; Thrive Regional Partnership; Walker County Government
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – North Hall Community Center	3/6/2023	Hall County Government
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Spout Springs Library	3/6/2023	Charter Communications; Hall County library; Hall County schools; Kajeet; Piedmont regional library; Verizon
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Augusta GA Cyber Center	2/23/2023	AARP; Accelecom; The Clubhouse/Tech for Success; Comcast; Georgia Library System Blind and Disabled Services; U.S. Congressman Rick Allen
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session – Southern Crescent Technical College	2/22/2023	Central Georgia EMC; Georgia Department of Community Affairs; City of Griffin fiber network; City of Griffin schools; Griffin Spalding schools; Town of Sharpsburg; Spalding County government; Southern Crescent Technical College
Eastman-Dodge Chamber of Commerce	4/11/2023	Eastman-Dodge Chamber of Commerce
Education Stakeholder	3/28/2023	Bank On Georgia; Bartow County School System;

Meeting name	Meeting date	Organizations
Session – Bartow County		Georgia Department of Education; We thrive on Riverside Renters Association
Education Stakeholder Session – Jones County	3/29/2023	Georgia Department of Education; Georgia Department of Education – Technology Services; Jones County Board of Education
Family Connections Partnership	4/17/2023	Family Connections
Family Connections Region 6	5/16/2023	Family Connections
GA Internet for All Meeting with NTIA	4/14/2023	
Internet Service Provider Stakeholder Session	3/17/2023	Charter Communications; Comcast; Cox Communications; Georgia Cable Association; Mediacom
Internet Service Provider Stakeholder Session	3/10/2023	AT&T
Internet Service Provider Stakeholder Session – GTBA	4/13/2023	GTBA – Georgia’s Rural Telephone and Broadband Association and members
Internet Service Provider Stakeholder Session	4/13/2023	Windstream
Internet Service Provider Stakeholder Session	5/4/2023	Canoochee EMC; Carroll EMC; Central Georgia EMC; Coastal Electric Cooperative; Diverse Power; Flint EMC; Georgia Electric Membership Corporation (EMC); Georgia System Operations Corporation; Grady EMC; Habersham EMC; Irwin EMC; Jackson EMC; Middle Georgia EMC; Mitchell EMC; Oconee EMC; Satilla REMC; Slash Pine EMC; Sumter EMC; Trailwave Fiber; Washington EMC
Local and Regional Government Stakeholder Session	3/24/2023	City of Albany; Bleckley County; Carl Vincent Institute of Government – UGA; City of Calhoun; City of Calhoun City Council; Candler County Board of Commissioners; Chatham County; Cobb County Government; City of Dublin; City of Fort Gaines; Georgia Department of Corrections; City of LaFayette; Macon-Bibb Commission; Macon-Bibb County Board of Tax Assessors; Madison County Board of Commissioners; Middle Georgia Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging; Montgomery County Board of Commissioners; River Edge Behavioral Health Center; City of Shady Dale; Southwest Georgia Regional Commission; Statham Mayor’s Office; City of Thomasville; Three Rivers Regional Commission; City of Tucker; UGA; City of Woodstock

Meeting name	Meeting date	Organizations
Local and Regional Government Stakeholder Session	3/27/2023	City of Arlington; City of Atlanta; City of Augusta; Bank On Georgia; City of Clarkston; City of Climax; Town of Cohutta; City of College Park; De Soto Trail Regional Library; Dooly County Chamber; Evans County; City of Fort Gaines; Georgia Department of Community Affairs; City of Glennville; Johnson County; City of LaFayette; City of Loganville; Madison County Board of Commissioners; City of Metter/Georgia Grown Innovation Center; City of Molena; City of Norcross; Pulaski County Commission; Three Rivers Regional Commission; City of Tucker; City of Waynesboro; Whitesburg City Hall; City of Woodstock
National Coalition on Adult Basic Education (CABE) Conference	4/4/2023	
National Summit on State Planning for Digital Equity and Economic Inclusion	4/27/2023	
Digital Connectivity Public Listening Session	6/15/2023	Paine College
Rural Healthcare Access	5/10/2023	
Stakeholder Meeting – Covington	5/25/2023	Community Members
Workforce Development Stakeholder Session	2/17/2023	OFS, a fiber manufacturer headquartered in Norcross, GA
Workforce Development Stakeholder Session	2/24/2023	ATC Broadband; BTC Telecom; Bulloch Solutions; Charter Communications; Comcast; ETC Now; Fiber Broadband Association; Fiber Network Alliance; FTC (Farmers Telephone Cooperative); Georgia Department of Labor; Georgia EMC; Georgia Telecommunications Association; Hart Telephone Company; Highline; OFS; PAC Fiber; Pineland Telco; Relyant Communications; TDS Telecom; Technical Association of Georgia; Truvista; Workforce Evolved; WOW
Workforce Development Stakeholder Session	3/3/2023	AT&T; Communications Workers of America; Fiber Optic Association; Georgia Department of Education; OFS; Southeast Lineman Training Center
Clayton County Digital Equity Youth Empowerment Summit	10/7/2023	Community Members
Digital Connectivity Roundtable - Justice Impacted Community	10/23/23	Data collection in progress
South GA Regional Digital Connectivity Action	10/24/2023	City of Valdosta; Lower Muscogee Tribe, Ware County Schools

Meeting name	Meeting date	Organizations
Planning Meeting		Data collection in progress
Thrive Tri-state Summit – North GA Digital Connectivity Action Planning Meeting	11/1/2023 – 11/2/2023	Data collection in progress
Middle Georgia Regional Digital Connectivity Action Planning Meeting	11/9/2023	Data collection in progress
College Digital Connectivity Session	11/10/2023	Data collection in progress
Statewide Digital Connectivity Symposium	11/14/2023	Data collection in progress

Organizations that provided input to GTA via online surveys

GTA covered populations survey respondents

Organization
AARP Georgia
Banks/Habersham County Extension
Barnesville, city of
Buford City Schools
Chattooga County Extension
Cherokee Regional Library
CJ Hicks Elementary School
Cohutta, town of
Columbus Technical College
Dade County Schools
Dawson County Board of Education
Dodge Connection-Communities In Schools (CIS) of Dodge County, Inc.
Dodge County
Elbert County Cooperative Extension
Emanuel County 4-H
Empower Southwest Georgia
Evans County Extension
Everlasting Vessels Inc.
Fulton County Cooperative Extension
Georgia Department of Corrections
Georgia Department of Education
Georgia Public Library Service
Gilmer County Board of Education
Grady County School District
Hancock County 4-H Club

Organization
Houston County Extension
Inspiredu
Lakeland, city of
Meigs, city of
Norwood, city of
Partnership for Inclusive Innovation
Partnership for Southern Equity
PCs for People
Polk School District
Pulaski County Commission
Reynolds, city of
Santa Claus, city of
Sharpsburg, town of
UGA Cooperative Extension
UGA EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program)
UGA Extension – Bryan County
UGA Extension – Glynn County
UGA Extension – Gwinnett County
UGA Extension – Laurens County
UGA Extension – Northeast District
UGA Extension – Paulding County
UGA Extension – Walker Country
University of Georgia (UGA)
Wilcox County Extension/4-H

GTA CAI survey respondents

Organization
Barnesville, city of
Buford City Schools
Cohutta, town of
Columbus Technical College
Dade County Schools
Decatur Christian Towers
Dodge Connection-Communities In Schools of Dodge County, Inc.
Empower Southwest Georgia
Everlasting Vessels Inc.
Fort Gaines, city of
Fort Valley State University
Georgia Department of Corrections
Georgia Department of Education
Georgia Public Library Service
Gilmer County Board of Education

Organization
Goodwill Industries Southern Rivers
Goodwill of North Georgia
Grady County School District
Inspiredu
Madison County Board of Education
Pataula Charter Academy
Piedmont Regional Library System
Polk Family Connection
Pooler Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau
Reynolds, city of
Rogers State Prison
Santa Claus, city of
Seminole County School
Sharpsburg, town of
Twin Oaks Elementary School
University of Georgia (UGA)
Washington State Prison, Georgia Department of Corrections

GTA digital connectivity program inventory survey respondents

Organization
Adtell Integration
Adrian, city of
Alma Police Department
AT&T
Barnesville, city of
Bibb County School District
Buford City Schools
Carroll County Schools
Charter Communications
Cohutta, town of
Columbus Technical College
Compudopt
Cook County Schools
Dade County Schools
Dawson County Board of Education
Dillard, city of
Dodge Connection Communities In Schools of Dodge County, Inc.
Dodge County
Dogwood Gardens Senior Living
Echols County Schools
Emory University School of Medicine
Evans County Charter School System

Organization
Everlasting Vessels Inc.
Gainesville City Schools
Georgia Council on Aging
Georgia Department of Corrections
Georgia Municipal Association
Georgia Public Library Service
Gilmer County Board of Education
Goodwill of North Georgia
Grady County School District
Graham, city of
Hagan, city of
Houston County Board of Education
Inspiredu
Lakeland, city of
Loganville, city of
Macon Housing Authority
Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority
McDuffie County Board of Education
Meigs, city of
Northwest Georgia Housing Authority
Norwood, city of
Pataula Charter Academy
Pelham City Schools
Pickens County Schools
Piedmont Regional Library System
Pierce County School District
Register, town of
Relyant Communications
River Valley Regional Commission
Santa Claus, city of
Savannah-Chatham Public School System
Seminole County School
Sharpsburg, town of
Sumter County Board of Commissioners
Terrell County Board of Education
Thrive Regional Partnership
University of Georgia Cooperative Extension
Vienna, city of
Wheeler County School District
Zebulon, city of

GTA government agency asset inventory survey respondents

Organization
Barnesville, city of
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
Buford City Schools
Cohutta, town of
Dodge County Board of Commissioners
Georgia Department of Education
Georgia Department of Public Safety
Georgia Department of Transportation
Georgia Public Library Service
Georgia Technology Authority
Lakeland, city of
Reynolds, city of
Santa Claus, city of
Sharpsburg, town of
State Properties Commission
Technical College System of Georgia

GTA ISP survey respondents

Organization
Adtoll Integration
AT&T
Charter Communications
Comcast
Cox Communications
ETC (Ellijay Telephone Company)
Family Connection of Turner County
Frank Callen Boys & Girls Club
Glenwood Telephone Company
Hart Telephone Company
Highline
Mediacom
Montgomery State Prison, Georgia Department of Corrections
Open Broadband, LLC
Paladin Wireless, LLC
Pineland Telephone Cooperative
Relyant Communications
Rogers State Prison, Georgia Department of Corrections
Southeast Lineman Training Center
SWA Connect
TDS
Tri-CoGo

GTA workforce development opportunity survey respondents

Organization
Adtell – The Fiber School (Adtell Integration)
Adtell Integration
AT&T
Bibb County School District
Buford City Schools
Carroll County School System
Columbus Technical College
Communications Workers of America
Cook County Schools
Dublin City Schools
ETC (Ellijay Telephone Company)
Evans County Charter School System
Everlasting Vessels Inc.
Fiber Broadband Association
Gainesville City Schools
Georgia Department of Corrections
Georgia Department of Education
Georgia Piedmont Technical College
Georgia Public Library Service
Global / Georgia Partnership for TeleHealth, Inc.
Goodwill Industries Southern Rivers
Goodwill of North Georgia
Hart Telephone Company
Pelham City Schools
Pembroke Advanced Communications (PAC Fiber)
Piedmont Regional Library System
Pineland Telephone Cooperative
Relyant Communications
River Valley Regional Commission
Savannah-Chatham Public School System
SLTC (Southeast Lineman Training Center)
South Georgia Regional Library
Southeastern Technical College
Southwest Georgia Regional Commission
Spectrum Southeast, LLC
Technology Association of Georgia (TAG)
Terrell County Board of Education
World Education

Appendix C: Needs assessment discussion

Covered population needs assessment

For covered populations, broadband access is a key issue. In a 2023 survey conducted for the development of this Plan, representatives from organizations serving covered populations as defined by NTIA were asked if households they serve have access to “some type” of internet service at home. Out of 57 respondents, only 14 agreed or strongly agreed. 22 were neutral, and 21 disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked whether households had more than one choice of provider for “high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband,” respondents were more emphatic: 39 of 57 either disagreed or strongly disagreed, 8 were neutral, and 10 agreed.

According to the State’s broadband map and other internal data sources that reflect service availability, areas that are currently shown as unserved and underserved also have a lack of digital connectivity programs—as well as a significant number of covered populations. This correlation means that increasing digital connectivity programs in these areas can help address the digital divide and further the State’s policy and service goals by helping improve educational outcomes, health outcomes, and employment opportunities for individuals in these areas.

According to stakeholder outreach conducted for the development of this Plan, residents in rural areas of Georgia struggle not only with accessing internet service at home, but also with limited connectivity in CAIs—both of which compound gaps in digital literacy. Meanwhile, many rural communities prioritize delivering broadband access and are not focused on developing digital connectivity (equity) programs. According to stakeholders, individuals in these areas have few such programs available in nearby communities and are not catered to by applicable programs in more urban and suburban areas.

Stakeholders report that the lack of connectivity in rural areas particularly impacts the ability of individuals with disabilities to access state library content and programs, as well as making it more difficult for seniors in these areas to access benefit programs which are offered online.

In areas where service is available, residents may face other barriers to digital connectivity. Affordability is a particular concern for some individuals who live in low-income households, who can be faced with a high cost for inadequate service.

Many Georgia residents who are members of covered populations lack access to digital training, according to a 2023 online survey of organizations serving covered populations. GTA conducted the survey in the development of this Plan. Of 55 organizations responding, only one organization felt that the population they covered had access to “convenient and comprehensive digital literacy training.”

Many residents could benefit from online safety training, a key component of digital literacy coursework. Of the 50 organizations that expressed an opinion regarding Georgia residents’ cybersecurity capabilities, only three agreed that individuals know how to protect their information online or that they can recognize a phishing scam or other types of scams and illegal activity.

Only four organizations stated that the populations they serve take the basic step of using anti-virus and anti-malware software on their computers.

The State intends to work with partner organizations that have established digital literacy training programs, as well as potential new programs, to mitigate the digital literacy gaps among covered populations and other residents.

Stakeholders also noted that only libraries in certain counties have devices that assist with accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

The following table lists barriers identified by representatives of organizations serving covered populations in their responses to the Covered Population Barriers Survey. As many organizations serve multiple covered populations and barriers identified are intersectional, responses are grouped by the subject matter of the question to which they were given.

Table 40: Barriers to covered populations identified by community organizations

Survey question	Barriers identified
General barriers to access	Availability, particularly in rural areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders from the following counties specifically mentioned issues due to rural/remote location: Polk, Glynn, Laurens, Grady, Elbert, Terrell, Randolph, Steward, Clay, Schley, Marion, Calhoun, Hancock, Chattooga, Muscogee, and Walker. • “Rural areas don’t have the access. There are parts of Georgia where you cannot get a cellular signal.” • “They are limited in choices and access to reliable, affordable high speed internet services.” • “Many of our prisons are in rural areas where internet connectivity is limited.” • “If they don’t have it in their homes, there may be issues with transportation to get to a location that does provide the service, how to use the service may also be an issue.” • “Students outside of Muscogee County often have very limited access to effective broadband connections. Many of our students, even in Muscogee County, are not able to afford reliable, high-speed broadband connectivity other than on their

Survey question	Barriers identified
	<p>telephones. This makes online learning courses and access to college online resource challenging for them.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There are dead spots in Walker County for Internet. High speed internet is not affordable and anything less doesn't cover all of the data needs of the household.” • “Workers perform all their field activities/work in the field, orchards, outdoors and have difficulty to access internet or limited provider or expensive internet options. no resources available in their language.” <p>Reliability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The service is so slow that we cannot have more than one device on the service. Downloads for movies or doing zoom calls buffer or get interrupted, drops sometimes, or just buffers.” • “Need reliable high speed internet at rural prison locations. We do some computer classes with limited internet access.” <p>Affordability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A large percentage of our population is homeless and/or financially insecure. This is a huge barrier to clothing, food, as well as internet access.” • “Cost; credit history with the major carriers; lack of knowledge of ACP.” • “My area is not in a greatly populated area. Therefore, companies charge outrageous prices to come out and run lines to my home.” <p>Limited choice of providers, leading to high cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our city has one internet provider. The service is good and reliable. Many people consider the service too costly.” • “We are located in rural, southeast Georgia. There is one local internet provider, and other providers, like Hughes net, have limited network availability due to the rural nature of the area and are cost prohibitive.” • “One provider, lack of service in rural areas if any at all. Cost is around \$100 per month and not worth the money.” <p>“Poverty, lack of digital literacy, and imbedded inequity unite to prevent members of the community our organization serves from accessing or using broadband internet services. This part of GA</p>

Survey question	Barriers identified
	<p>[southwest] ranks the lowest in the state for broadband access... This internet desert leaves students in an information desert when they get home from school. Public schools in our region have access to broadband... but when students go home to do their homework (or research topics that became alive during the school day) the students are severely constrained by lack of access to broadband. ... Their [unserved residents in southwest Georgia] experience includes leaving their homes and driving around the neighborhood until they can get a signal strong enough to sustain a conversation in a Zoom meeting.) ... We need an economic development strategy that brings Broadband to rural residents in southwest Georgia, especially those below the poverty line. This area severely lacks E-commerce opportunities. Six months ago, a neighbor of one team member lost her remote job because of slow internet speed. The need here is not hypothetical. Broadband internet can provide access to online education, training, and commerce resources that are scarce in Southwest Georgia.”</p>
Device barriers	<p>Availability of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We can afford a home computer. The problem is that the companies will not run affordable high-speed service to my area.” • “The school district supplies computers for the students, but without internet they are useless.” <p>Access to devices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Between the price of equipment and internet, a lot of homes still do not have computer access.” • Not enough devices for all members of a household. • “Despite what many may assume, many high school and university students do not [have] access to a computer with internet connectivity for individual use. This greatly restricts their access [to] essential educational resources and contributes directly to incomplete assignments.” • Libraries provide access, but transportation can be an issue and computers are only available during open hours. • “New times for public agencies (closing before 6pm) who have computers for the community to use.” • Many individuals rely on smartphones. • “Due to security restrictions with incarcerated individuals, there must be restricted networks, whitelisting, secured devices, etc.”
Digital literacy barriers	<p>Lack of available, accessible training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Digital literacy taught at various times of day to accommodate

Survey question	Barriers identified
	<p>working individuals and those in school.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Local training and advanced options, transportation to trainings, direct outreach and guidance, device ownership, home internet access.” <p>Multiple respondents indicate challenges for seniors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The elderly population that uses our services are struggling with having adequate digital skills. There is no one outside of their family who can help them. The public library is being heavily used for these services - almost to the point of not having enough help to serve.” <p>Respondents note individuals may be familiar with a smartphone but not a computer.</p>
Barriers to accessible content	<p>Lack of access to content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Availability of assistive technologies in libraries varies depending on location, funding, need.” • “The internet has useful, relevant content for the area we serve. Opportunities for telehealth, training, e-commerce, and doing homework all exist. The widespread absence of broadband accessibility and connectivity make all those internet resources inaccessible to much of our population.”
Barriers to data privacy and cybersecurity	<p>Cost of antivirus software</p> <p>Lack of knowledge/skills/experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lacking devices and broadband makes data privacy and cyber security a moot point until access is on the horizon.”
Programmatic recommendations	<p>Access combined with publicly available, free training</p> <p>Emphasis on libraries as accessible CAIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Libraries provide basic digital literacy skills training and support (depends on area and ability). Expanding these programs to more advanced skills, covering areas that currently do not provide training, and increasing frequency/availability would be made possible with additional funding for staff, educating staff (train the trainers), hiring outside trainers for local programming, devices and labs to conduct training in, lending devices for patrons to take home and practice with.” • “The public library is a great place with equal access to all residents in the community. It's a non-threatening place to visit. We would need trained professionals to teach specialty

Survey question	Barriers identified
	programming - we can provide the space. We need educational materials to distribute.”

Broadband adoption

Some Georgia households do not use broadband even when the infrastructure is available to them—whether because the service cost is a barrier, they do not have a computer, they lack the skills to use the internet, or other reasons.

Rates of internet subscription, as well as rates of computer ownership, are tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). According to the most recent ACS five-year estimates, 13.8 percent of Georgia’s households do not subscribe to an internet service, and 6.8 percent do not have a computer.¹⁷⁹

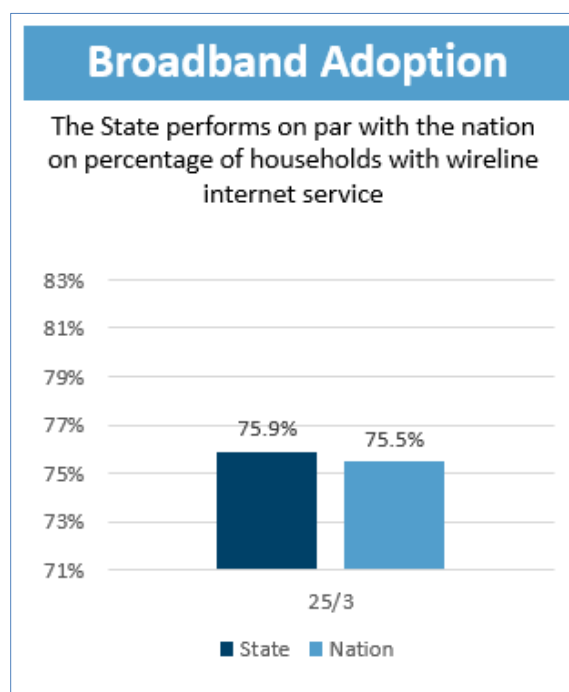
Broadband adoption rates in the state correlate with income; analysis for the State’s 2022 broadband strategic plan showed that households in areas with higher average median household incomes, such as Atlanta, Savannah, and Macon, tend to show higher levels of internet access and broadband adoption. A statewide analysis of ACS data by county showed that broadband subscription rates tend to increase as median household income increases.¹⁸⁰

Georgia’s broadband adoption rate is slightly above the national average.

¹⁷⁹ U.S. Census, “Computer and Internet Use,” American Community Survey, <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/about/why-we-ask-each-question/computer/>.

¹⁸⁰ Analysis from Georgia Broadband Strategy (2022), available upon request.

Figure 7: Georgia adoption compared to national average



The State has identified multi-sectoral needs to increase broadband adoption rates to achieve benefits in terms of economic development, education, and telemedicine.

GTA believes investments in broadband infrastructure and other efforts to increase broadband adoption will create long-term economic benefits. Per analysis conducted for the State’s 2022 broadband strategic plan, should an additional 210,000 to 351,000 households enroll in broadband (corresponding to a 30 or 50 percent reduction in the number of nonadopters), Georgia could see an increase of \$120 million to \$223 million in household income. There could also be 15,800 to 19,500 new jobs resulting in \$1.1 billion to \$1.4 billion in additional earnings. In sum, the total estimated economic impact of expanded broadband adoption over 10 years, not including the direct impact of spending on construction, could exceed \$5 billion.¹⁸¹

Improving broadband adoption rates will enable more residents to access telehealth, which in turn will present opportunities for better outcomes for patients, and savings to patients and providers alike. Telehealth offers access to care for residents who are limited by access to transportation, health needs, or even busy schedules. It also decreases no-shows, saving hospitals money, and decreases road miles that need to be driven to appointments.

Telecommunications systems in Georgia are a critical foundation to improving health outcomes for Georgians and the overall efficiency of our healthcare system. According to the analysis in the

¹⁸¹ “2022 Georgia Broadband Annual Report,” GTA, <https://broadband.georgia.gov/media/35/download>.

State's broadband strategic plan, healthcare savings in the state with the adoption of telemedicine could range from \$1.2 billion to \$2 billion, and the consumer surplus value over 10 years is an estimated \$2.8 billion to \$4.6 billion.¹⁸² The State has an important resource for these efforts in the Global Partnership for Telehealth (GPT), one of the largest nonprofit telehealth networks in the U.S.

Georgia's rural communities face disparities in access to care and health outcomes. In 2018, the State awarded grant funding to Mercer University School of Medicine to establish the Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center,¹⁸³ which partners with Georgia's rural counties on a range of targeted initiatives to address the complex healthcare challenges facing their communities. Through a partnership with GPT, the Center has provided telehealth access to 40 providers in rural areas of the State.¹⁸⁴

In the education sector, it is expected that K-12 school districts now or in the future may rely more on a combination of in-person and "in the cloud" teaching, including assigning homework where students must collaborate on shared files. In that light, increasing broadband adoption will pay dividends in terms of education.

In addition to conducting more classes online, a growing number of schools are providing curriculum about digital skills that are necessary for many 21st century jobs, like coding and computer science. These courses can start at a young age and require a computer and internet connection to practice and learn.

To meet students' bandwidth and connection needs, a recent report recommends speeds of at least 25 Mbps (download) and 12 Mbps (upload) per student, rather than per household.¹⁸⁵ And as with other applications, broadband speeds sufficient today will likely not be sufficient in years to come.

Recognizing that many students in Georgia's rural areas lack adequate access to broadband, technology, and devices, the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) Office of Rural Education and Innovation (established in 2021) has made connectivity one of its key priorities. The Office's initiatives include increasing broadband access and adoption through awarding technology grants to rural school districts and promoting ACP enrollment, providing

¹⁸² "2022 Georgia Broadband Annual Report," GTA, <https://broadband.georgia.gov/media/35/download>.

¹⁸³ Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center, <https://www.georgiaruralhealth.org/about/>.

¹⁸⁴ "Grand Challenges," Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center, <https://www.georgiaruralhealth.org/grand-challenges/>.

¹⁸⁵ David Nagel, "Landmark Study Calls for Increased Bandwidth for At-Home Learning," The Journal: Transforming Education through Technology, May 4, 2021, <https://thejournal.com/articles/2021/05/04/landmark-study-calls-for-increased-bandwidth-for-at-home-learning.aspx>.

cybersecurity training and tools, and ensuring equitable access to 21st century learning and devices.¹⁸⁶

While GaDOE data indicate that statewide, more than 99 percent of classrooms had high-speed internet access for the 2022 school year and the school systems had more devices than students—with a ratio of 67:100 for all devices—significant gaps exist in some districts. Notably, three school districts in the coastal area between Savannah and Brunswick have schools with no high-speed internet, as do a handful of other districts across the State. In several Clayton County schools, approximately 35 percent of classrooms do not have high-speed internet access.¹⁸⁷

Broadband affordability

Affordability is a barrier to broadband adoption in Georgia for some and an obstacle for many, and while discounted services and subsidy programs are available there is low awareness of and participation in these programs.

According to stakeholder outreach, some residents pay a high cost for service (especially DSL) that is not adequate to complete schoolwork or to work from home. Parents described choosing between completing adult education coursework or having their child participate in class because their home internet connection speed is inadequate to support both users.

While some households may need additional support, the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) represents one of the most important programs to assist households struggling to afford the cost of broadband. Georgia’s percentage of households that participate in federal subsidies is higher than the national average. However, a significant number of households in the State may not be taking advantage of the program. As of March 2023, 576,430 households in Georgia are enrolled in the ACP¹⁸⁸ out of a total 1,571,000 eligible, per a 2022 estimate¹⁸⁹—representing a participation rate of 36.7 percent.

This enrollment rate shows an improvement as compared to the statewide participation rates in the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program, the predecessor to the ACP. An estimated 27

¹⁸⁶ “Rural Education and Innovation presentation,” GaDOE, https://shealy-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/bronwyn_ragan-martin_doe_k12_ga_us/EVNQvk9O94NijLoS2WyDpJoB9aT8i7wSHHuoawUlxT03vw?e=II8NPA.

¹⁸⁷ “Technology Inventory,” GaDOE, <https://georgiainsights.gadoe.org/Dashboards/Pages/Technology-Inventory.aspx>.

¹⁸⁸ “ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker,” USAC, last updated March 27, 2023, <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/> (accessed March 28, 2023).

¹⁸⁹ “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Fact Sheet: Georgia,” White House Briefing Room, July 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Georgia-BIL-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

percent of potentially eligible Georgia households subscribed to the EBB.¹⁹⁰ It should be noted that the ACP has broader eligibility requirements.

In a survey of organizations serving NTIA-defined covered populations conducted in 2023 for the development of this Plan, most respondents (32 of 57) either disagreed or strongly disagreed—with over half (18) strongly disagreeing—that available internet service is affordable. Respondents saw affordability as a particular issue for covered populations.

During public listening sessions, some residents in covered households reported that covering other monthly bills such as electricity is a key concern even with a subsidy, compounded by incremental increases in the cost of service—and households who have past-due bills with an ISP are unable to enroll in the ACP. Stakeholders also identified that affordability is a particular concern for rural minority residents.

During the preparation of the State’s 2022 broadband strategic plan, the Director of IT for GaDOE discussed many of the challenges in helping eligible families enroll for the EBB, including the substantial “paperwork” (virtual) required and some families’ distrust of federal government programs. They noted that outreach from trusted local sources, such as schools, libraries, and community organizations, was key to encouraging enrollment.¹⁹¹ Stakeholder engagement conducted for this Plan also identified that eligible individuals in the State who are English language learners and/or non-English speakers may not be aware of the program and may have difficulty filling out the online forms to enroll.

¹⁹⁰ Represents the percentage of households who were eligible for Lifeline that were enrolled in the EBB, as the program’s eligibility was aligned with eligibility for Lifeline; analysis from Georgia Broadband Strategy (2022).

¹⁹¹ Georgia Broadband Strategy (2022).

Appendix D: Residential broadband and digital connectivity needs assessment survey results

The results presented in this appendix are based on analysis of information provided by 1,555 residents of Georgia, from an estimated 3,885,371 households. Results are representative of the set of households with a confidence interval of ± 2.5 percent at the aggregate level.

Survey responses were entered into SPSS¹⁹² software and the entries were coded and labeled. SPSS databases were formatted, cleaned, and verified prior to the data analysis. The survey data was evaluated using techniques in SPSS including frequency tables, cross-tabulations, and means functions. Statistically significant differences between subgroups of response categories are highlighted and discussed where relevant.

The survey responses were weighted based on region, household income, respondent age and ethnicity. Since respondents in lower income households, racial or ethnic minorities, and younger individuals were less likely to respond, the weighting corrects for the potential bias based on the household income, ethnicity, and age of the respondent. Additionally, some regions of the State were over-sampled. In this manner, the results more closely reflect the opinions of the State's adult population.

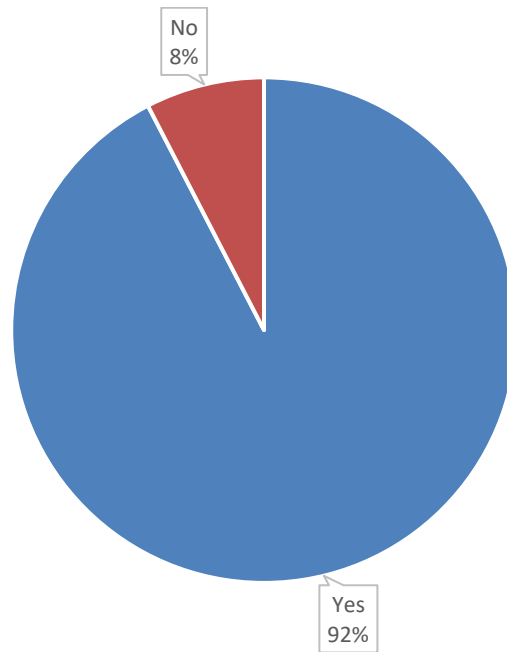
Unless otherwise indicated, the percentages reported are based on the "valid" responses from those who provided a definite answer and do not reflect individuals who said "don't know" or otherwise did not supply an answer because the question did not apply to them. Key statistically significant results ($p \leq 0.05$) are noted where appropriate.

Key findings

Eight percent of surveyed households report not having home internet service (see Figure 8).

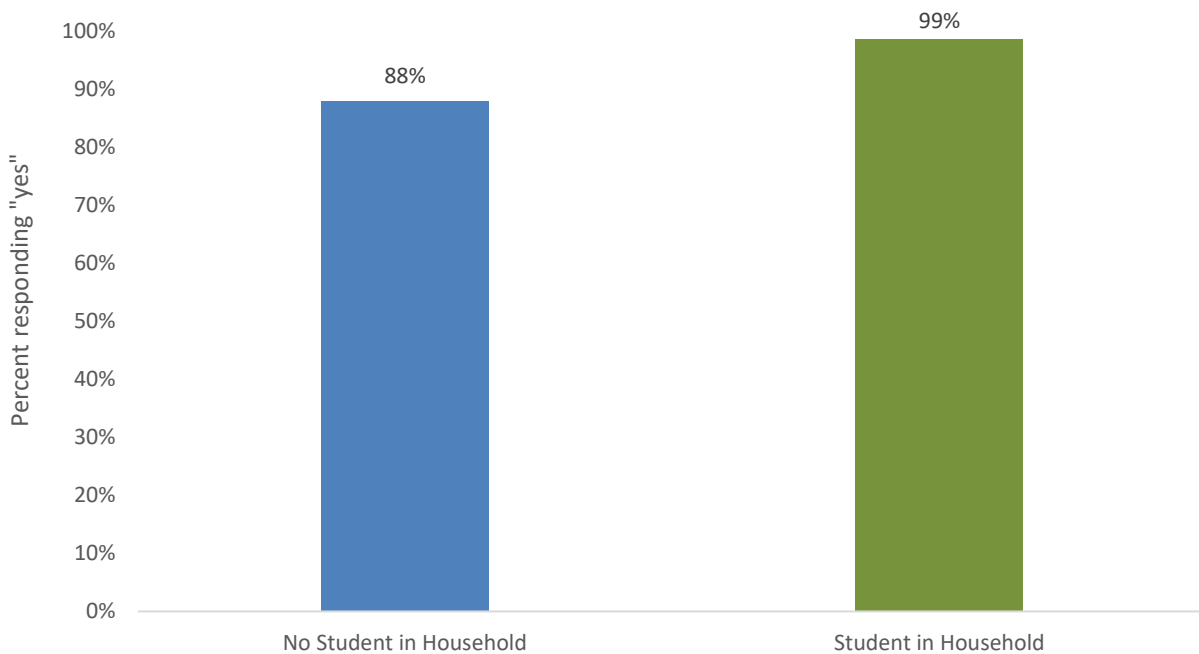
¹⁹² Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, <http://www-01.ibm.com/software/analytics/spss/>.

Figure 8. Percent of households with home internet service



99 percent of households with a student report having home internet service, compared to 86 percent of households without a student (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Percent of households that receive home internet service by student in household

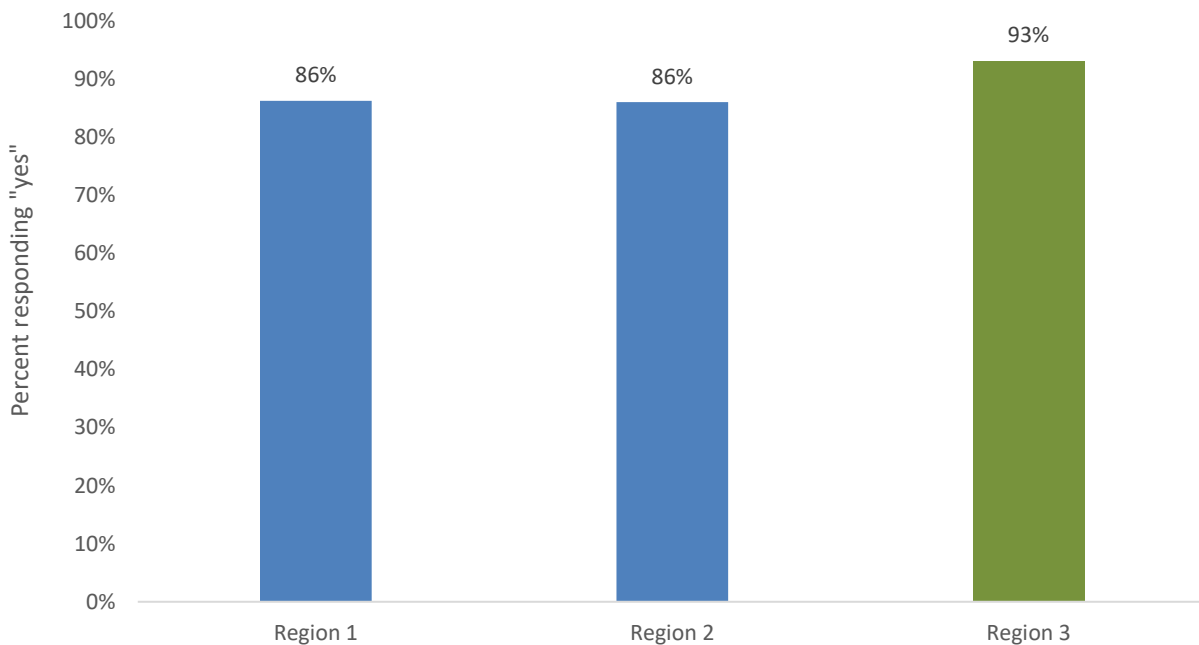


Data was oversampled to make sure that the needs of covered populations in underpopulated, rural areas received adequate sampling.

- Region 1: Calhoun, Charlton, and Dougherty counties
- Region 2: Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Pierce, Tift, Turner, Ware, Baker, Colquitt, Decatur, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, and Worth counties
- Region 3: all remaining counties in the state

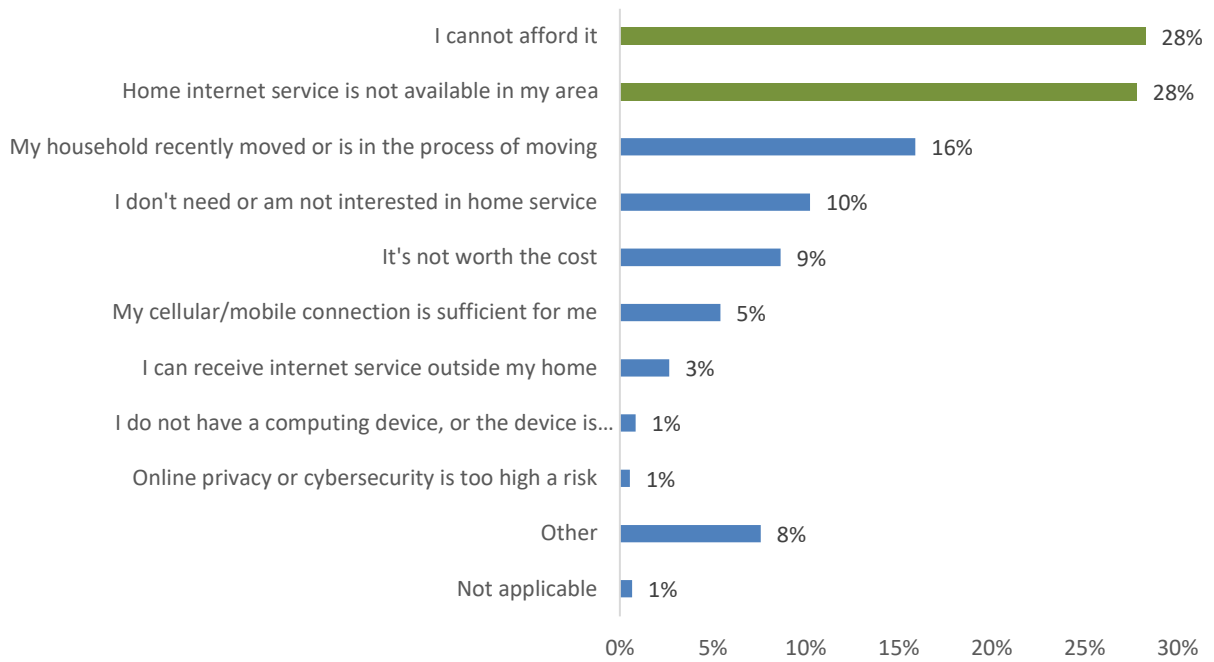
93 percent of households in region 3 report having home internet service, compared to 86 percent in region 1 and region 2 (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by region



Of the households who report not having home internet service, the two most common reasons are that home internet service is unavailable in the area and they cannot afford the service (see Figure 11).

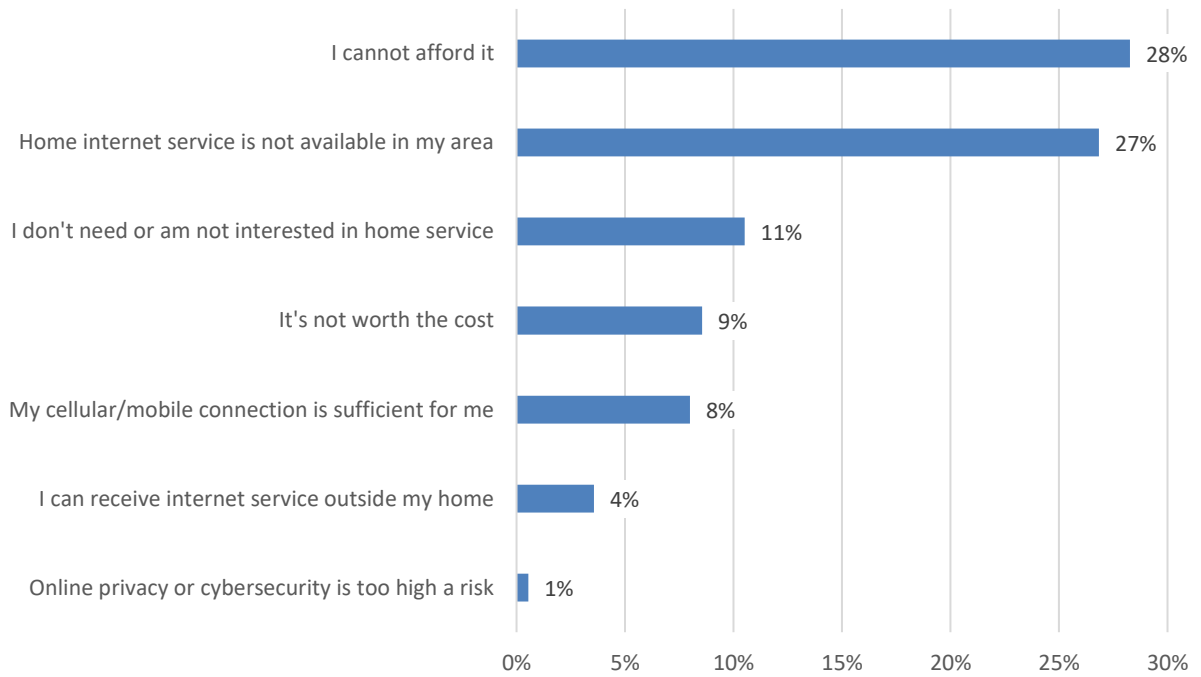
Figure 11. Reasons households do not purchase home internet service



Percent of respondents (out of 121 who do not purchase home internet)

Of the households who report they do not purchase home internet service, the most common reason was that they cannot afford the service. The second most common reason is that home internet service is unavailable in the area (see Figure 12).

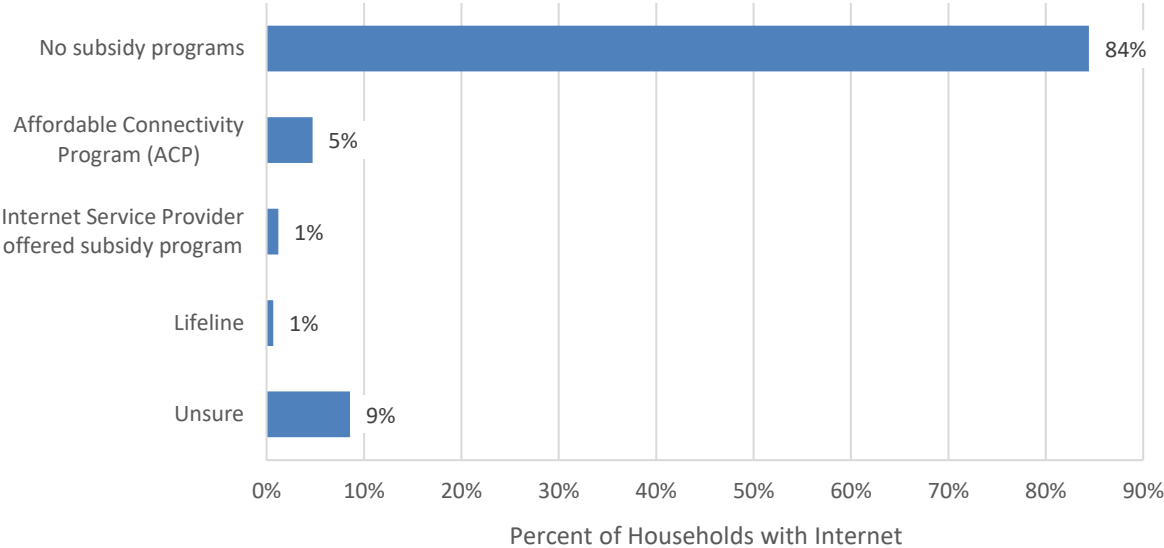
Figure 12. Most important reason households do not purchase home internet service



Number of respondents (out of 121 who do not purchase home internet)

Only 5 percent of households report being enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), while an additional 2 percent report being enrolled in an ISP program or the federal Lifeline program (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs



In households earning less than \$50,000, 19 percent report they do not have a computer. In households with incomes of \$100,000 or more, 95 percent report they do have a computer (see Table 41).

Table 41. Number of computers by household income

		Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or more
Computers	None	19%	16%	8%	5%
	One	48%	36%	38%	14%
	Two	21%	30%	25%	32%
	Three or more	12%	19%	29%	49%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	355	199	159	301

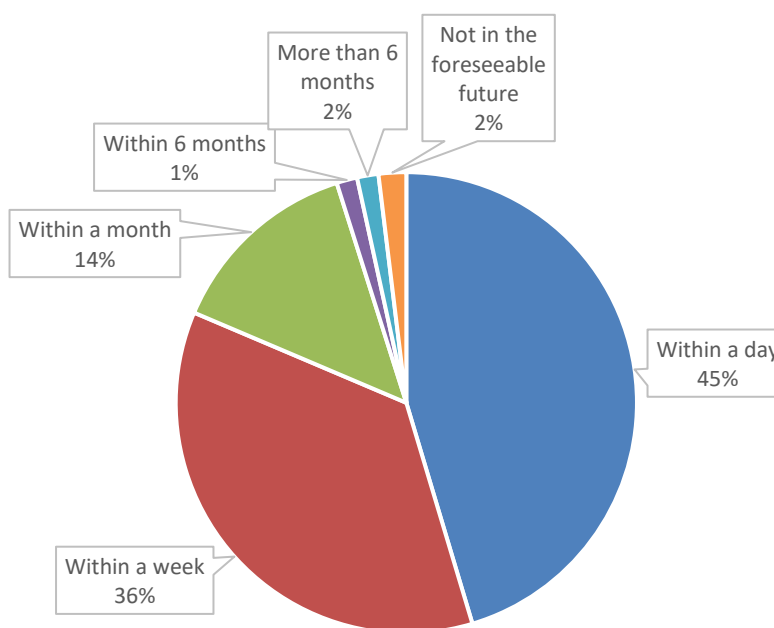
Households with individuals with a formerly incarcerated individual are more likely than other groups to not own a single computer (57 percent) (see Table 42).

Table 42. Number of computing devices by demographic group

		Veteran	Individual with a disability	Primarily non-English speaker	Formerly incarcerated individual	Actively enrolled in K-12, college, or other higher ed
Computers	None	9%	19%	0%	57%	12%
	One	33%	34%	18%	15%	27%
	Two	28%	18%	15%	25%	26%
	Three or more	30%	29%	67%	3%	35%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	196	243	18	43	654

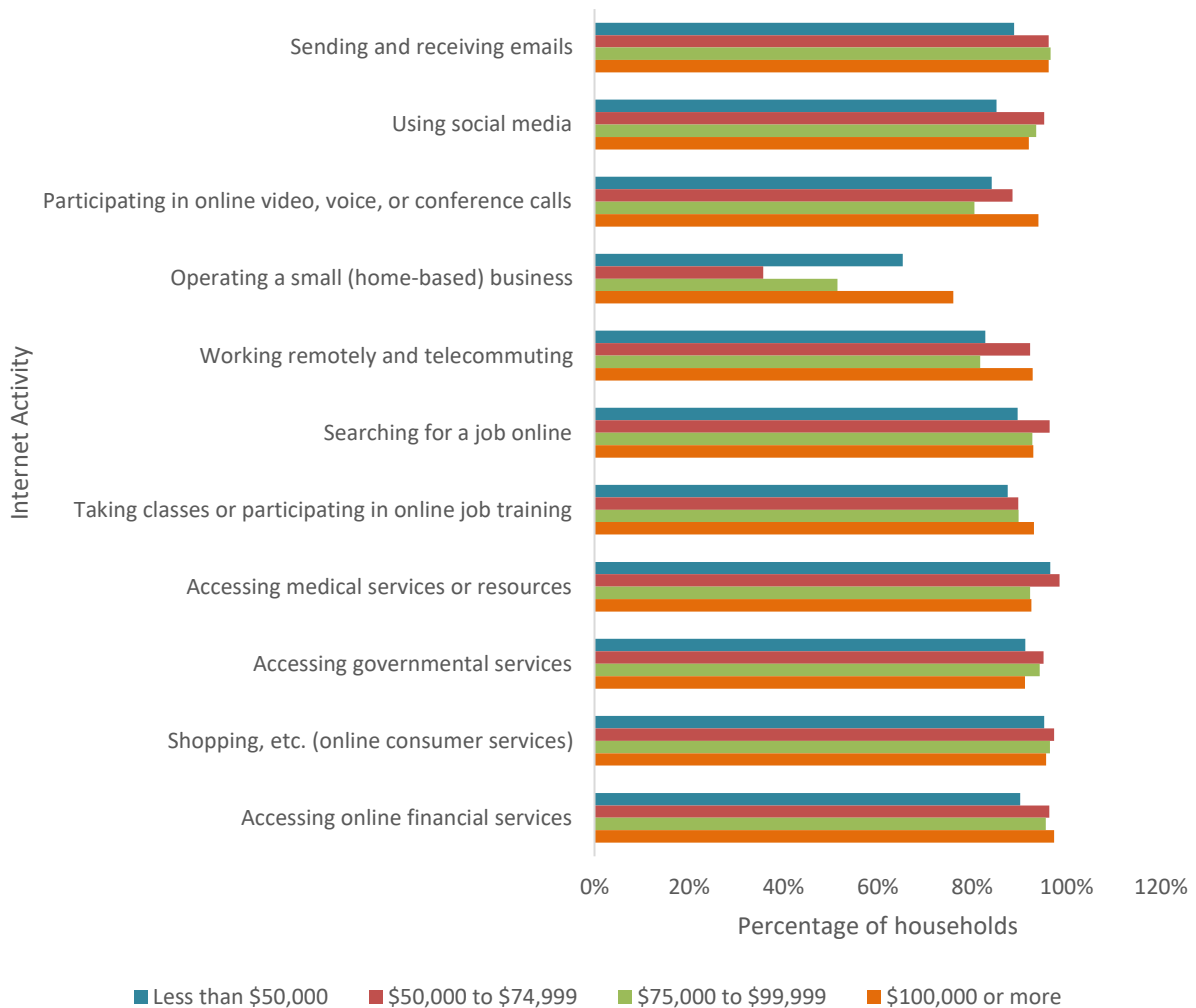
Four percent of households reported a broken device could not be replaced within 6 months or in the foreseeable future (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Likelihood of replacing a computing device



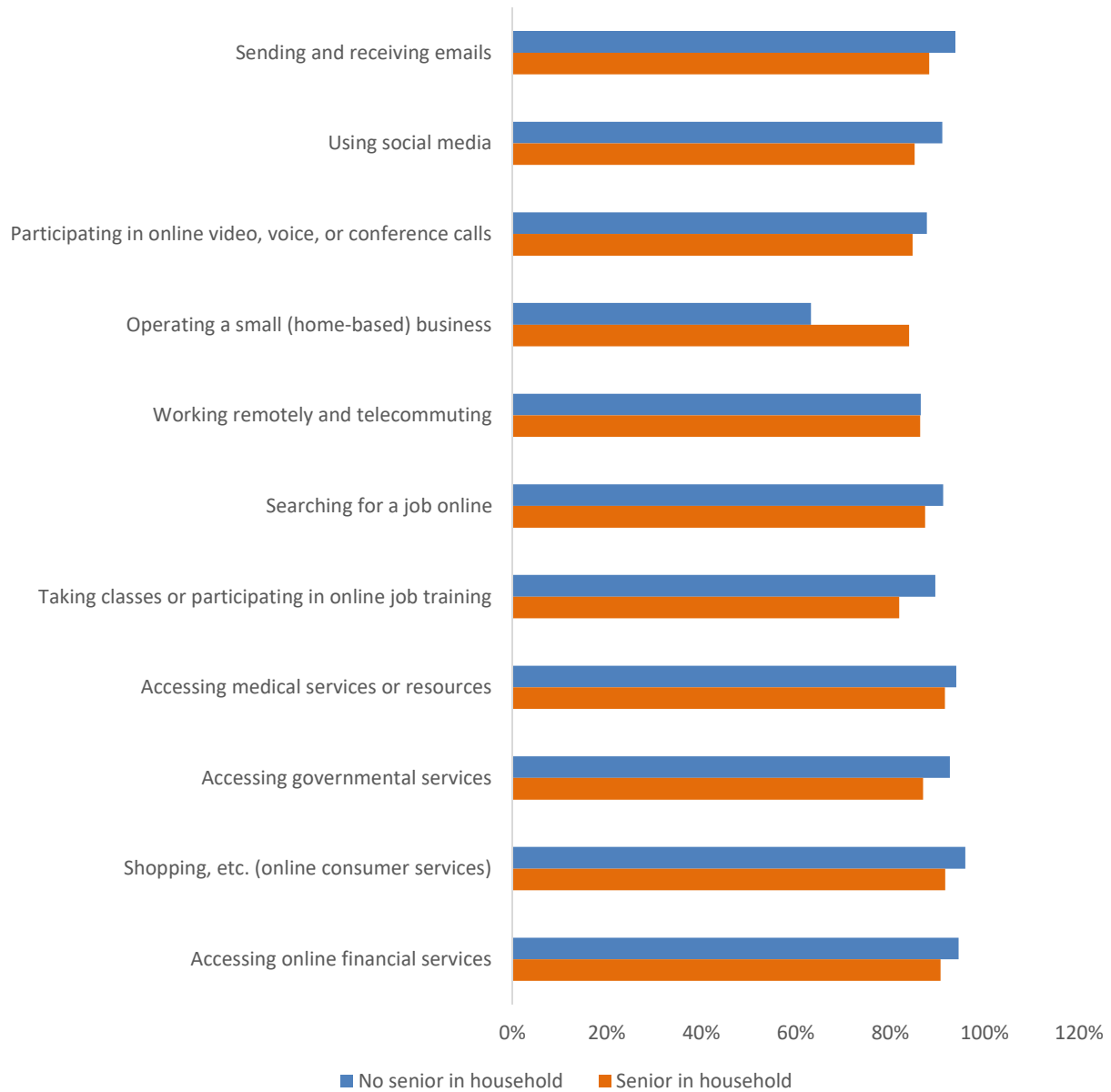
Except for the activity of accessing medical service or resources, low-income households are consistently less confident in their ability to complete activities online than are high-income households. For almost all online tasks, fewer low-income households reported that they are very confident compared to high-income households (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Very confident in using the internet for various activities by household income



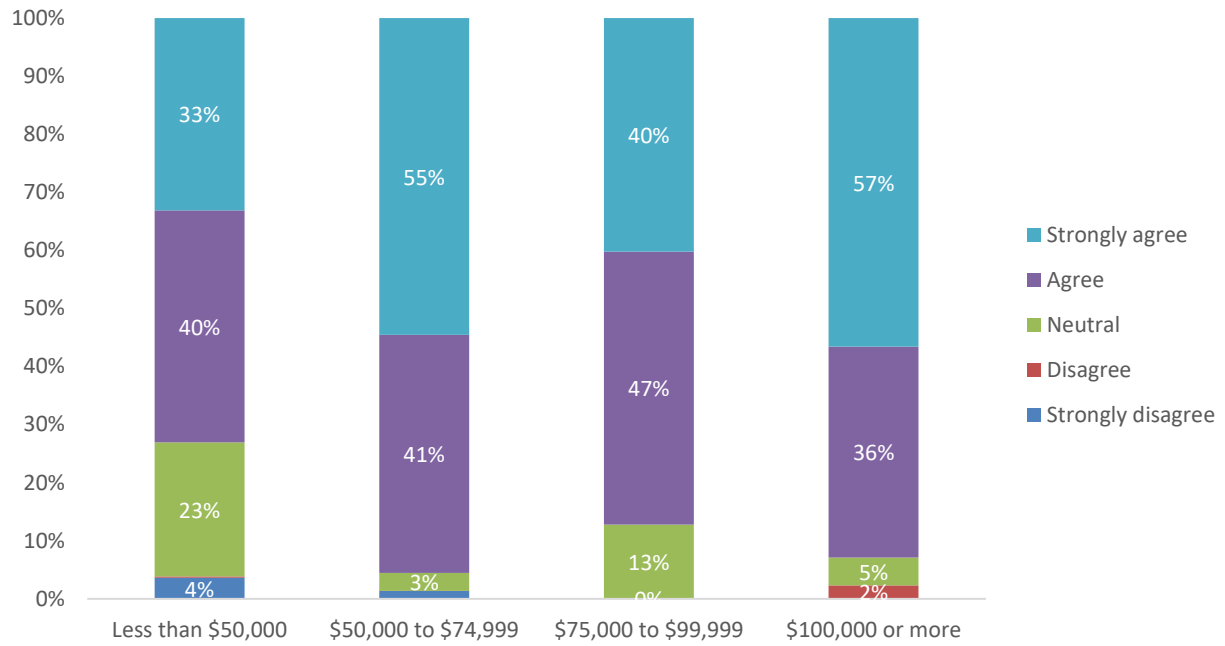
Generally, fewer households with seniors report that they are very confident completing online tasks compared to households without seniors. The outlier is for operating a small home-based business – 84 percent of households with a senior report being very confident compared to 63 percent of households without a senior (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Percentage of households with seniors who are very confident in using the internet for online activities



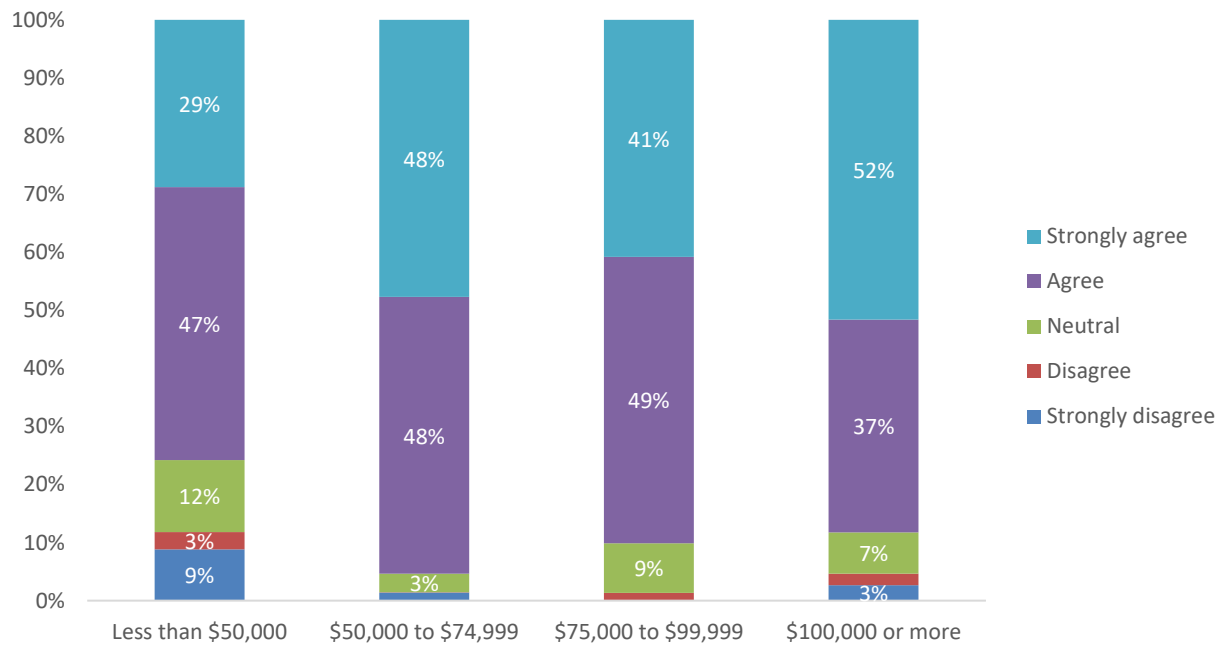
Households earning less than \$50,000 report they are less likely to be able to recognize and avoid online fraud than households earning more than \$100,000 (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. Ability to recognize and avoid online fraud by household income



Households earning less than \$50,000 report they are less likely to be able to identify false or misleading information online than households earning more than \$100,000 (see Figure 18).

Figure 18. Ability to identify false or misleading information by household income



Internet service questions

Does your household receive home internet service – not mobile data?

Figure 19. Percent of households that receive home internet service

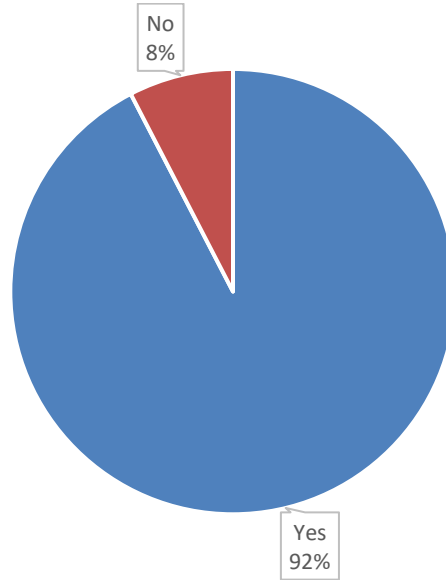


Figure 20. Percent of households that receive home internet service by region

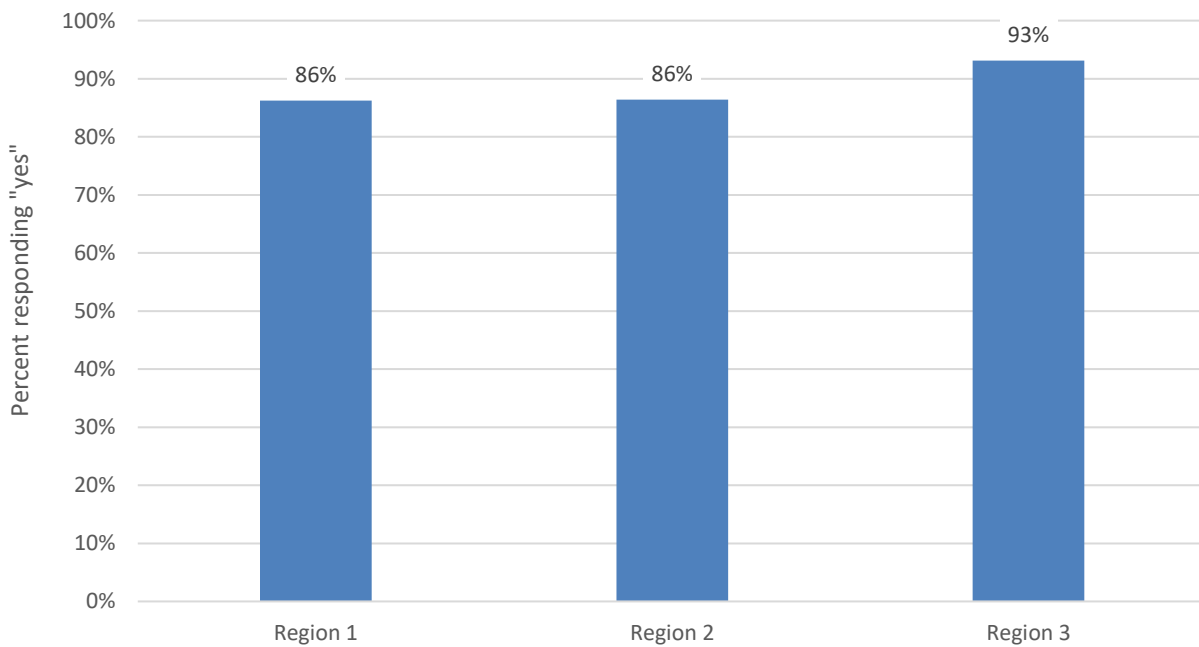


Figure 21. Percent of at-risk households that receive home internet service

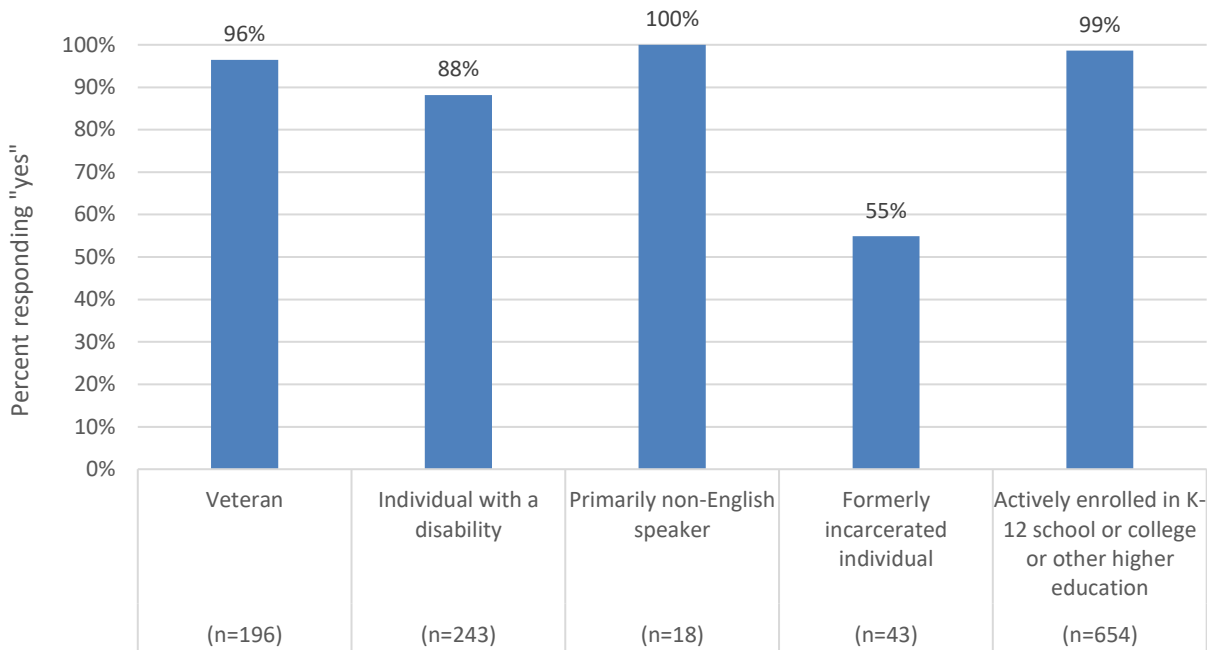


Figure 22. Percent of households that receive home internet service by household income

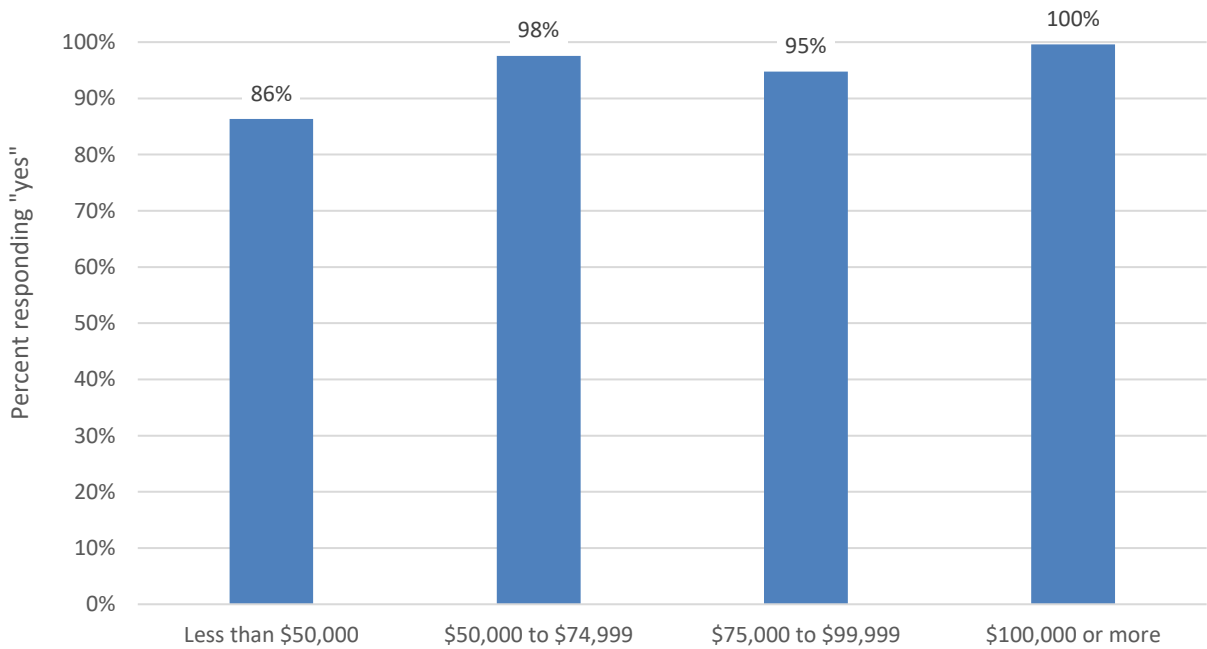


Figure 23 Percent of households that receive home internet service by race/ethnicity

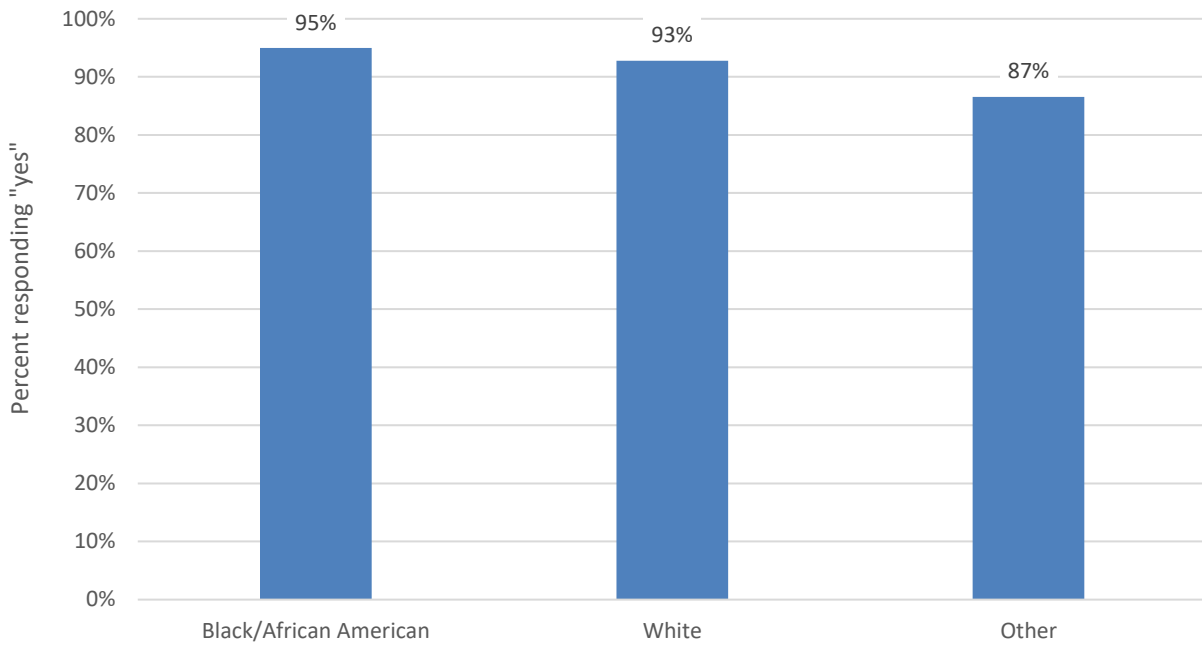


Figure 24. Percent of households that receive home internet service by student in household

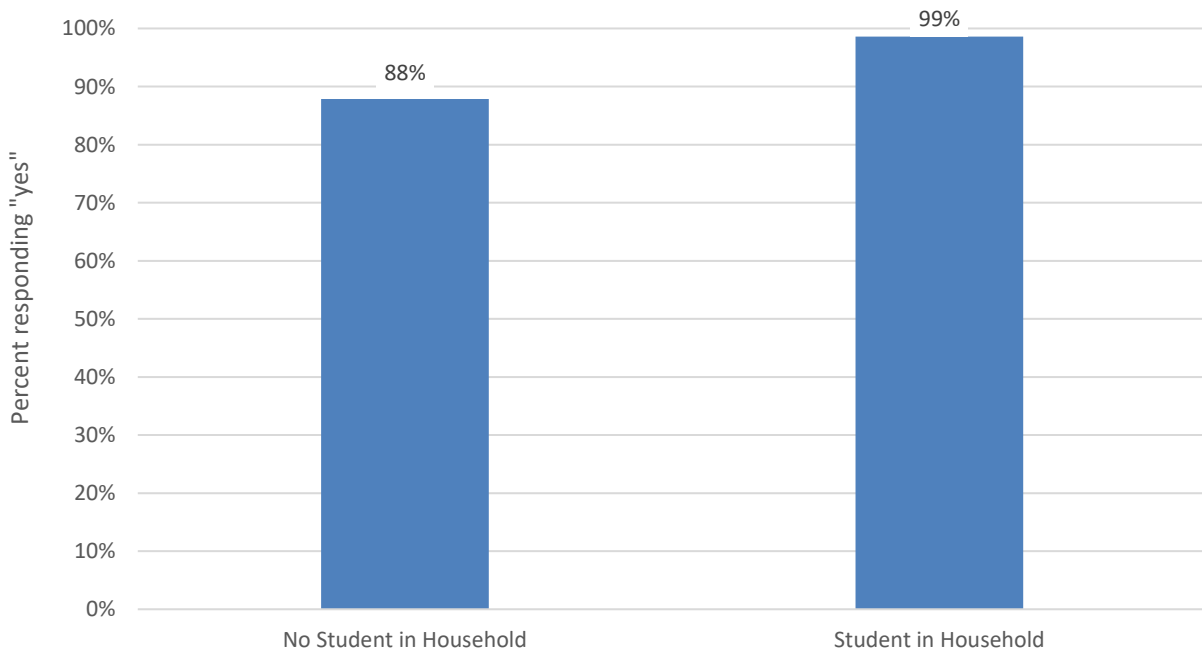


Figure 25. Percent of households that receive home internet service by household size

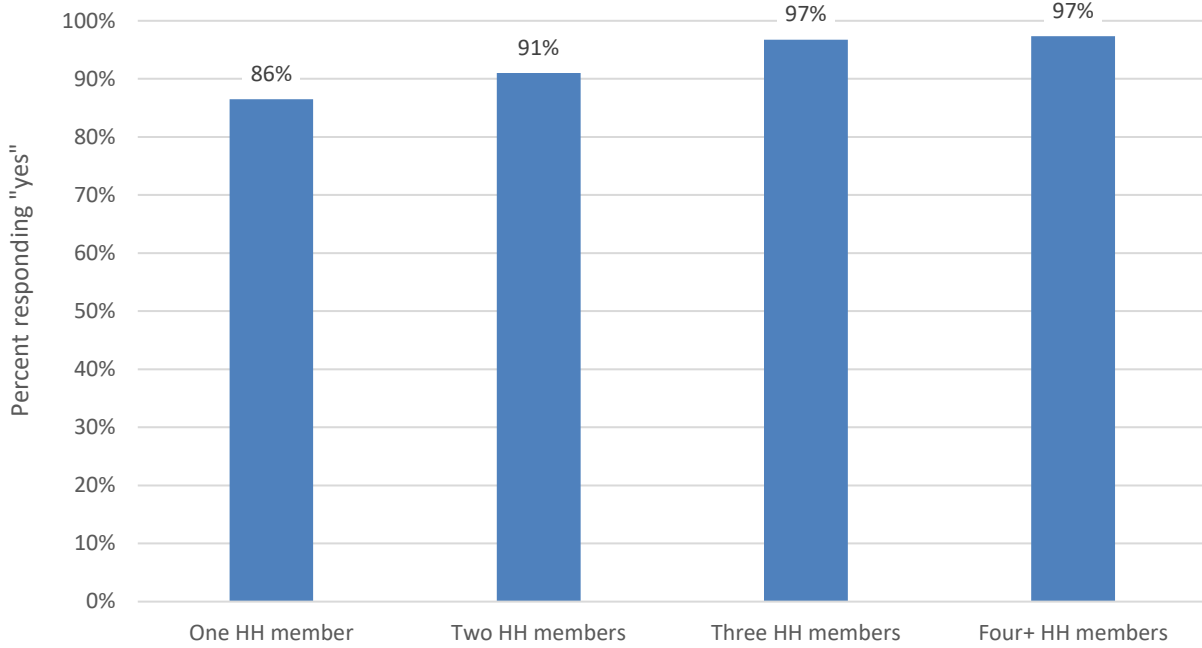


Figure 26. Percent of households that receive home internet service by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

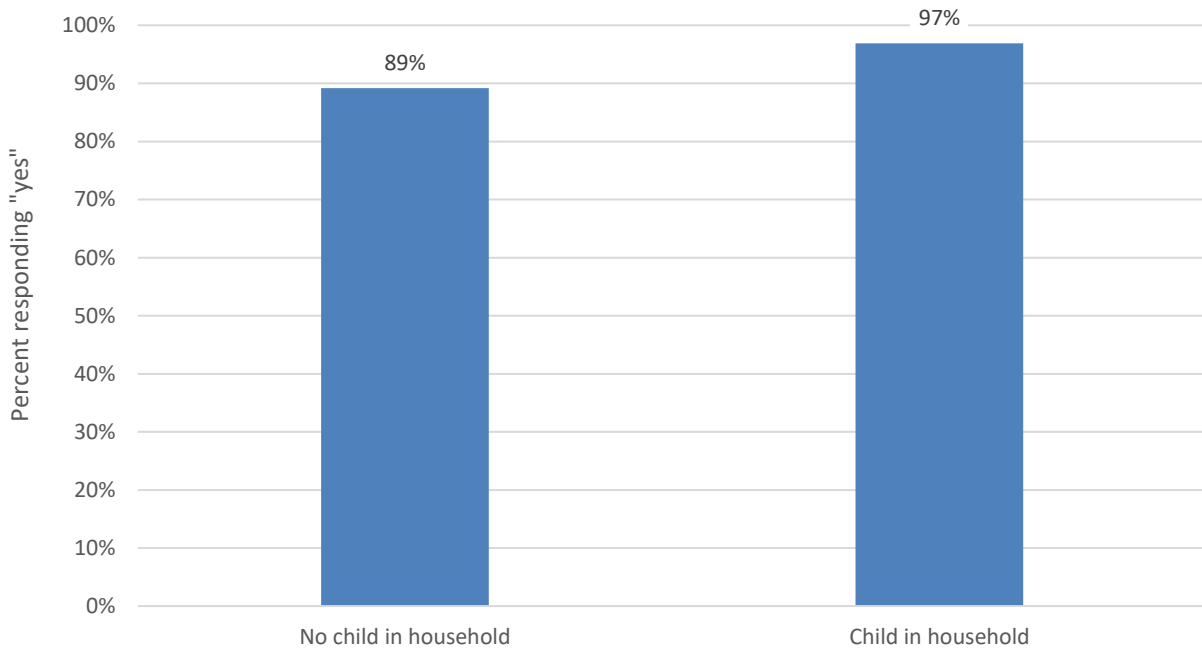


Figure 27. Percent of households that receive home internet service by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

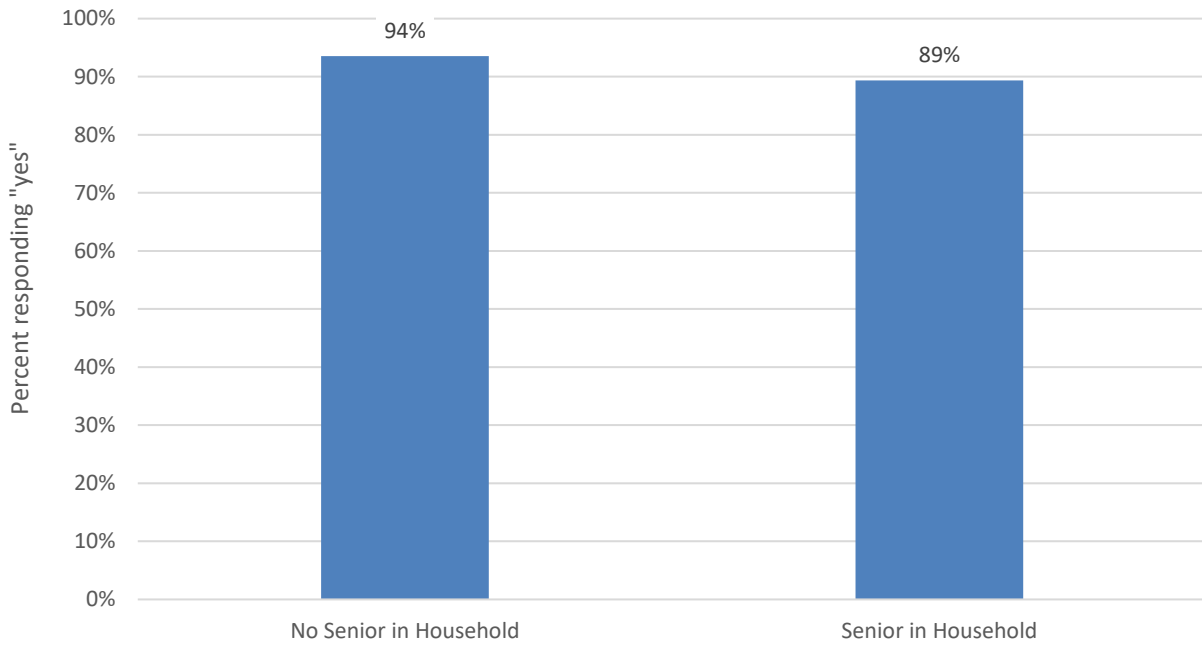
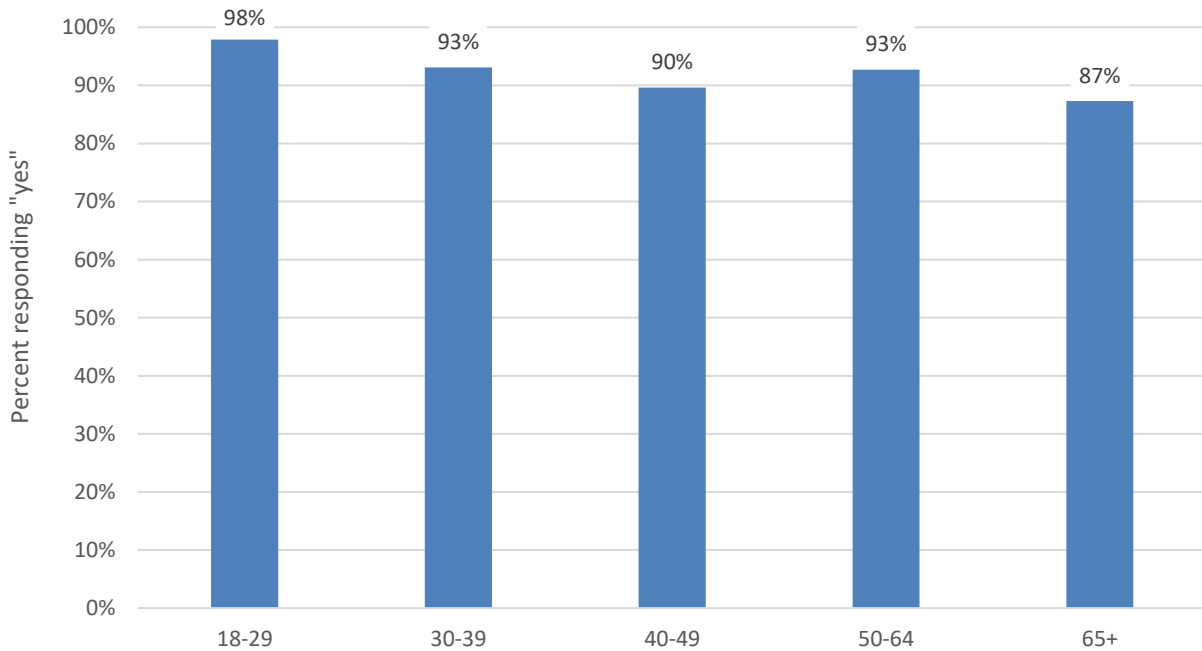


Figure 28. Percent of households that receive home internet service by respondent age



Does your household purchase home internet service from an internet service provider?

Figure 29. Percent of households that purchase home internet service

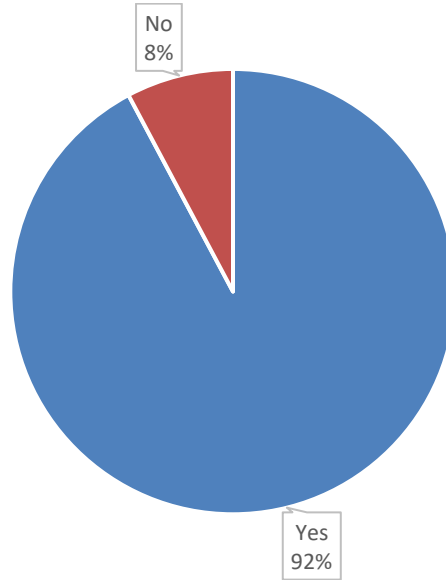


Figure 30. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by region

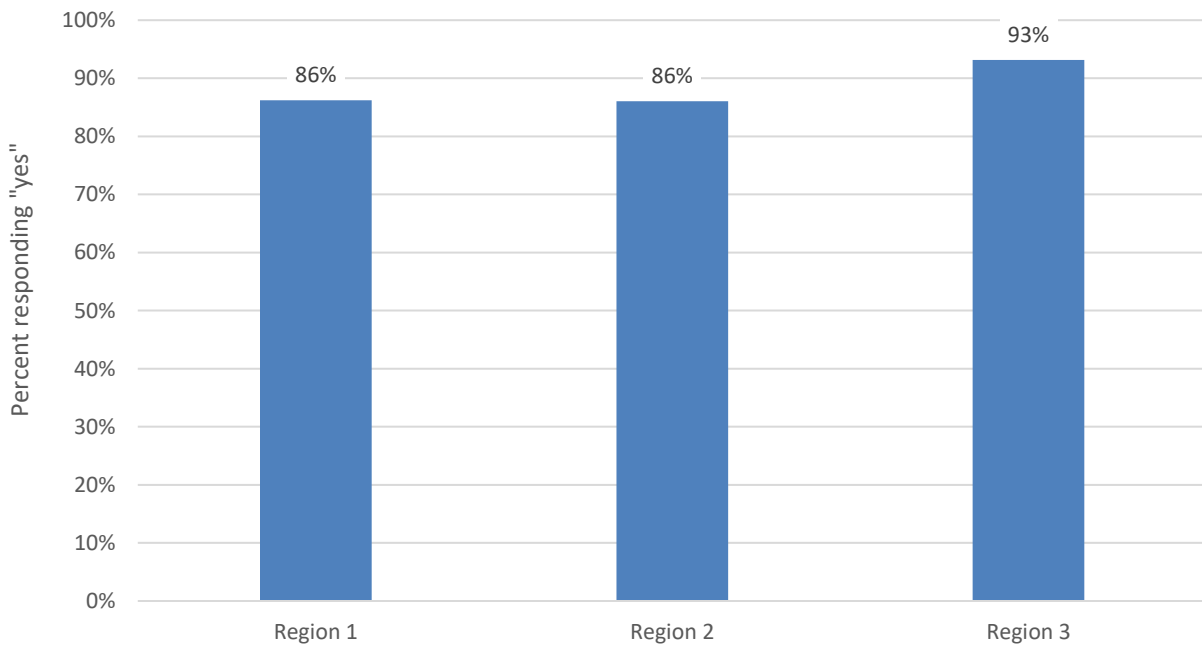


Figure 31. Percent of at-risk households that purchase home internet service

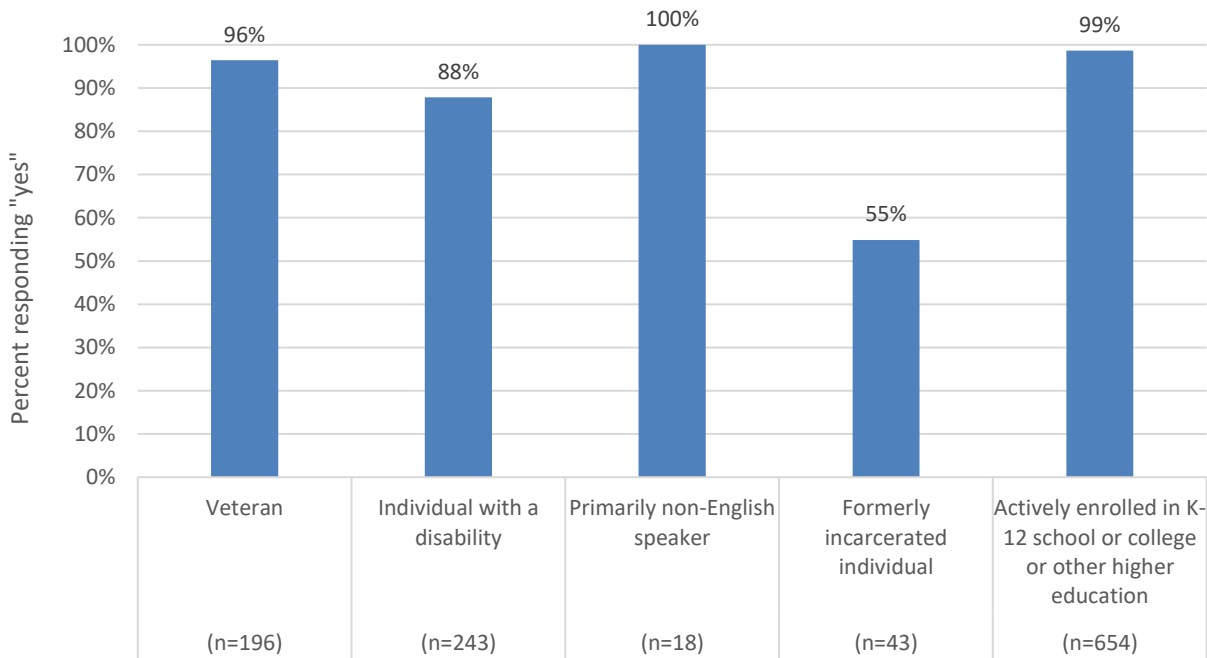


Figure 32. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by household income

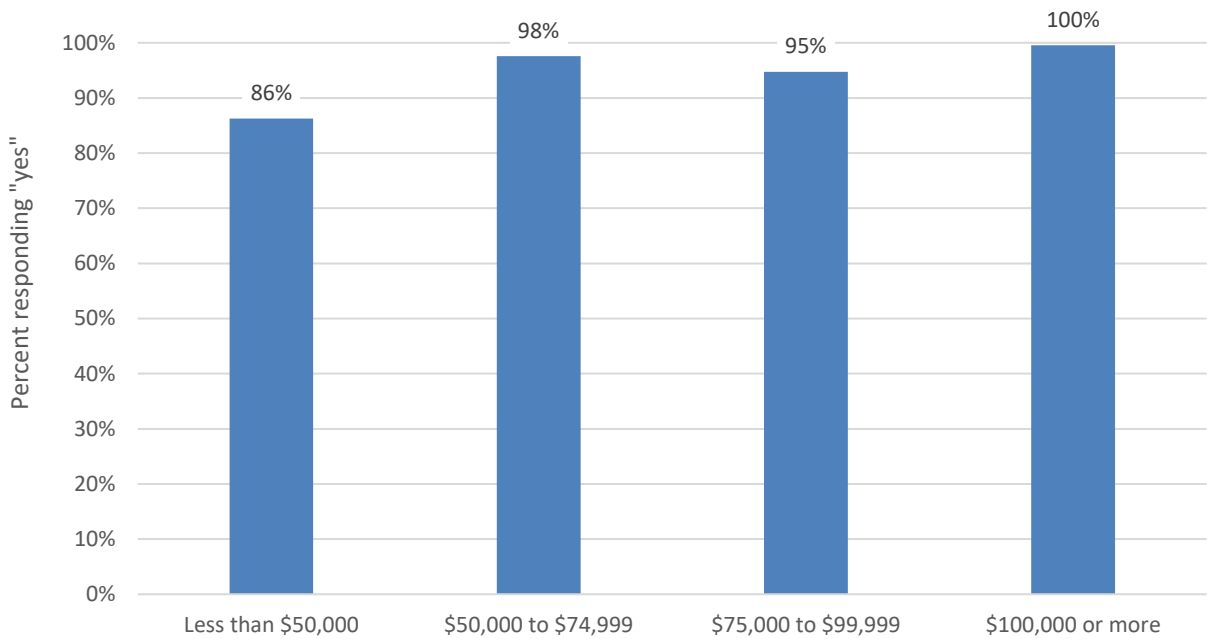


Figure 33. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by race/ethnicity

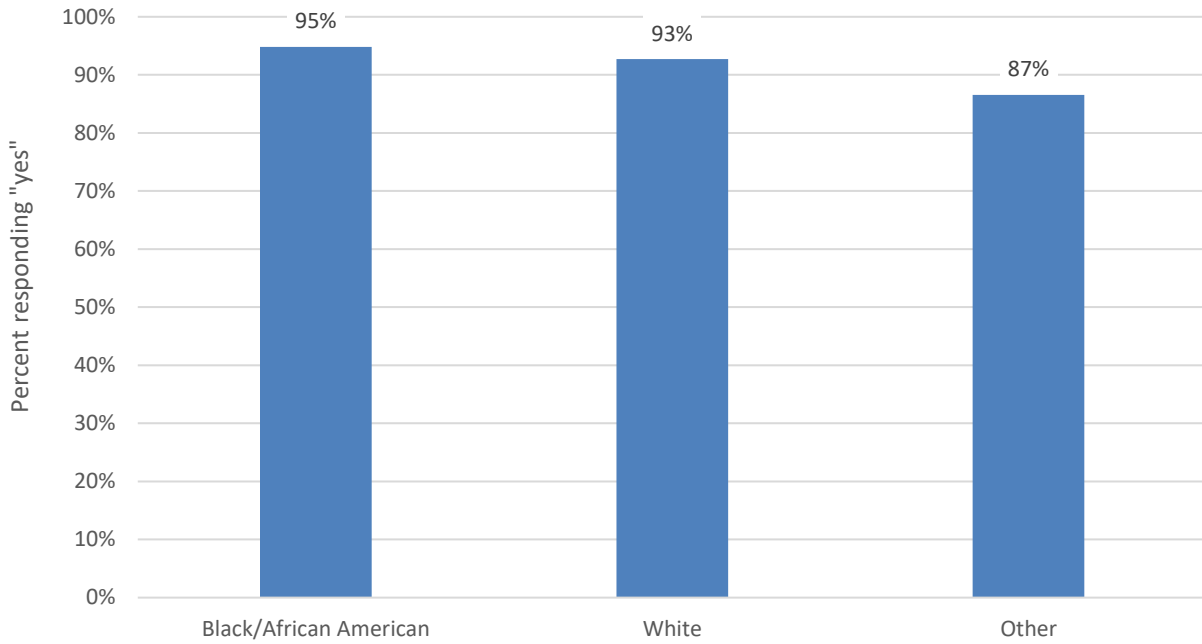


Figure 34. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by student in household

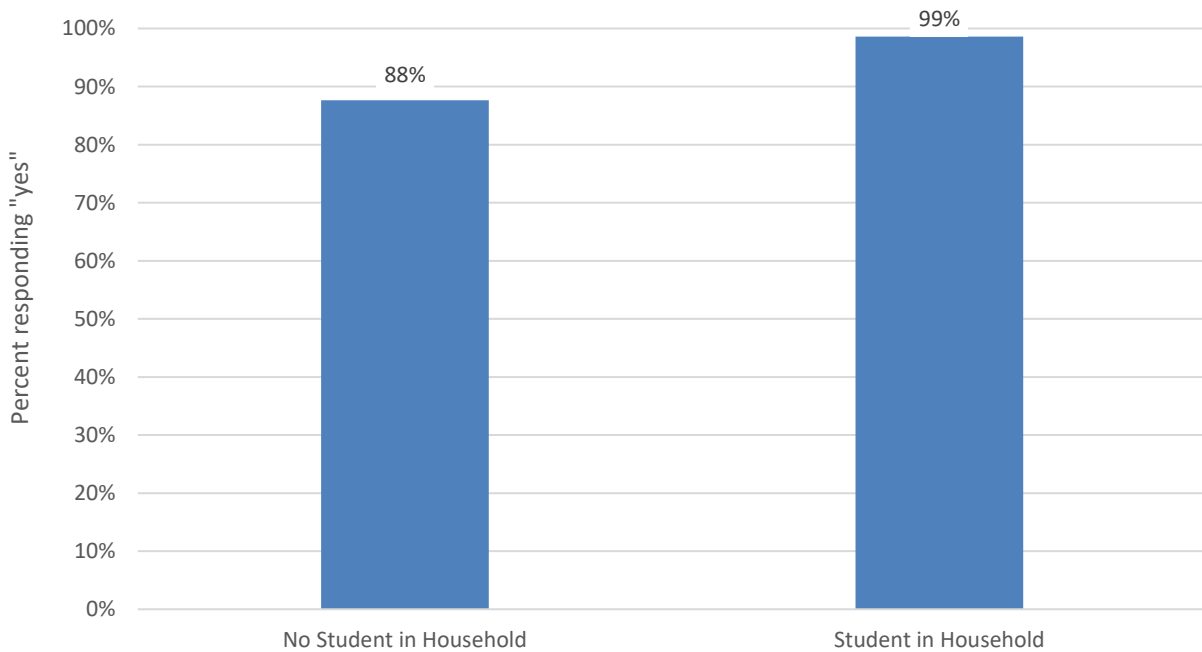


Figure 35. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by household size

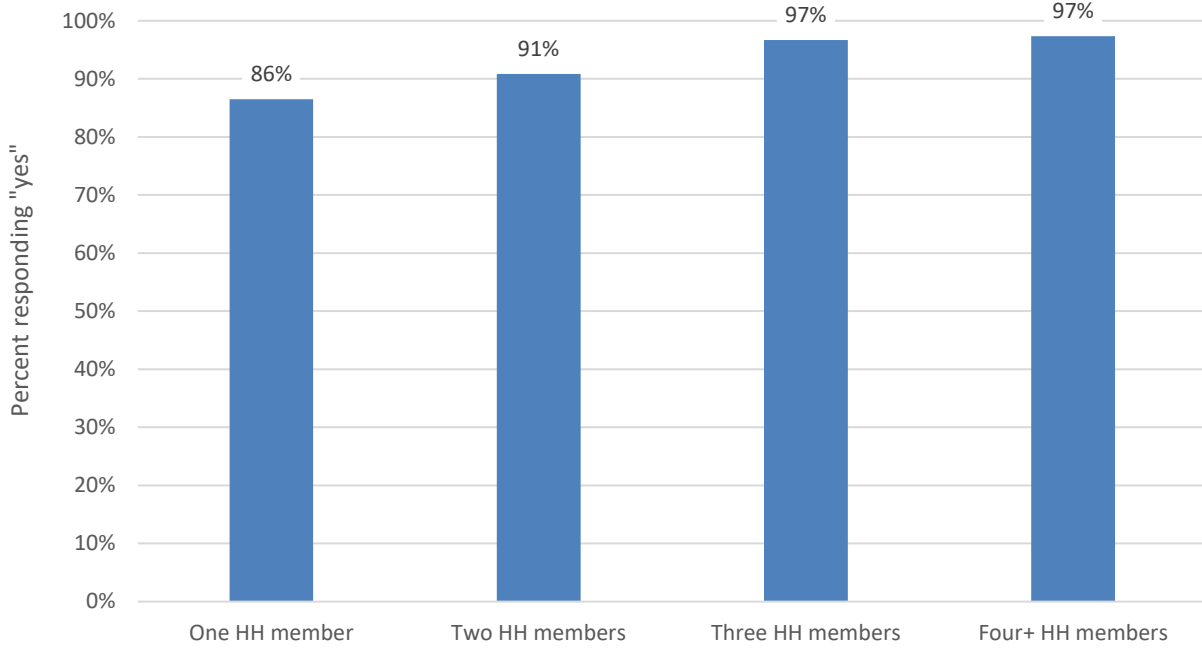


Figure 36. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

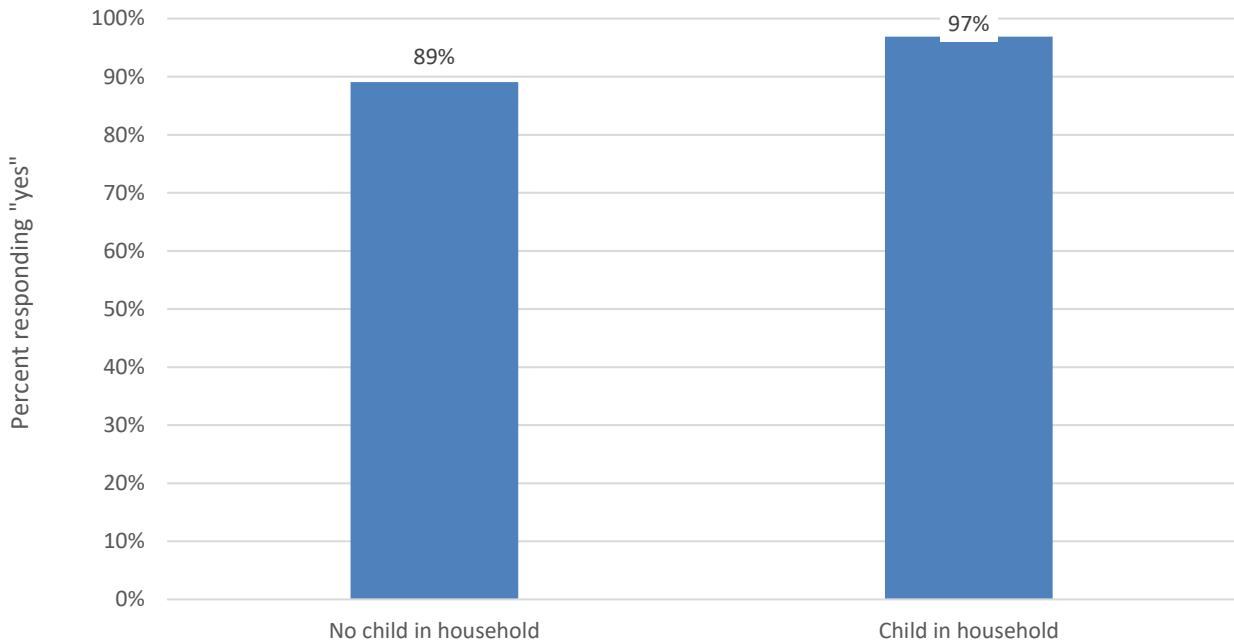


Figure 37. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

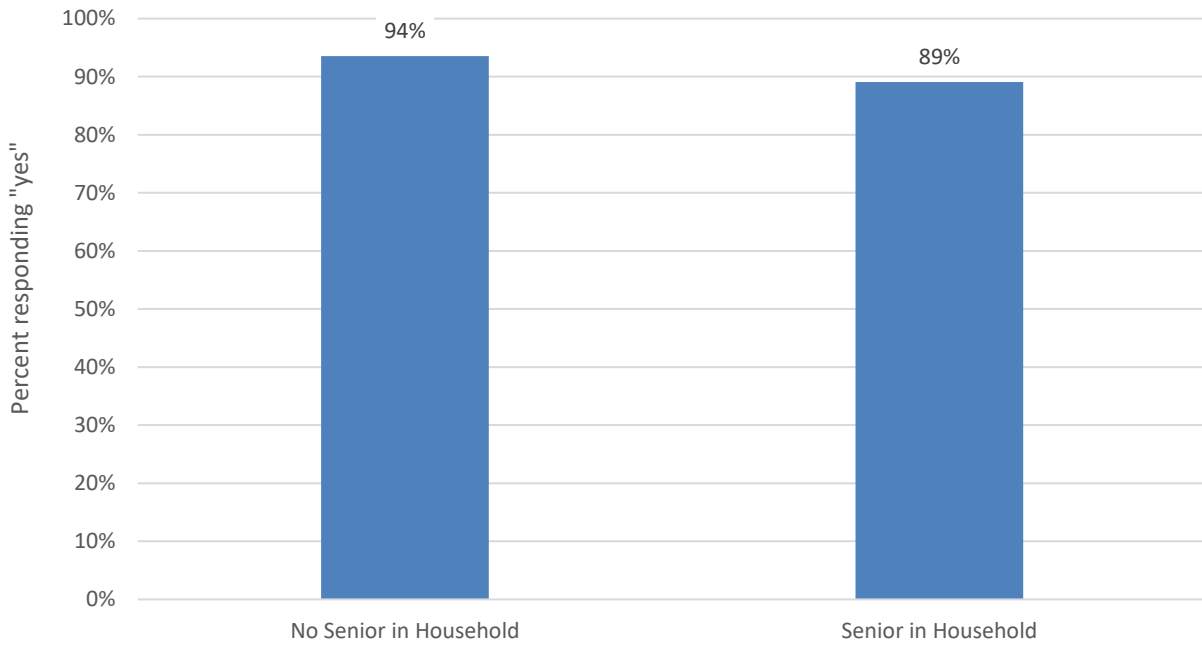
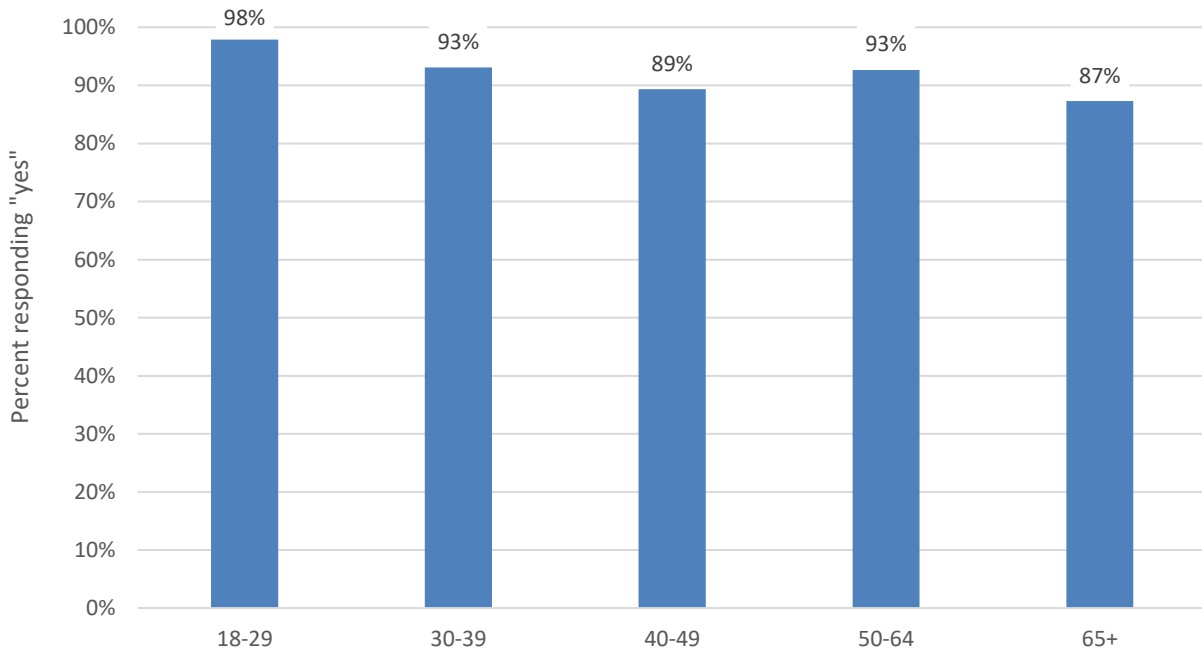
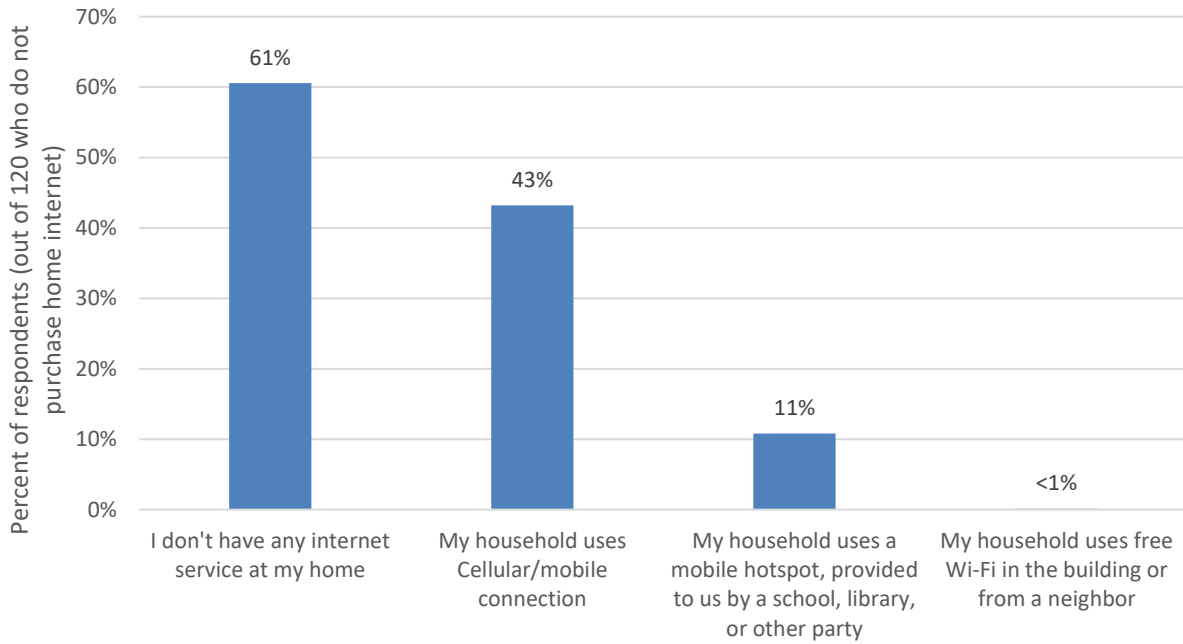


Figure 38. Percent of households that purchase home internet service by respondent age



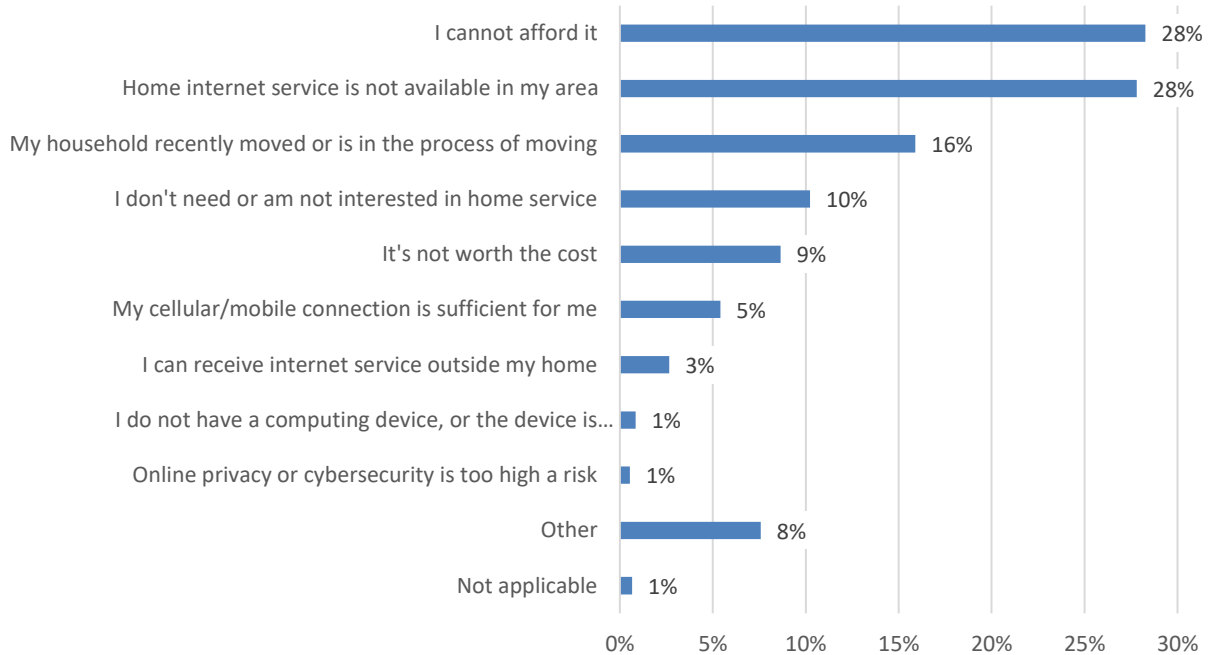
We understand that you don't purchase a home internet service. If you access the internet at home in other ways, which of the following about your service at home is correct:

Figure 39. Percent of households without home internet service who access the internet in other ways



What are the reasons why your household does not purchase home internet service?

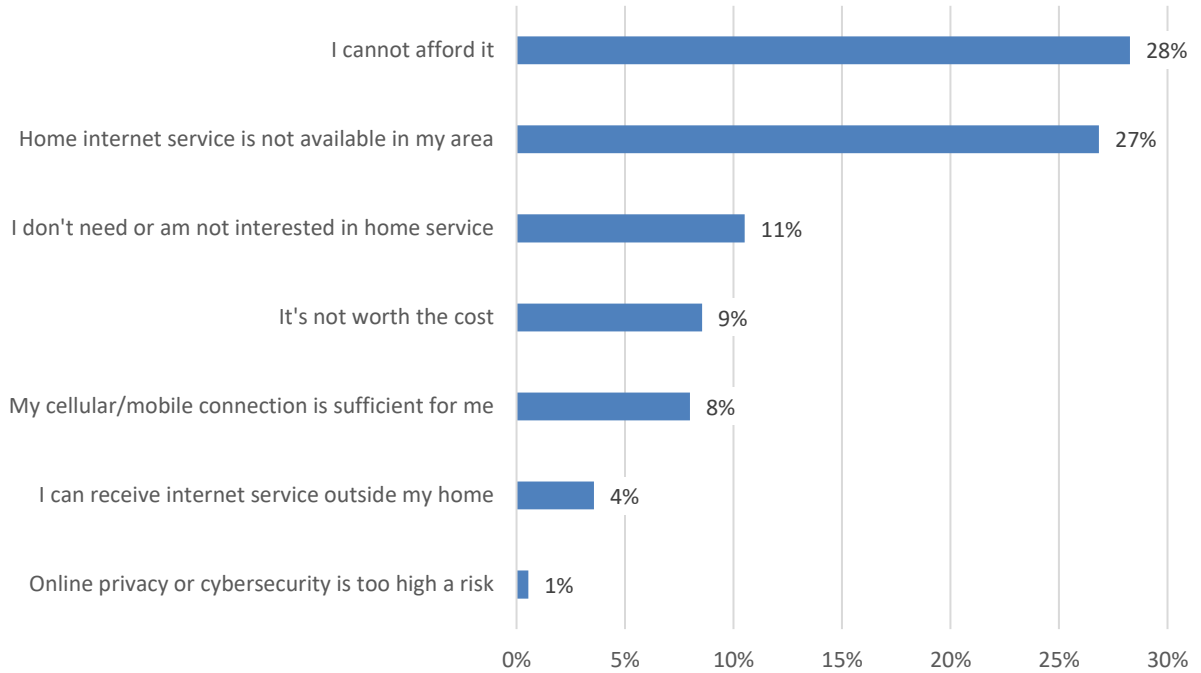
Figure 40. Reasons households do not purchase home internet service



Percent of respondents (out of 121 who do not purchase home internet)

Of the reasons you picked for not purchasing a home internet service, which do you and the members of your household consider to be the most important?

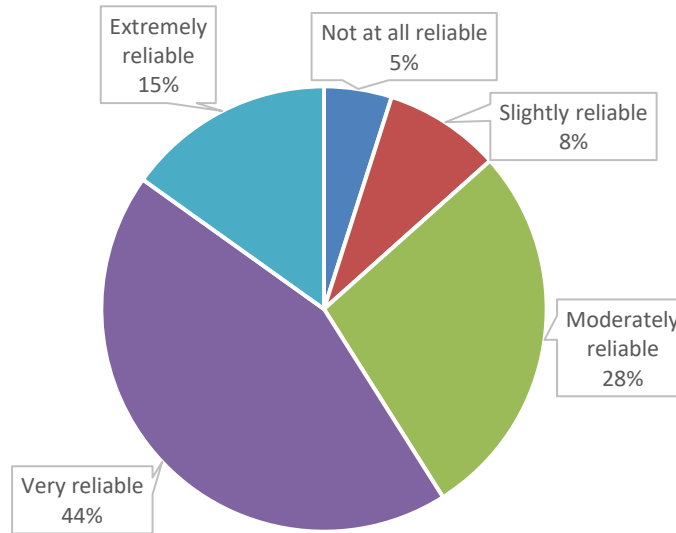
Figure 41. Most important reason households do not purchase home internet service



Number of respondents (out of 121 who do not purchase home internet)

How reliable is your home internet service? For example, unreliable service could mean that the service is not available, or experiences sudden drops in speed.

Figure 42. Reliability of home internet service



Percent of households with home internet service

Figure 43. Reliability of home internet service by household income

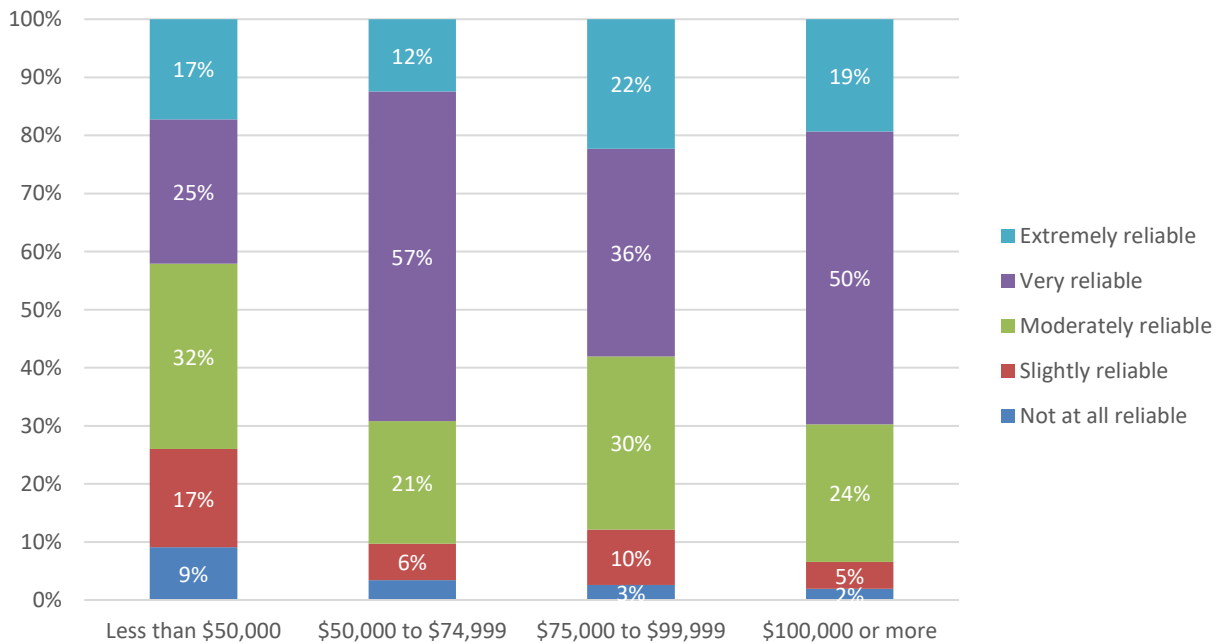


Figure 44. Reliability of home internet service by race/ethnicity

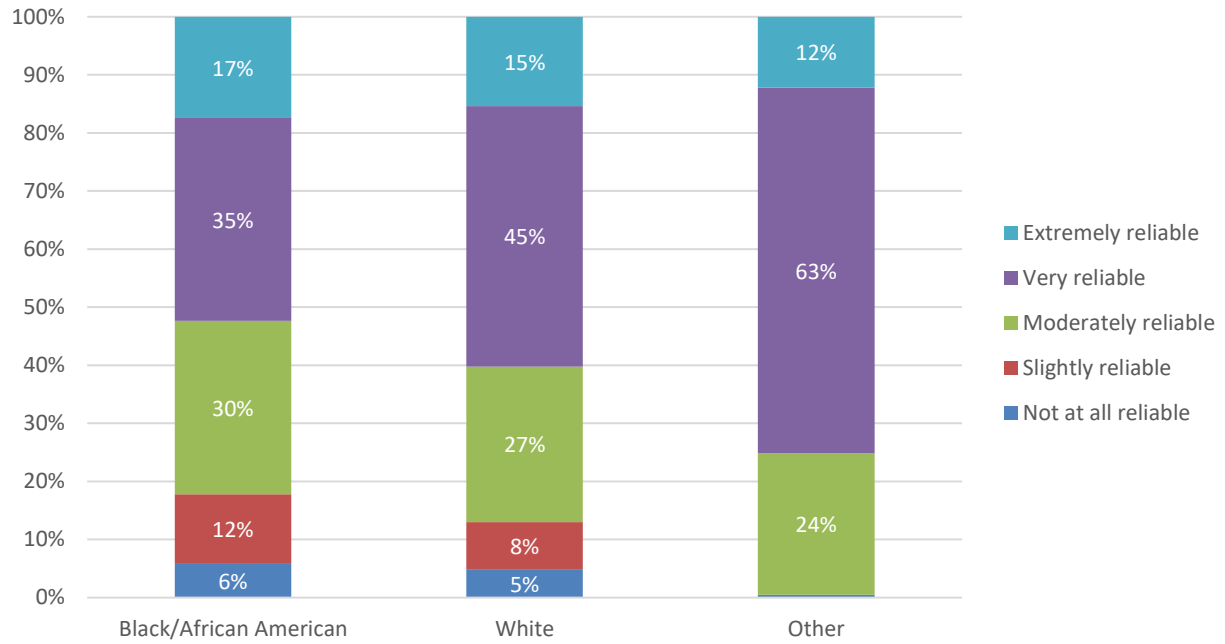


Figure 45. Reliability of home internet service by household size

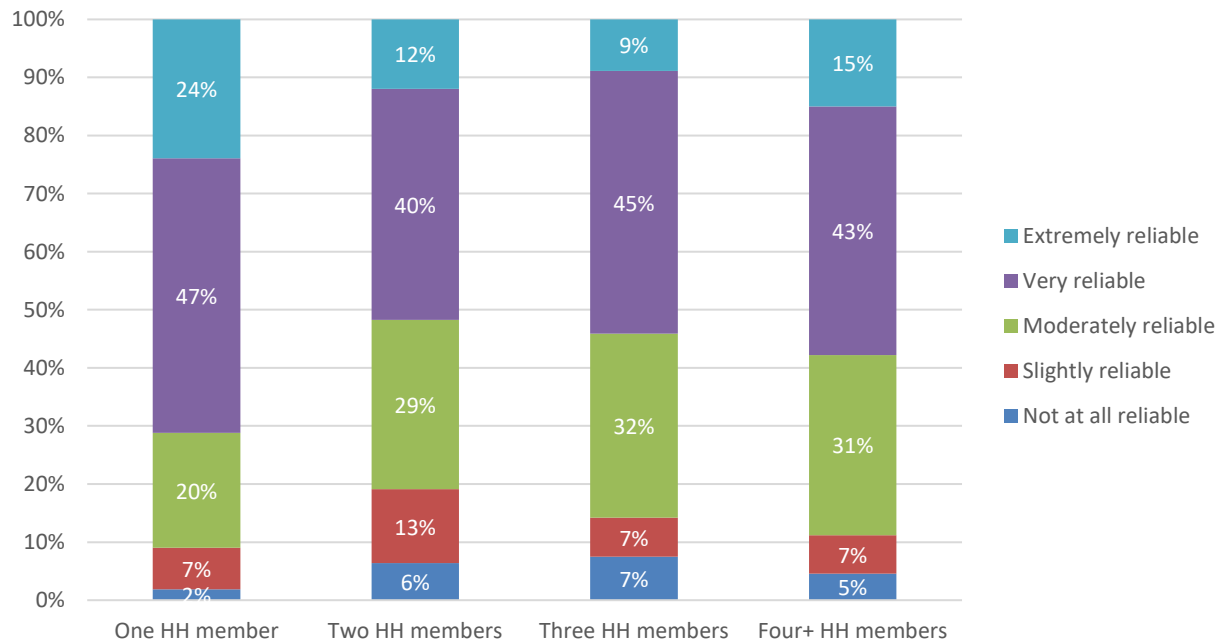


Figure 46. Reliability of home internet service by seniors in household (at least one person age 65+ in the household)

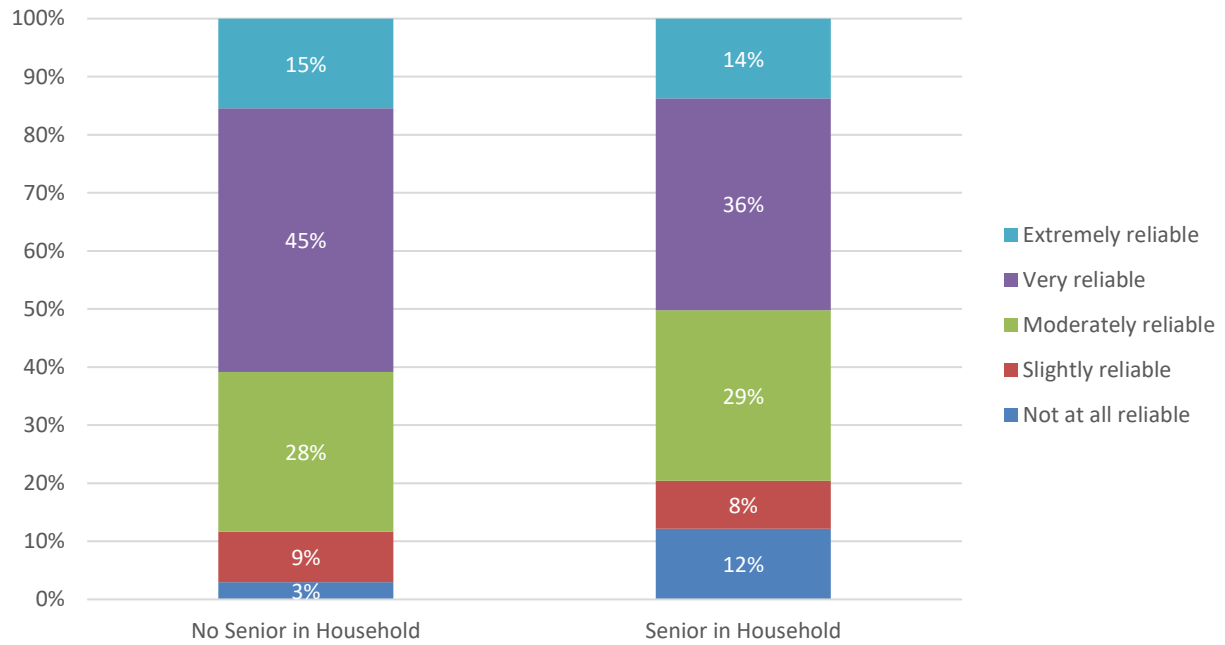
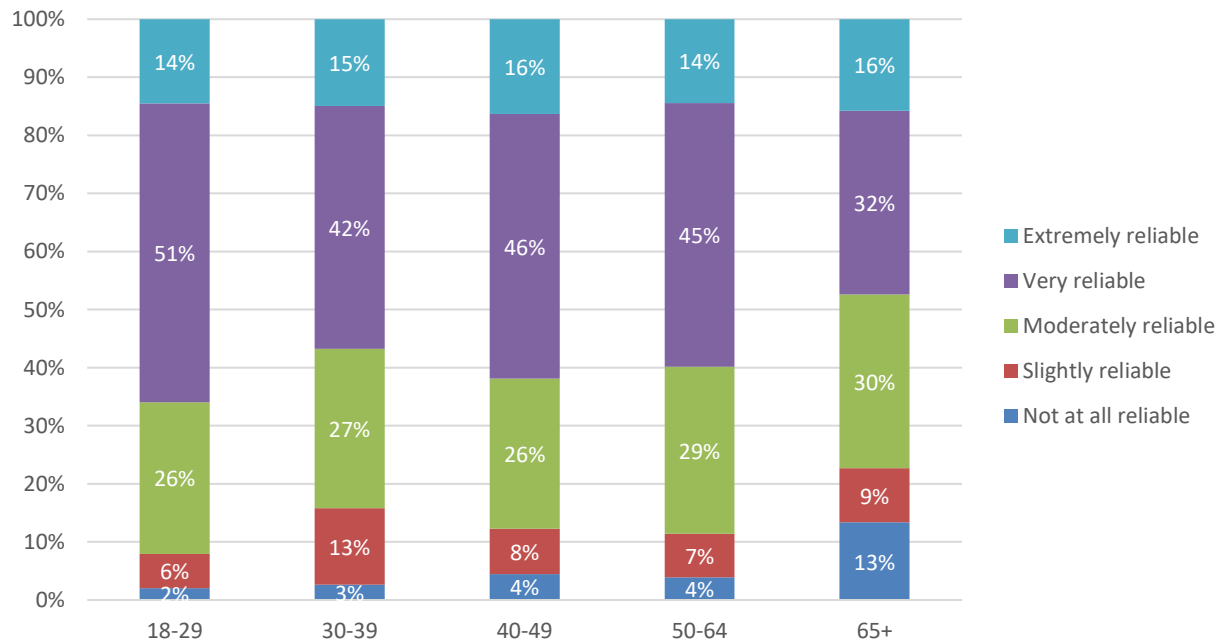


Figure 47. Reliability of home internet service by respondent age



Are you currently enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program, Lifeline, or a subsidy program offered by your internet service provider?

Figure 48. Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs

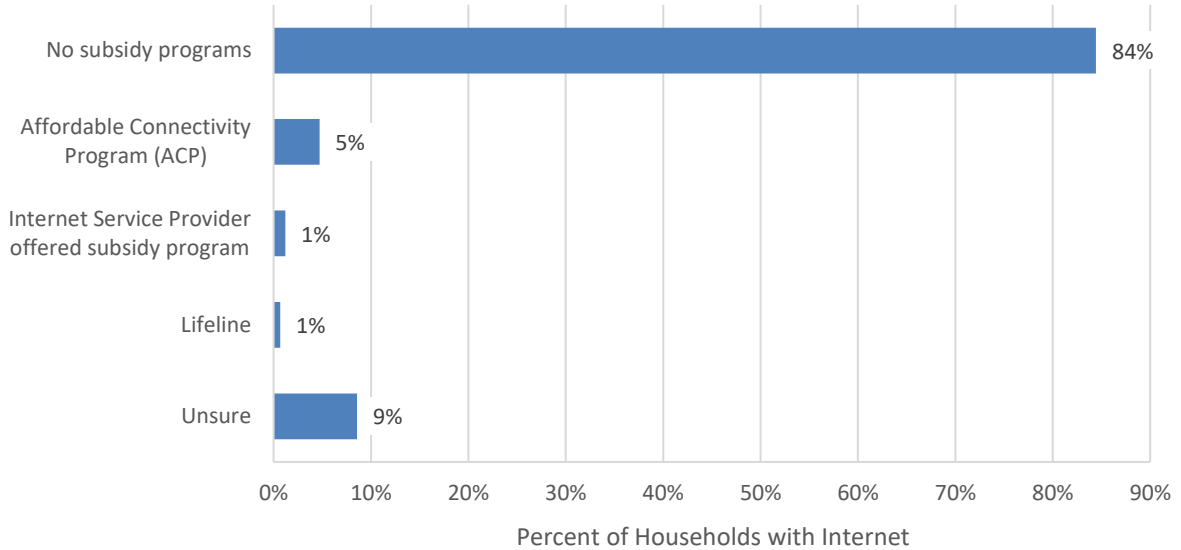
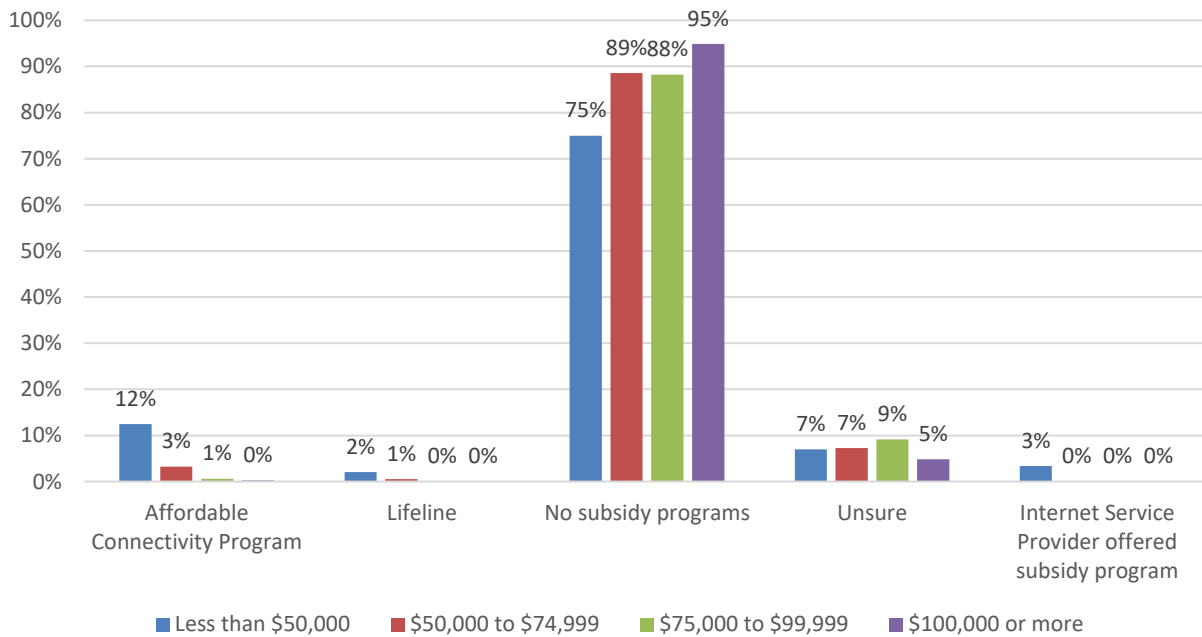


Figure 49. Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by household income



Please estimate how much you pay per month for your home internet service.

Figure 50. Monthly cost of home internet service

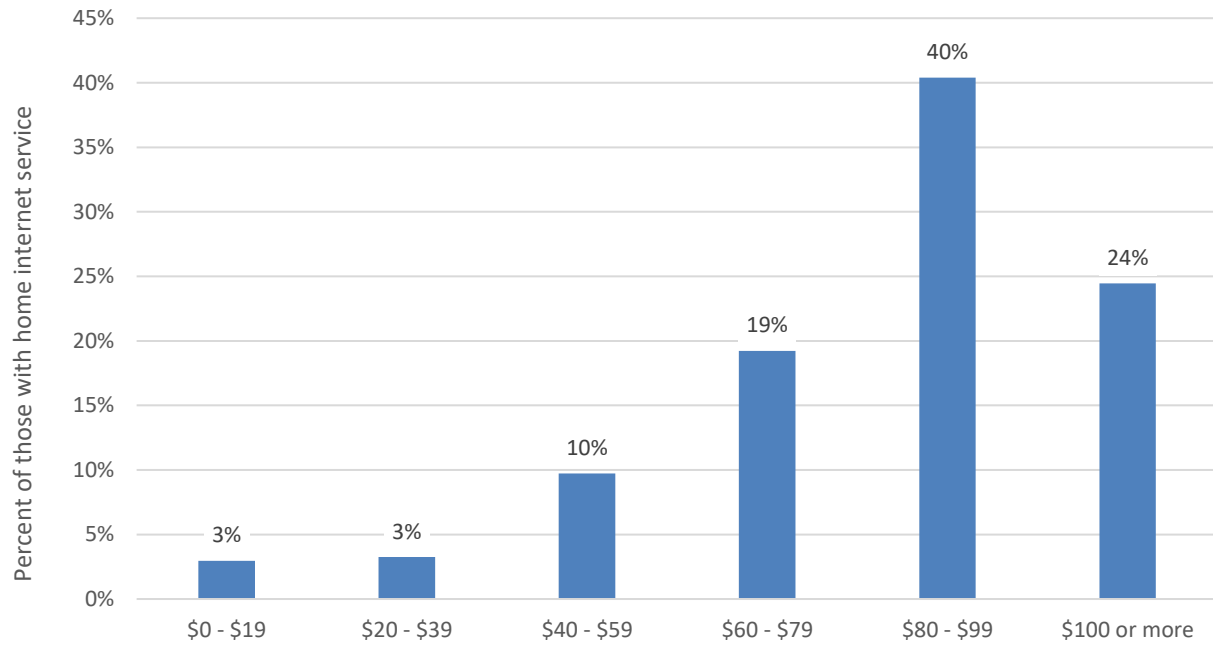
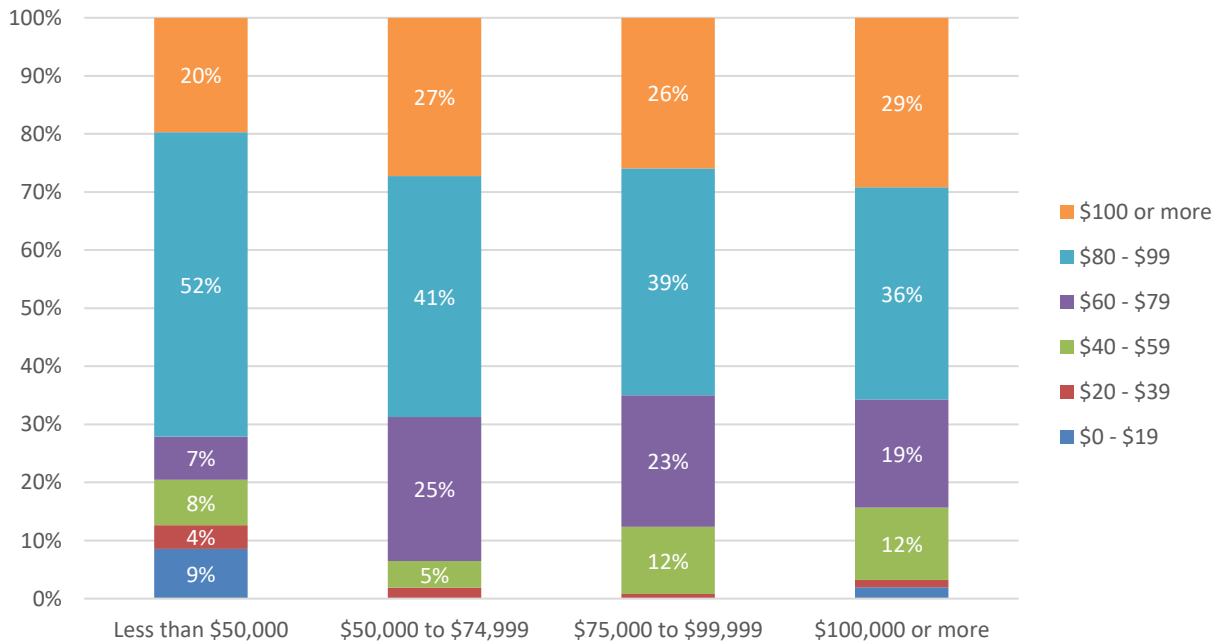


Figure 51. Monthly cost of home internet service by household income



Please estimate how much you are willing to pay per month for high-speed, reliable home internet service.

Figure 52. Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service

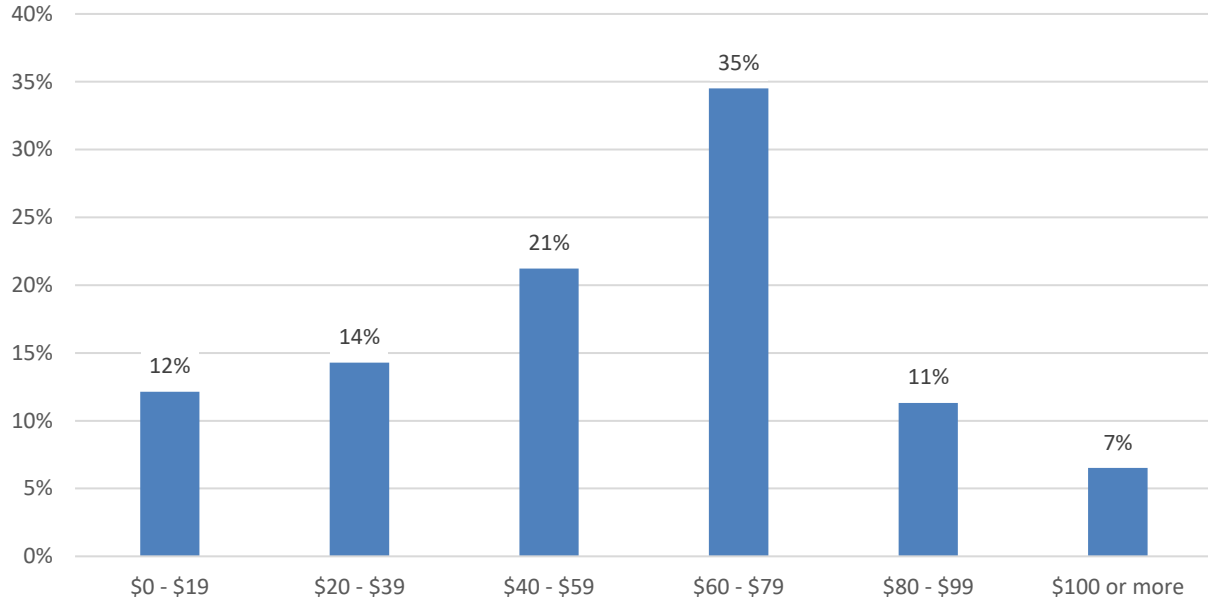
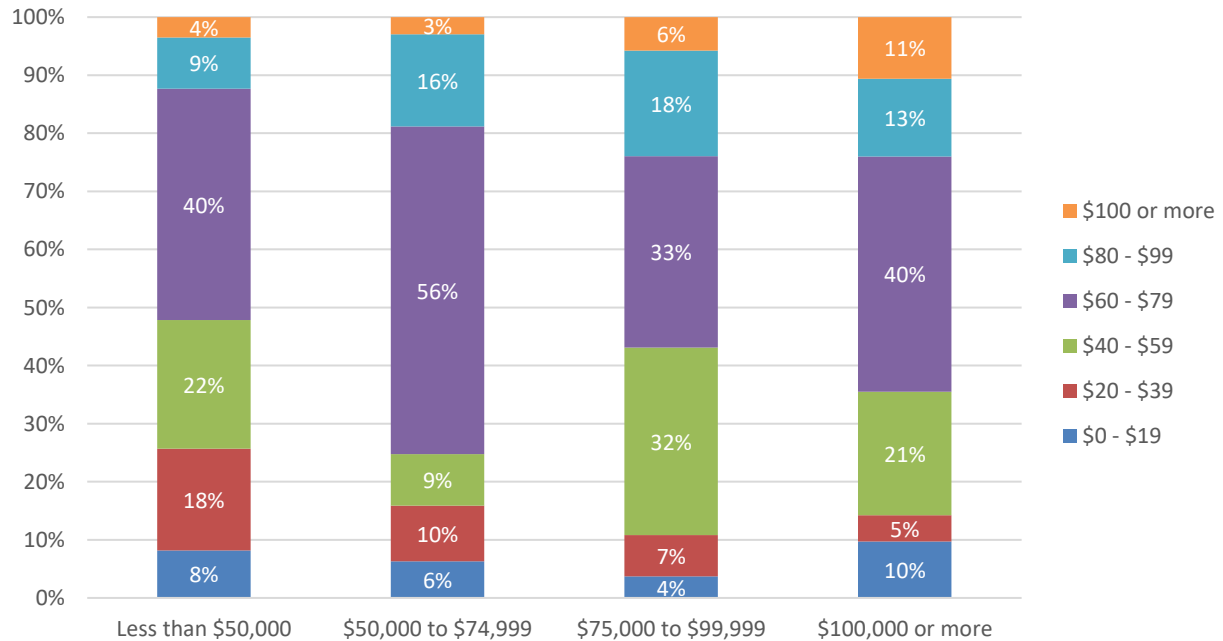


Figure 53. Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by household income



Internet devices questions

For each of the following devices, how many does your household use that are in good working condition?

Figure 54. Number of computing devices in the household

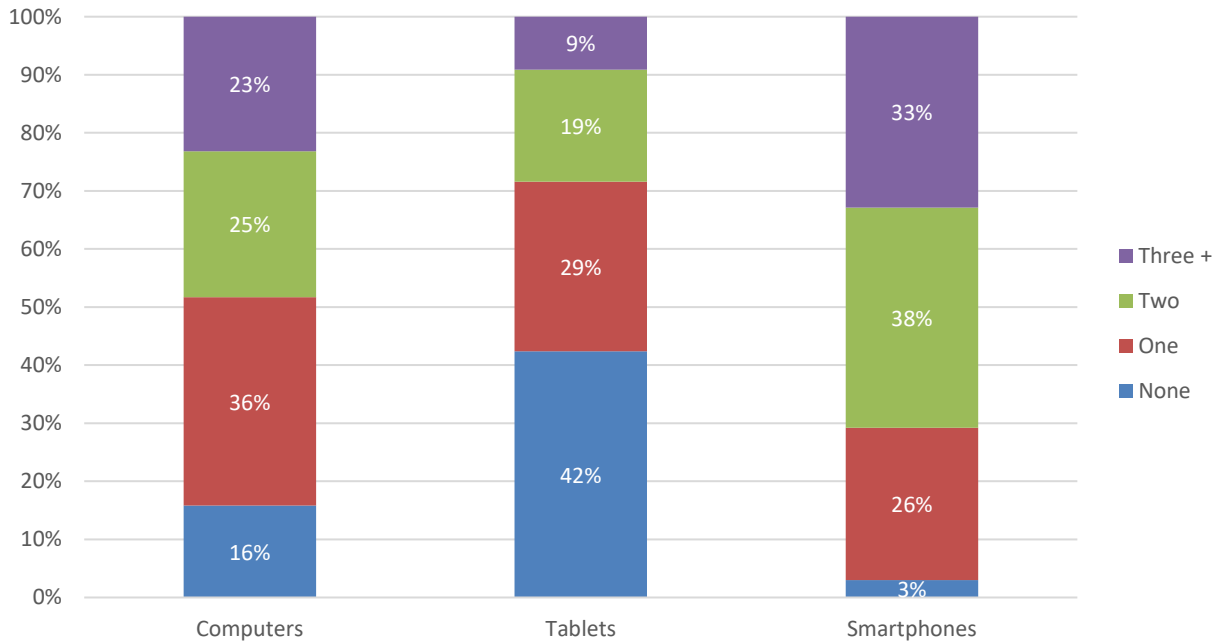


Figure 55. Average number of computing devices in the household (among households with at least one device)

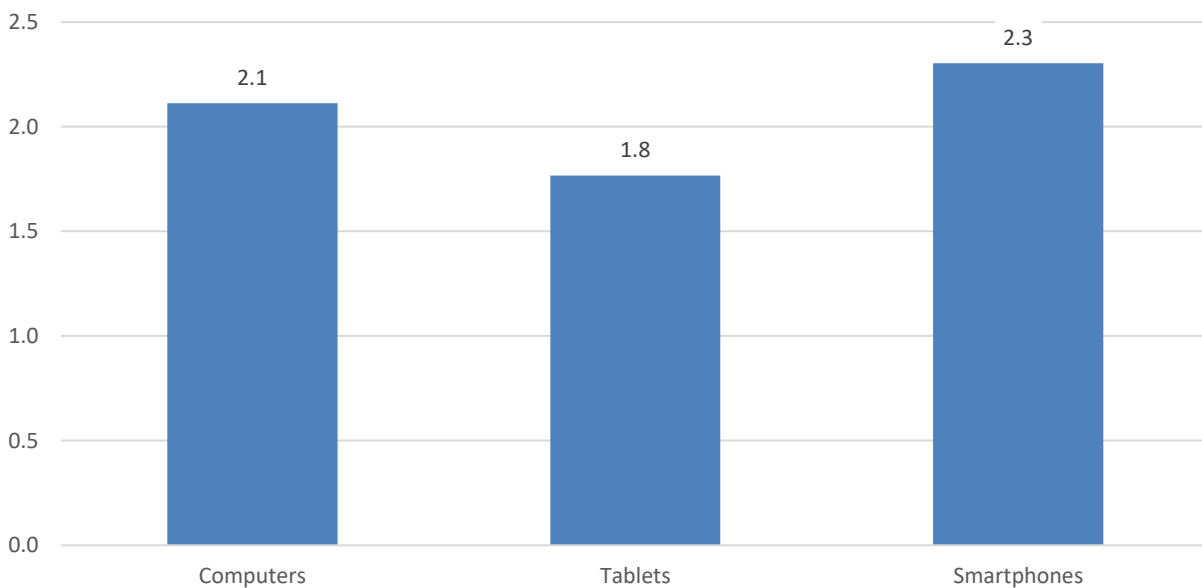


Table 43. Number of computing devices by household income

		Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or more
Computers	None	19%	16%	8%	5%
	One	48%	36%	38%	14%
	Two	21%	30%	25%	32%
	Three or more	12%	19%	29%	49%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	355	199	159	301
Tablets	None	50%	61%	36%	25%
	One	30%	25%	35%	25%
	Two	14%	13%	22%	29%
	Three or more	6%	1%	7%	21%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	355	199	159	301
Smartphones	None	7%	0%	1%	0%
	One	42%	35%	14%	13%
	Two	32%	38%	47%	37%
	Three or more	19%	27%	37%	50%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	355	199	159	301

Figure 56. Number of computers by household income

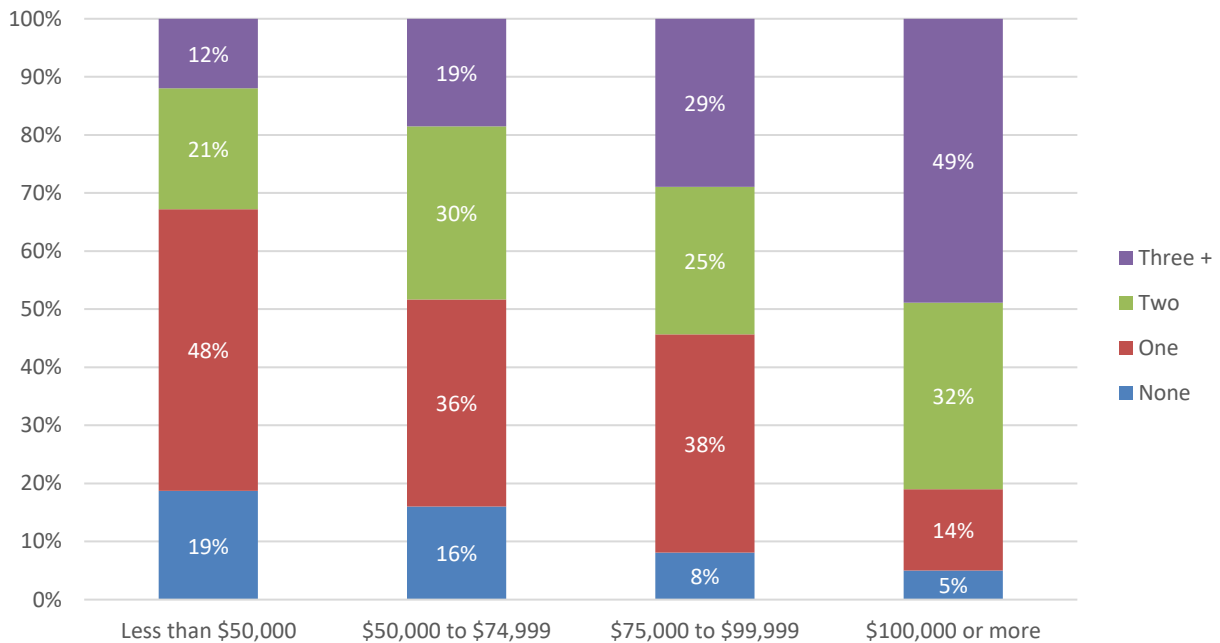


Figure 57. Number of tablets by household income

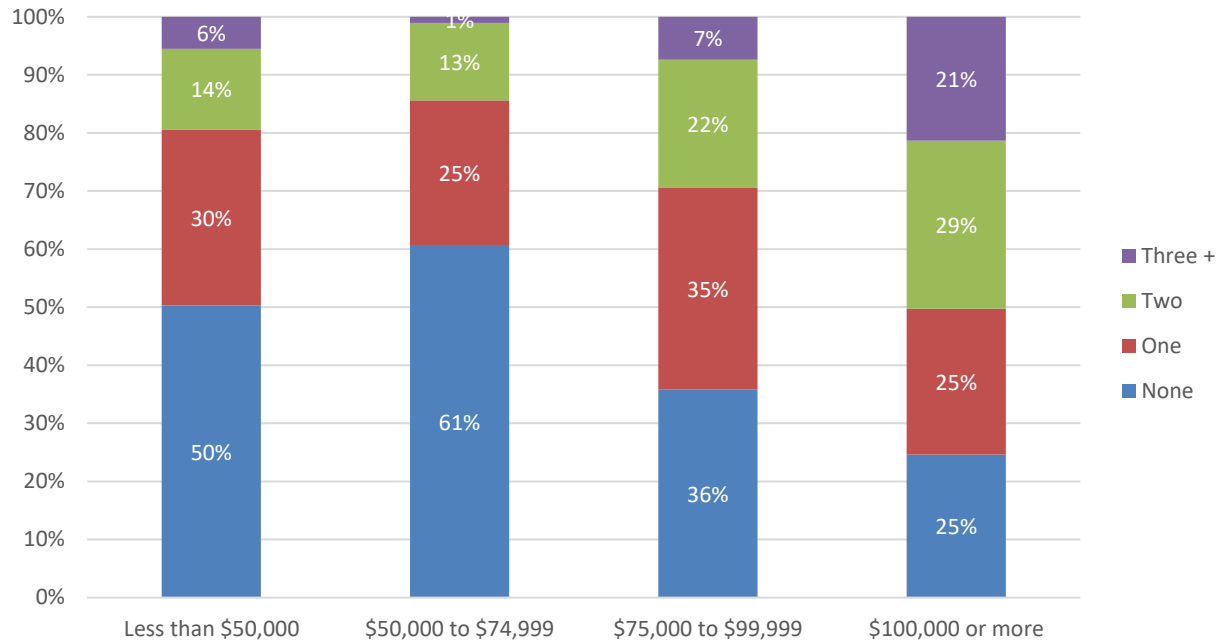


Figure 58. Number of smartphones by household income

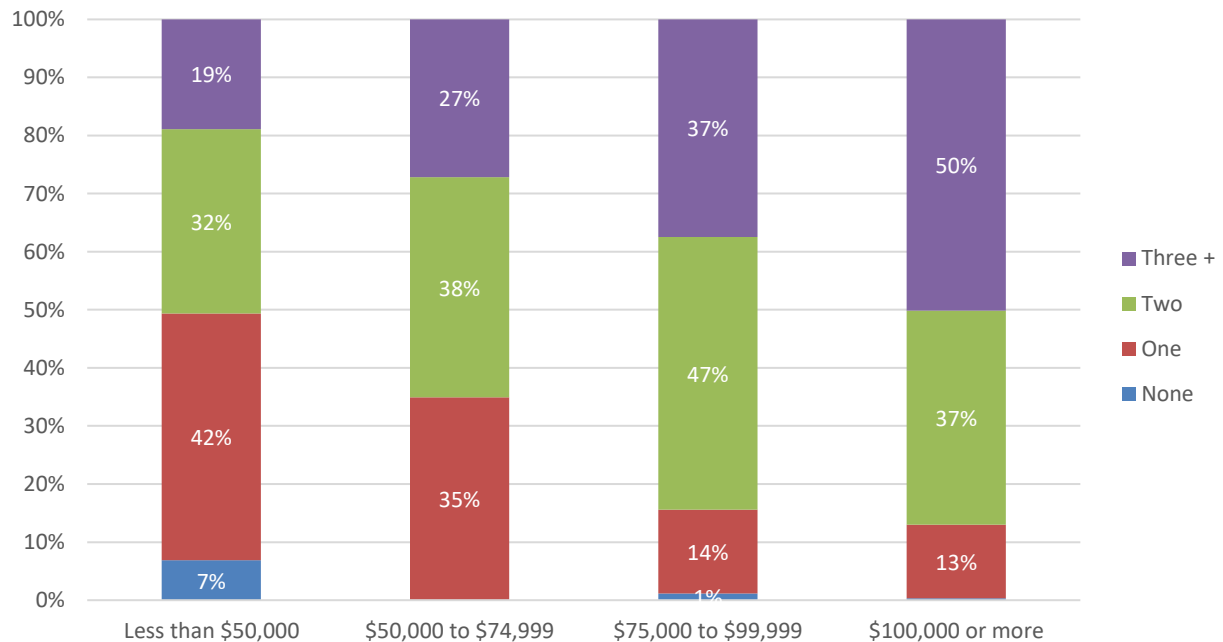


Table 44. Number of computing devices by race/ethnicity

		Black/African American	White	Other
Computers	None	17%	11%	26%
	One	42%	34%	13%
	Two	22%	31%	15%
	Three or more	19%	24%	47%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	471	739	156
Tablets	None	40%	42%	43%
	One	33%	29%	18%
	Two	19%	21%	17%
	Three or more	7%	8%	22%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	471	739	156
Smartphones	None	2%	3%	0%
	One	32%	20%	38%
	Two	33%	44%	15%
	Three or more	32%	33%	48%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	471	739	156

Figure 59. Number of computers by race/ethnicity

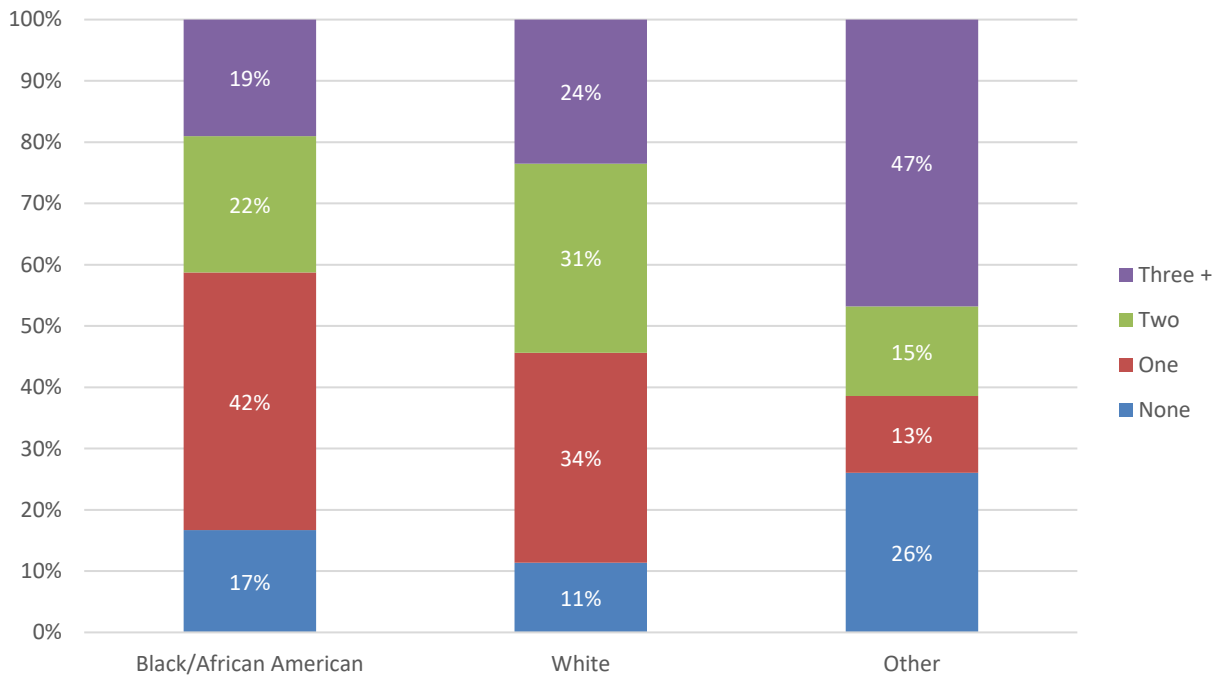


Figure 60. Number of tablets by race/ethnicity

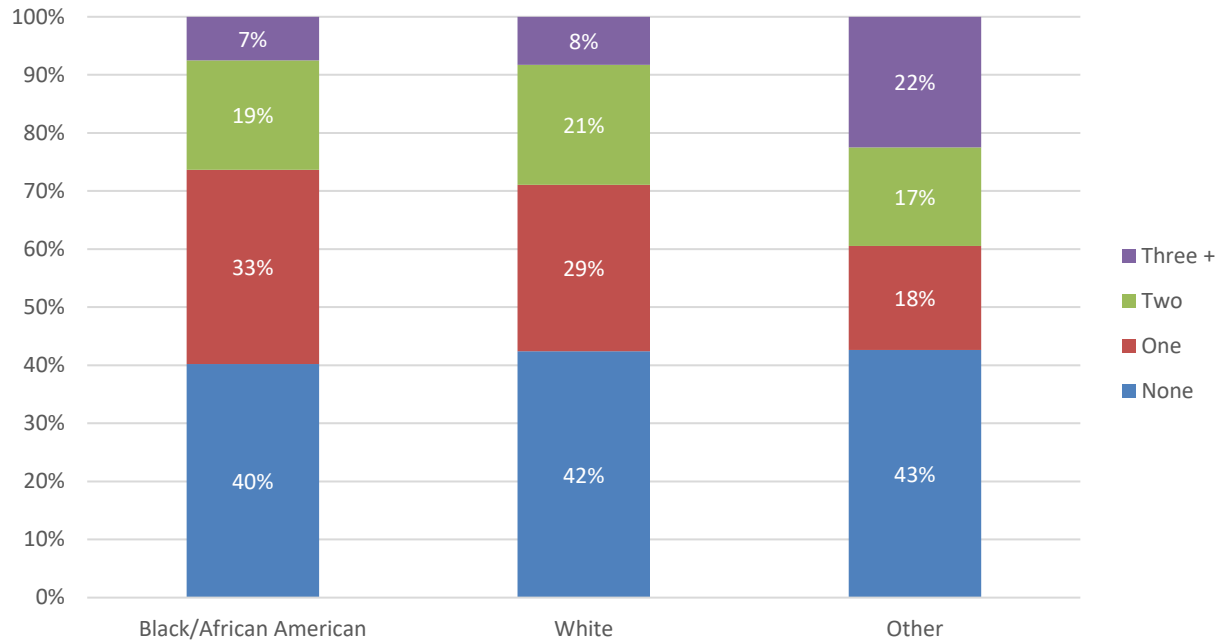


Figure 61. Number of smartphones by race/ethnicity

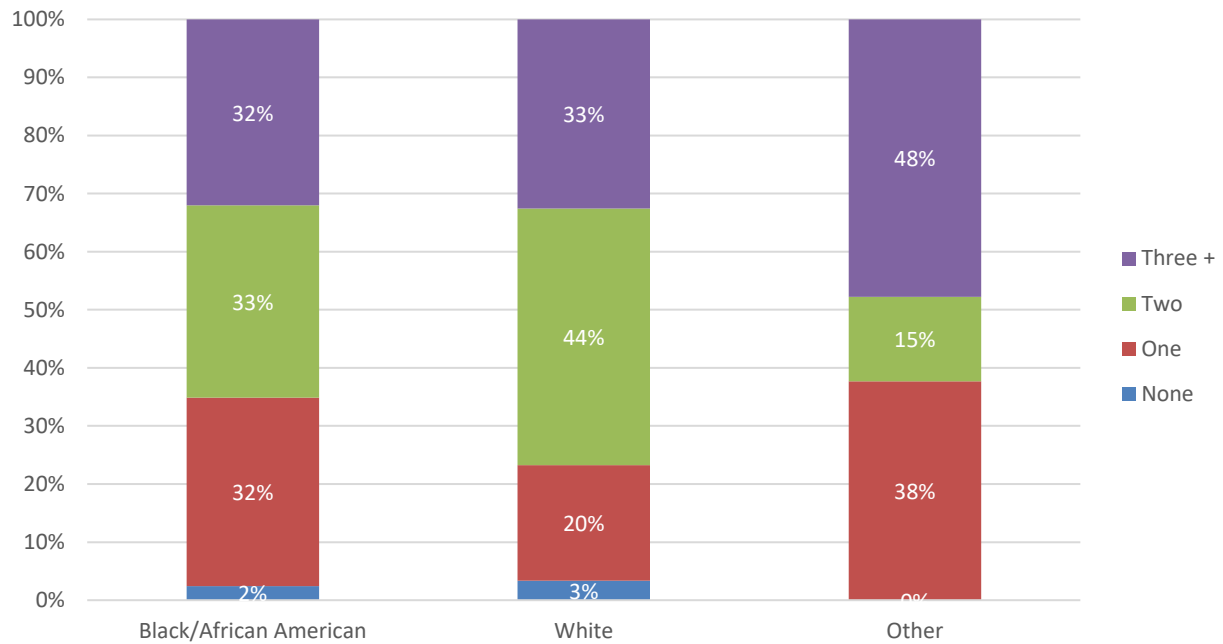


Table 45. Number of computing devices in at-risk households

		Veteran	Individual with a disability	Primarily non-English speaker	Formerly incarcerated individual	Actively enrolled in K-12 school or college or other higher education
Computers	None	9%	19%	0%	57%	12%
	One	33%	34%	18%	15%	27%
	Two	28%	18%	15%	25%	26%
	Three or more	30%	29%	67%	3%	35%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	196	243	18	43	654
Tablets	None	34%	36%	23%	56%	34%
	One	29%	29%	1%	22%	26%
	Two	25%	20%	0%	12%	27%
	Three or more	12%	16%	77%	10%	14%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	196	243	18	43	654
Smartphones	None	1%	6%	0%	0%	2%
	One	14%	19%	18%	55%	19%
	Two	42%	30%	24%	16%	30%
	Three or more	43%	44%	57%	29%	49%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	196	243	18	43	654

Figure 62. Number of computers by student in household

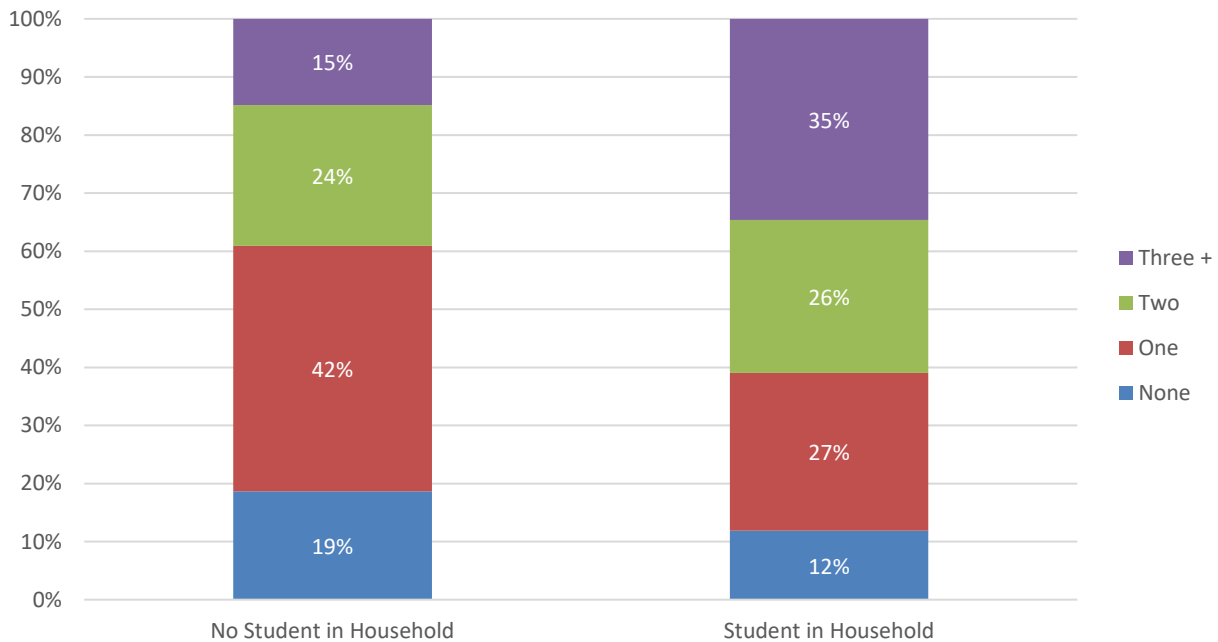


Figure 63. Number of tablets by student in household

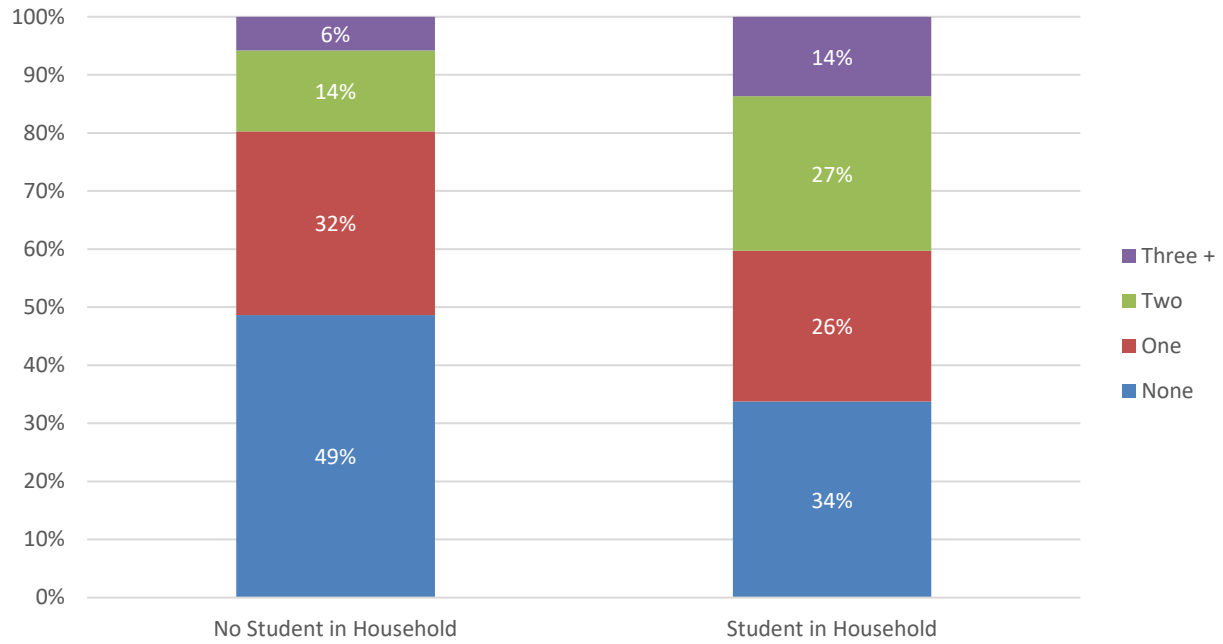


Figure 64. Number of smartphones by student in household

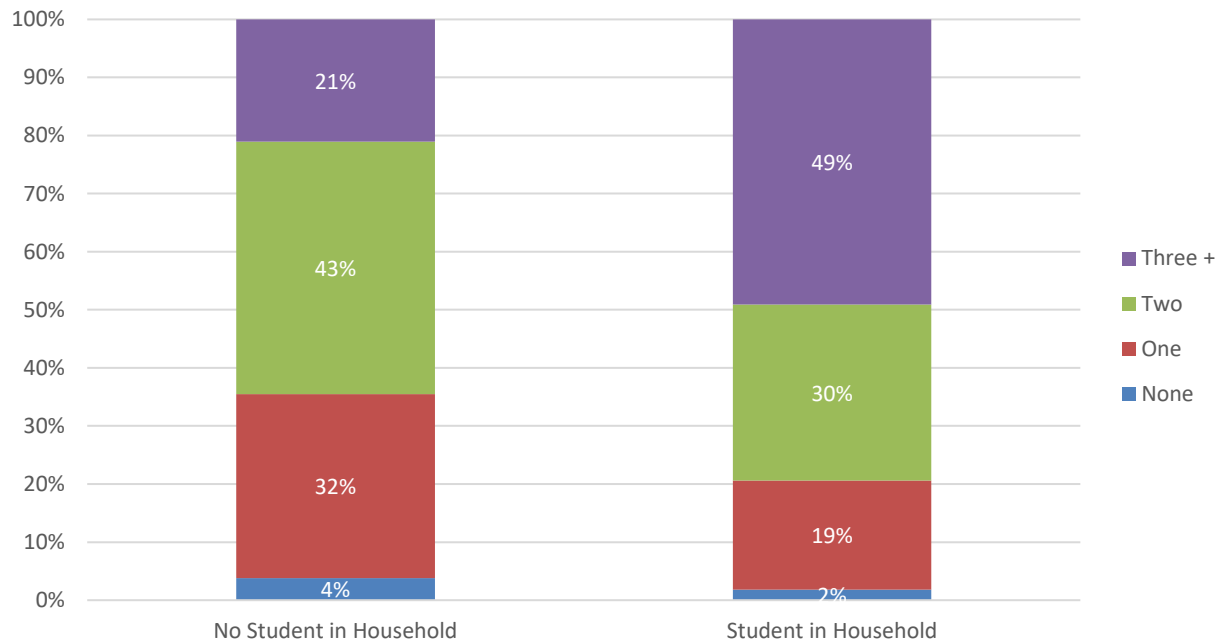


Table 46. Number of computing devices by household size

		One household member	Two household members	Three household members	Four+ household members
Computers	None	27%	16%	8%	7%
	One	61%	37%	27%	18%
	Two	9%	36%	35%	24%
	Three or more	3%	11%	31%	52%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	383	457	267	403
Tablets	None	61%	45%	30%	26%
	One	30%	36%	33%	20%
	Two	8%	18%	24%	30%
	Three or more	1%	1%	13%	24%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	383	457	267	403
Smartphones	None	4%	2%	4%	1%
	One	76%	15%	4%	4%
	Two	15%	70%	38%	25%
	Three or more	5%	12%	54%	71%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	383	457	267	403

Figure 65. Number of computers by household size

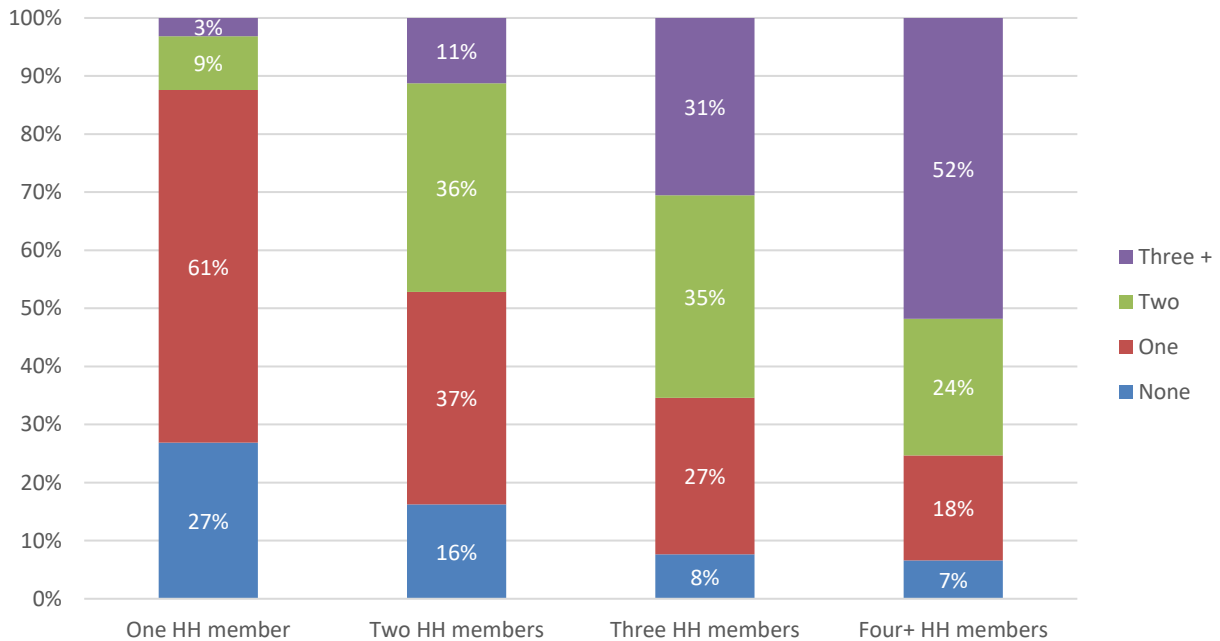


Figure 66. Number of tablets by household size



Figure 67. Number of smartphones by household size

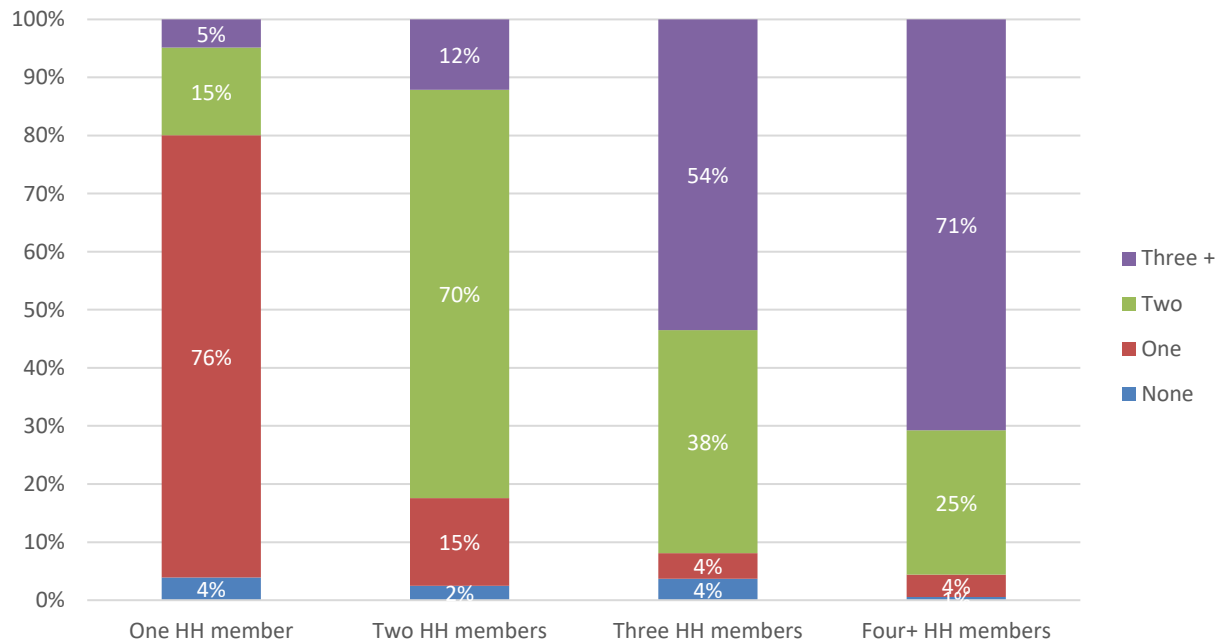


Table 47. Number of computing devices by ages of householders (percent of households with at least one householder in each age group)

		Under 18	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
Computers	None	12%	7%	6%	14%	15%	15%
	One	31%	32%	30%	25%	26%	41%
	Two	26%	26%	29%	29%	23%	24%
	Three or more	31%	35%	34%	33%	36%	20%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	663	363	333	353	439	346
Tablets	None	33%	41%	29%	33%	33%	48%
	One	26%	25%	34%	31%	28%	29%
	Two	26%	22%	20%	25%	27%	14%
	Three or more	15%	11%	17%	11%	12%	9%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	663	363	333	353	439	346
Smartphones	None	3%	0%	2%	1%	2%	6%
	One	17%	14%	20%	16%	14%	28%
	Two	34%	34%	38%	34%	35%	43%
	Three or more	47%	52%	40%	49%	49%	23%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	663	363	333	353	439	346

Figure 68. Number of computers by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

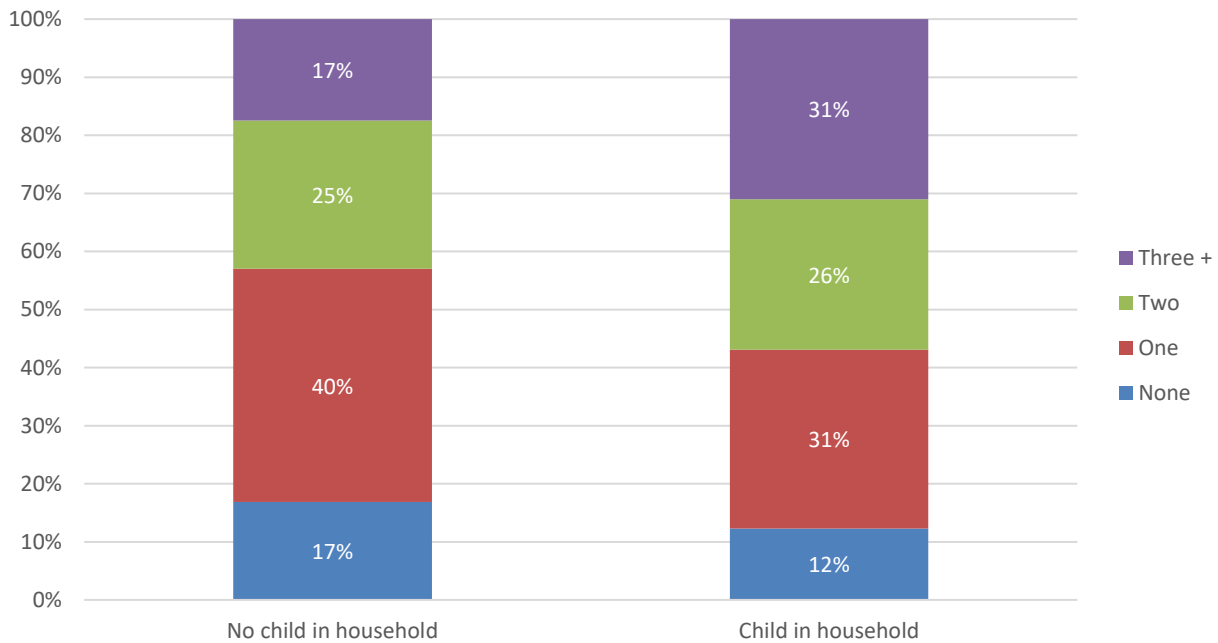


Figure 69. Number of tablets by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

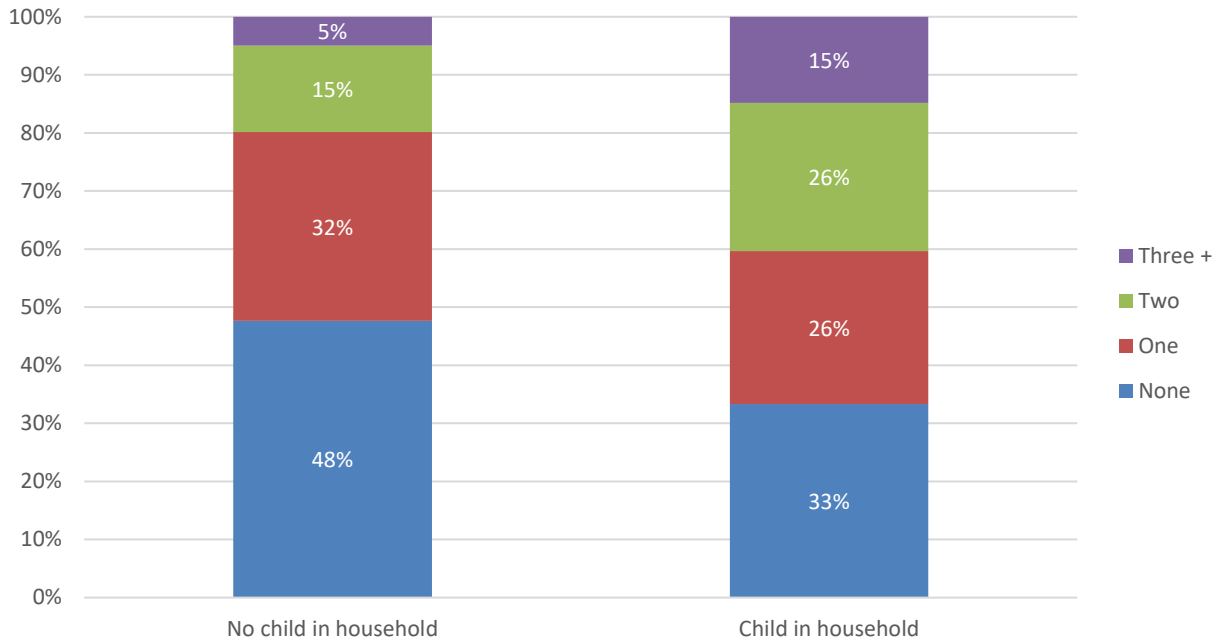


Figure 70. Number of smartphones by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

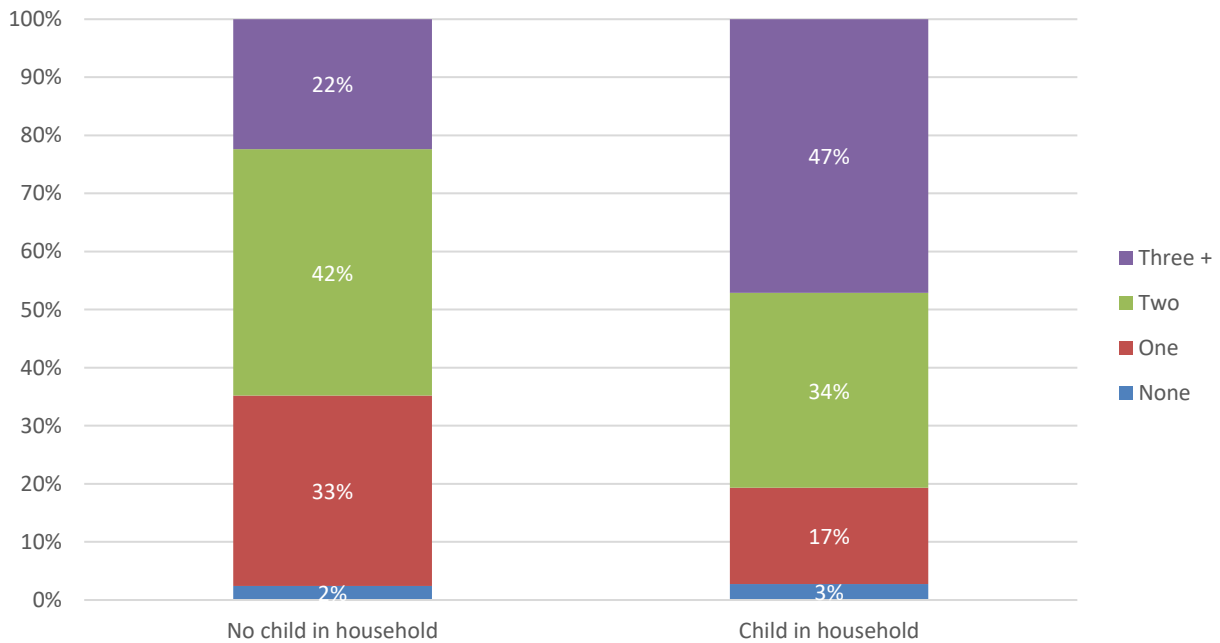


Figure 71. Number of computers by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

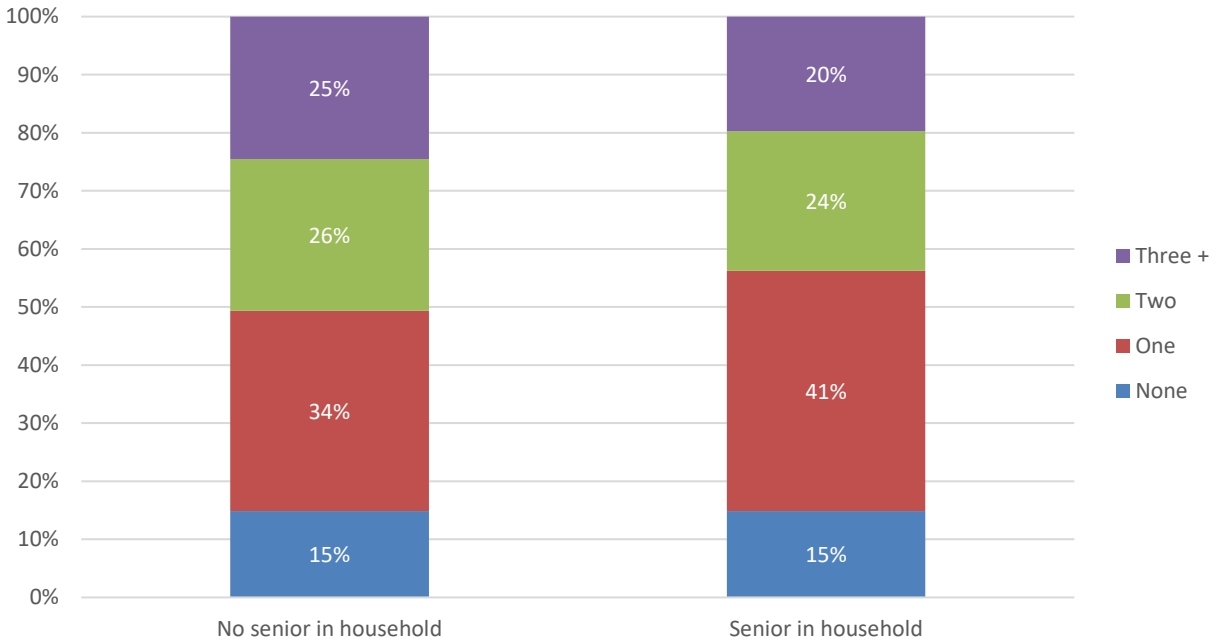


Figure 72. Number of tablets by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

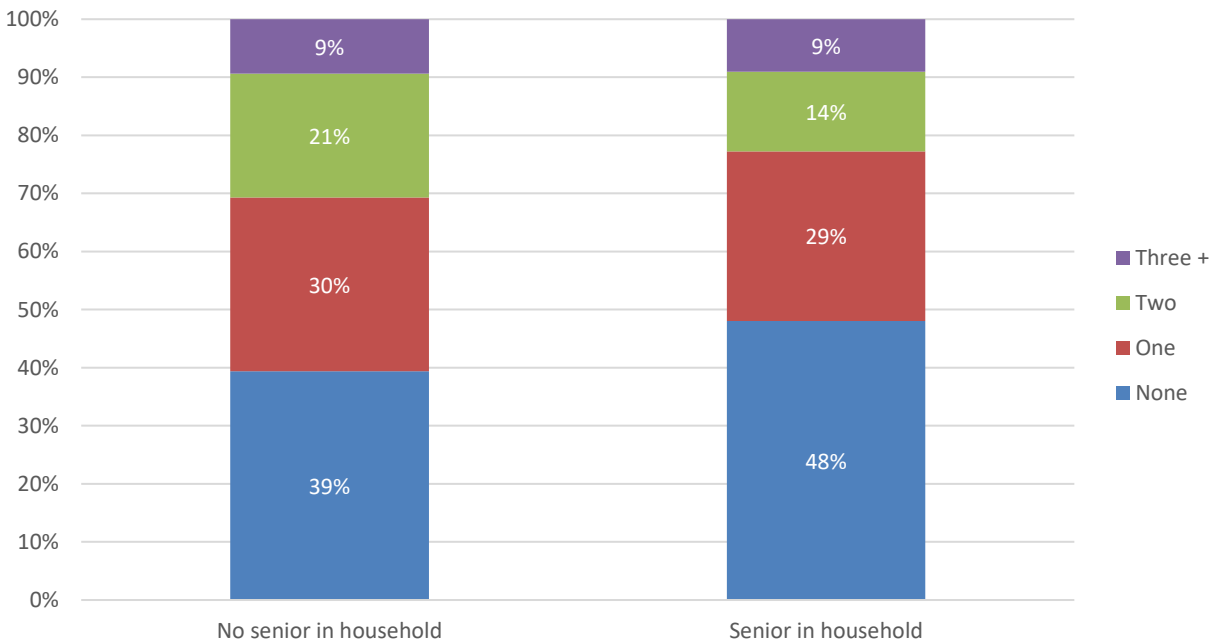


Figure 73. Number of smartphones by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

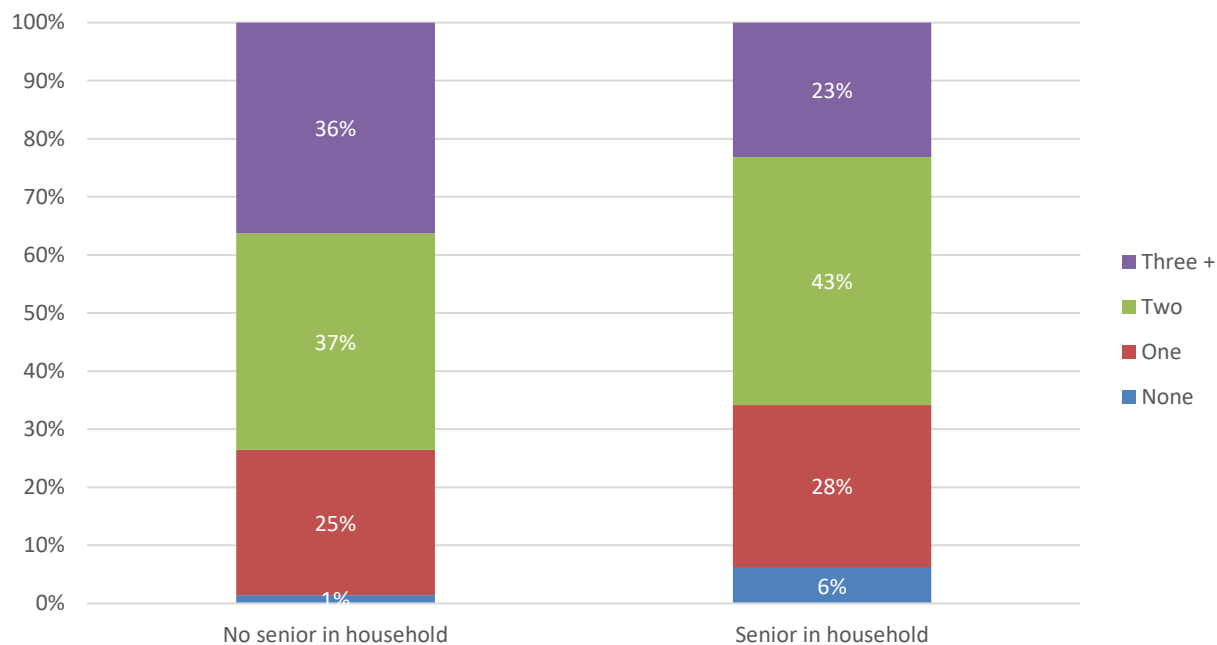


Table 48. Number of computing devices by respondent age

		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
Computers	None	17%	9%	16%	18%	15%
	One	40%	37%	31%	27%	48%
	Two	29%	28%	25%	21%	24%
	Three or more	14%	26%	27%	34%	12%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	334	273	266	382	281
Tablets	None	51%	34%	39%	35%	52%
	One	25%	35%	29%	28%	32%
	Two	18%	20%	21%	25%	11%
	Three or more	7%	11%	11%	12%	5%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	334	273	266	382	281
Smartphones	None	0%	2%	2%	2%	8%
	One	33%	27%	24%	16%	34%
	Two	37%	39%	33%	36%	45%
	Three or more	30%	31%	42%	46%	13%
	<i>Total Weighted Count</i>	334	273	266	382	281

Figure 74. Number of computers by respondent age

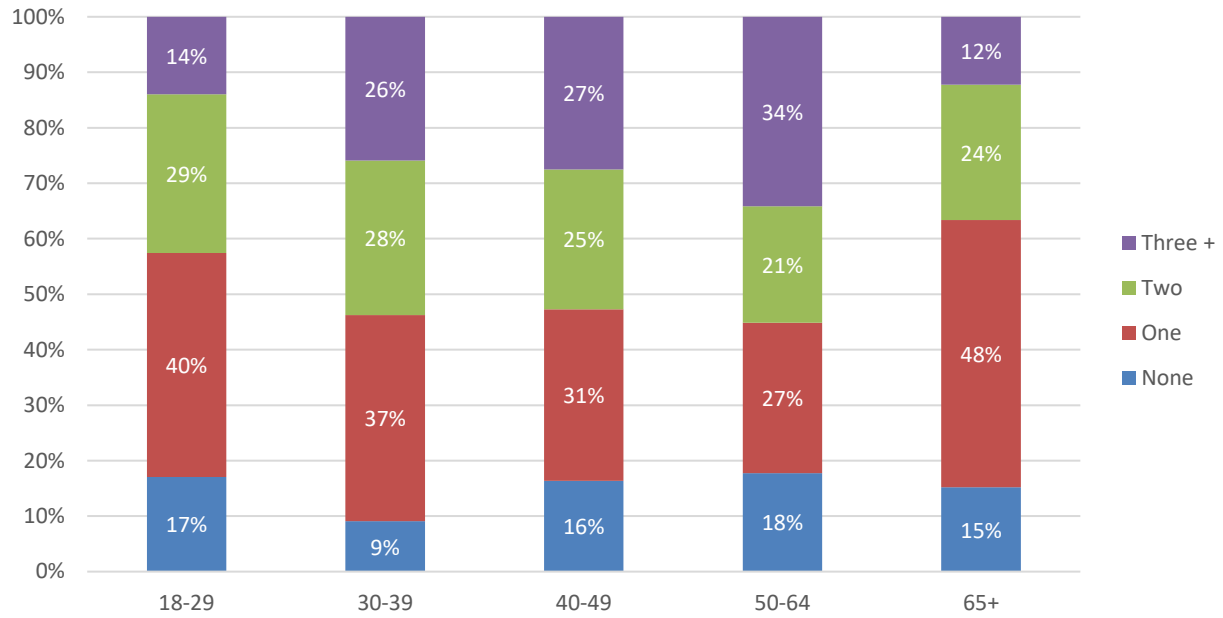


Figure 75. Number of tablets by respondent age

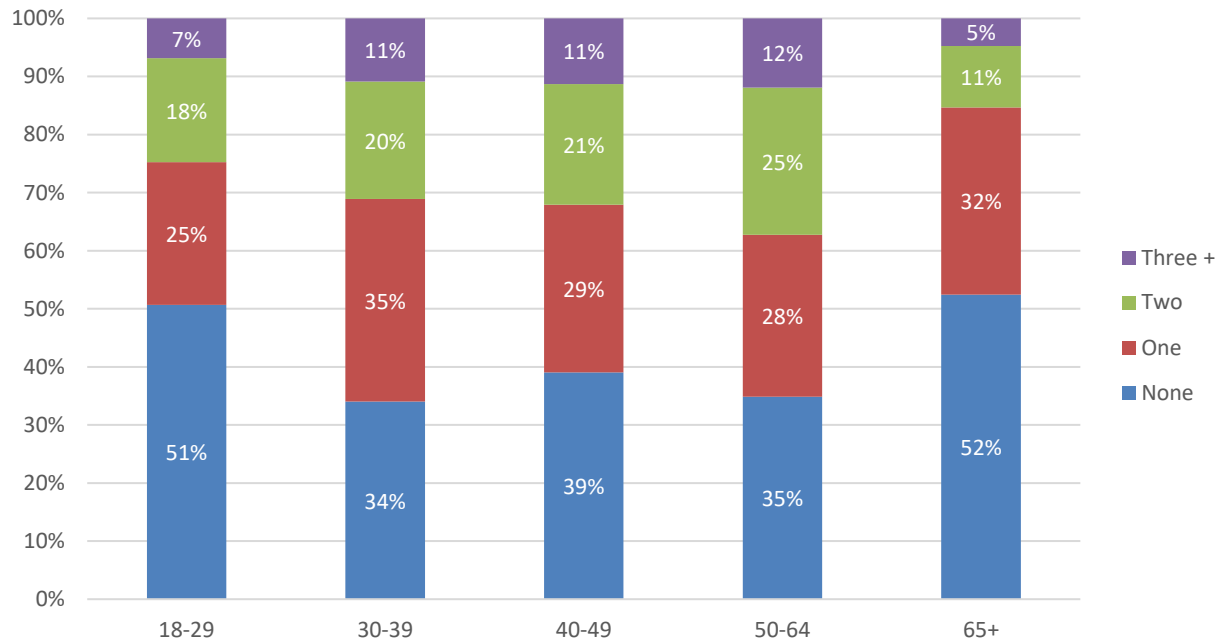
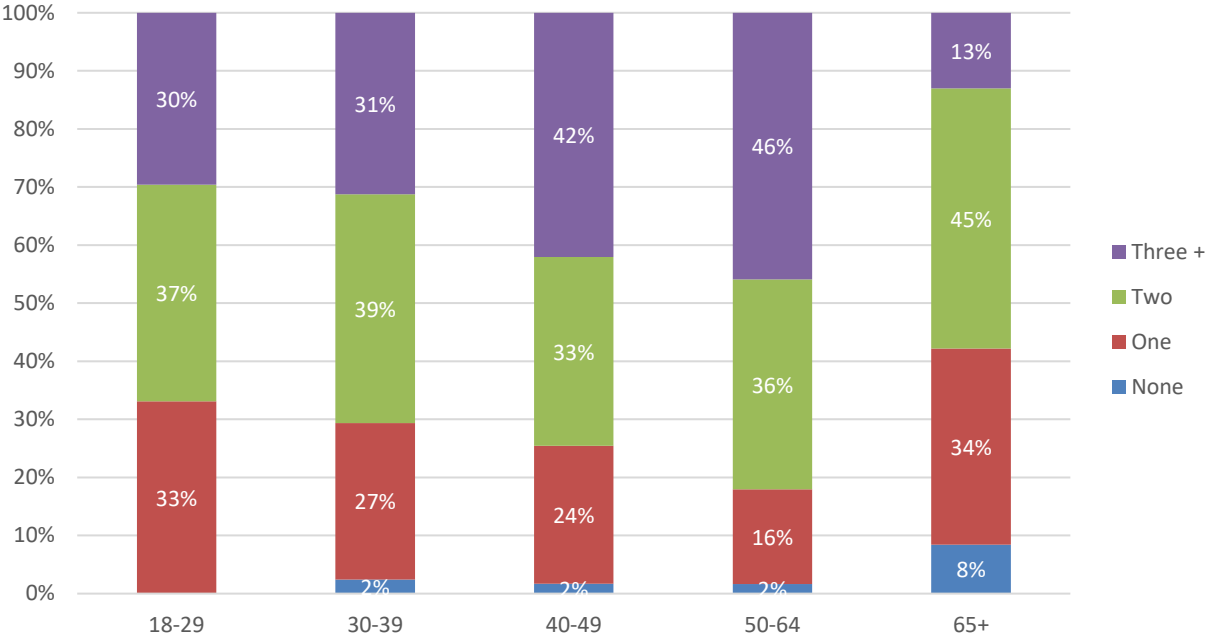


Figure 76. Number of smartphones by respondent age



Thinking about the computing device you primarily use, if it were lost or damaged beyond repair, how long do you think it would take you to replace it?

Figure 77. How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device

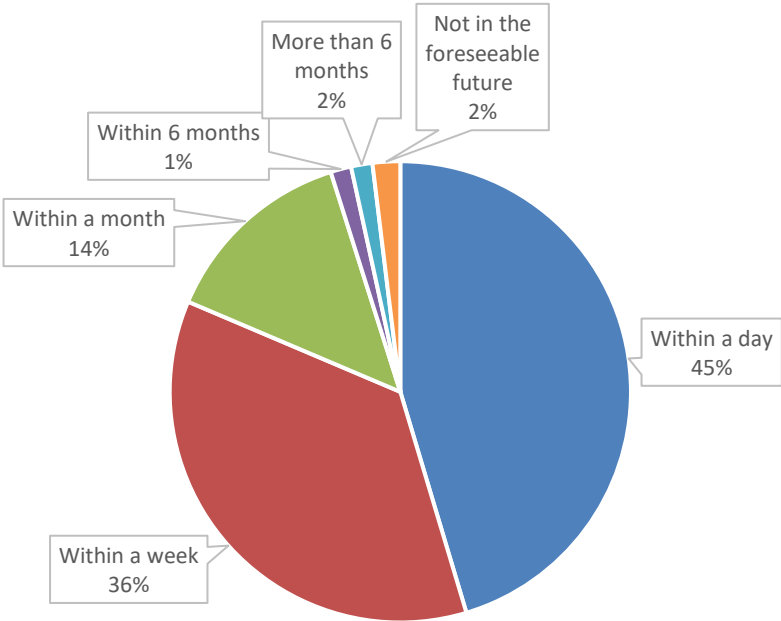


Figure 78. How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by household size

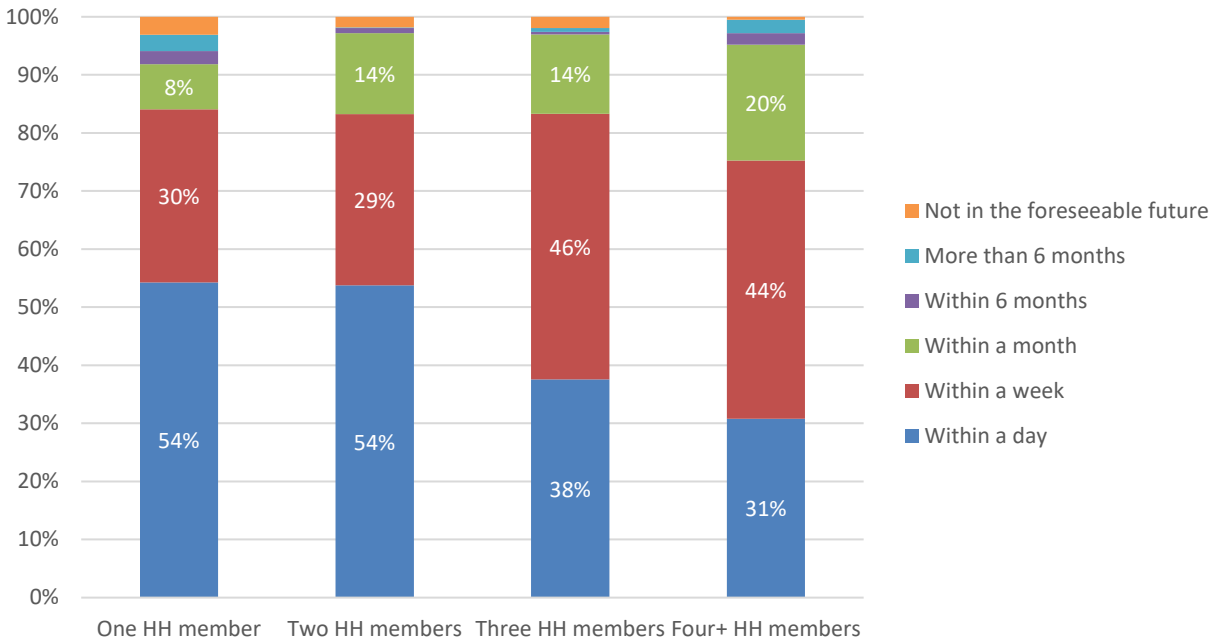
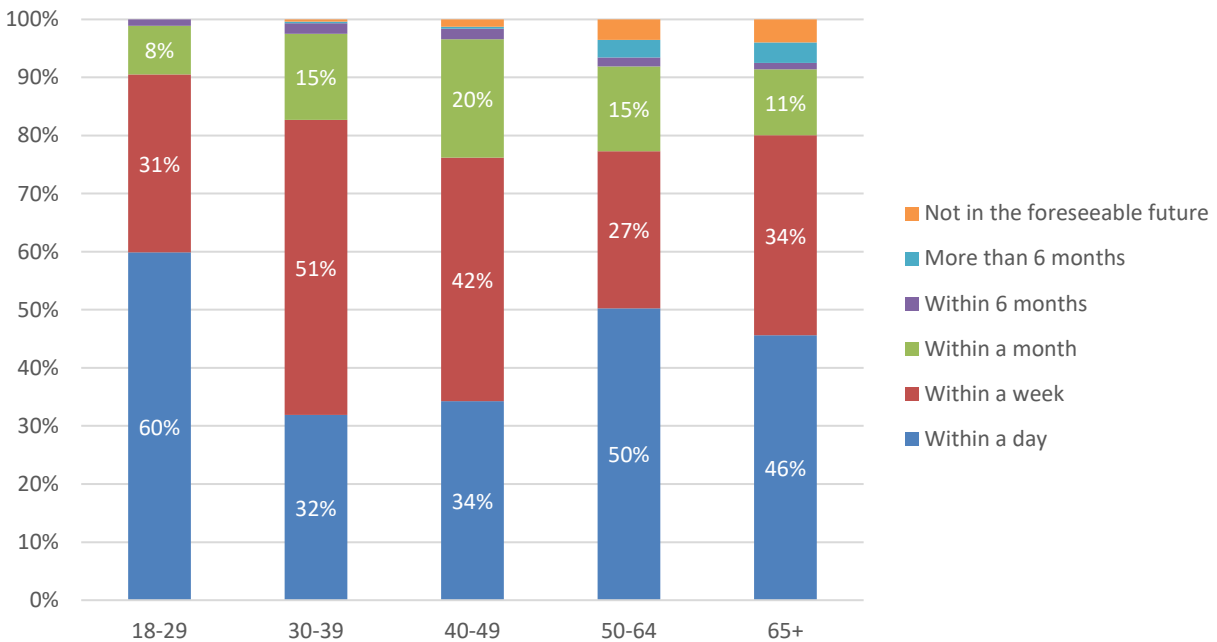


Figure 79. How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by respondent age



Internet activities questions

Please rate how confident you or the primary user are in doing the following activities on the internet?

Figure 80. Confidence in using the internet for various activities

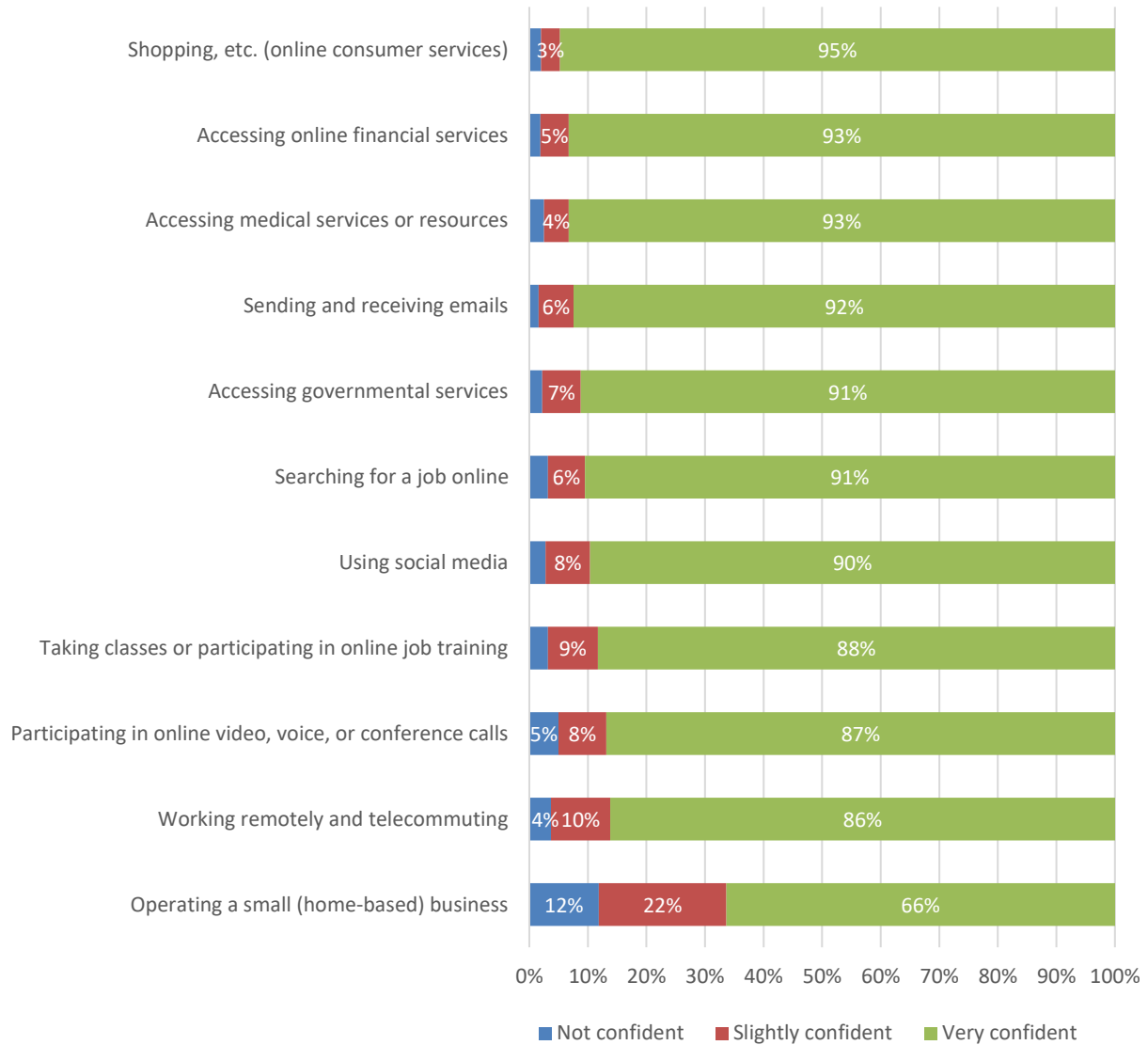


Table 49. Confidence in using the internet for various activities by household income

		Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or more
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	1%	0%	0%	2%
	Slightly confident	10%	4%	3%	2%
	Very confident	89%	96%	97%	96%
	<i>Total</i>	342	198	157	301
Using social media?	Not confident	2%	1%	1%	4%
	Slightly confident	13%	4%	5%	4%
	Very confident	85%	95%	94%	92%
	<i>Total</i>	309	194	148	286
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	12%	2%	1%	1%
	Slightly confident	4%	10%	18%	5%
	Very confident	84%	89%	80%	94%
	<i>Total</i>	293	180	147	279
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	16%	19%	10%	5%
	Slightly confident	19%	45%	38%	19%
	Very confident	65%	36%	51%	76%
	<i>Total</i>	152	103	105	196
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	2%	3%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	15%	4%	16%	6%
	Very confident	83%	92%	82%	93%
	<i>Total</i>	192	147	132	255
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	2%	2%	1%	4%
	Slightly confident	9%	2%	7%	3%
	Very confident	90%	96%	93%	93%
	<i>Total</i>	207	121	116	204
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	2%	2%	1%	3%
	Slightly confident	11%	8%	10%	3%
	Very confident	88%	90%	90%	93%
	<i>Total</i>	204	131	118	241
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	1%	1%	3%	3%
	Slightly confident	2%	1%	5%	4%
	Very confident	97%	99%	92%	93%
	<i>Total</i>	305	186	142	281
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	2%	1%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	7%	4%	4%	8%
	Very confident	91%	95%	94%	91%
	<i>Total</i>	312	193	153	292
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	3%	1%	2%	0%
	Slightly confident	2%	2%	2%	4%
	Very confident	95%	97%	97%	96%
	<i>Total</i>	326	194	155	297
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	3%	1%	0%	0%
	Slightly confident	7%	3%	4%	2%
	Very confident	90%	96%	96%	97%
	<i>Total</i>	311	193	155	293

Figure 81. Very confident in using the internet for various activities by household income

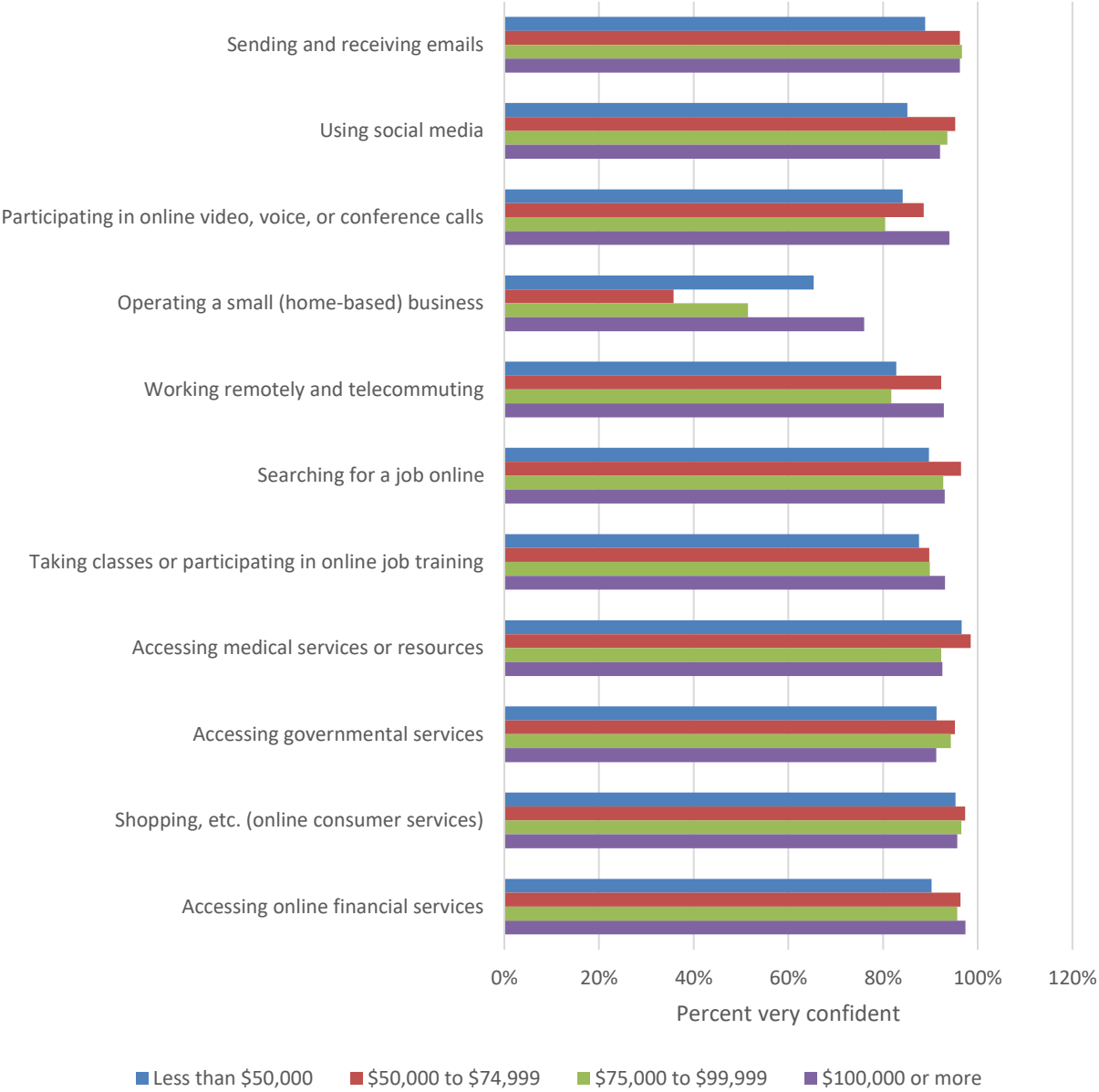


Table 50. Confidence in using the internet for various activities by household size

		One HH member	Two HH members	Three HH members	Four+ HH members
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	1%	3%	0%	0%
	Slightly confident	12%	4%	3%	3%
	Very confident	86%	92%	96%	96%
	<i>Total</i>	364	442	266	401
Using social media?	Not confident	3%	4%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	13%	9%	4%	4%
	Very confident	83%	87%	94%	95%
	<i>Total</i>	337	420	247	389
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	11%	3%	3%	1%
	Slightly confident	9%	8%	10%	6%
	Very confident	80%	88%	87%	92%
	<i>Total</i>	339	373	237	367
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	20%	9%	9%	8%
	Slightly confident	24%	20%	17%	25%
	Very confident	56%	70%	73%	68%
	<i>Total</i>	224	227	179	211
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	4%	5%	4%	2%
	Slightly confident	15%	10%	8%	7%
	Very confident	81%	85%	88%	91%
	<i>Total</i>	260	270	205	307
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	3%	5%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	9%	5%	6%	4%
	Very confident	87%	90%	92%	94%
	<i>Total</i>	289	266	193	278
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	4%	5%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	10%	11%	8%	5%
	Very confident	86%	84%	90%	95%
	<i>Total</i>	291	279	205	287
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	3%	4%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	3%	5%	2%	4%
	Very confident	94%	91%	96%	94%
	<i>Total</i>	345	407	251	367
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	3%	3%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	8%	9%	4%	4%
	Very confident	89%	88%	94%	96%
	<i>Total</i>	347	412	263	378
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	3%	2%	0%	2%
	Slightly confident	3%	4%	2%	2%
	Very confident	94%	93%	97%	96%
	<i>Total</i>	348	432	266	391
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	3%	2%	1%	2%
	Slightly confident	8%	4%	3%	3%
	Very confident	89%	94%	96%	96%
	<i>Total</i>	340	423	264	395

Figure 82. Very confident in using the internet for various activities by household size

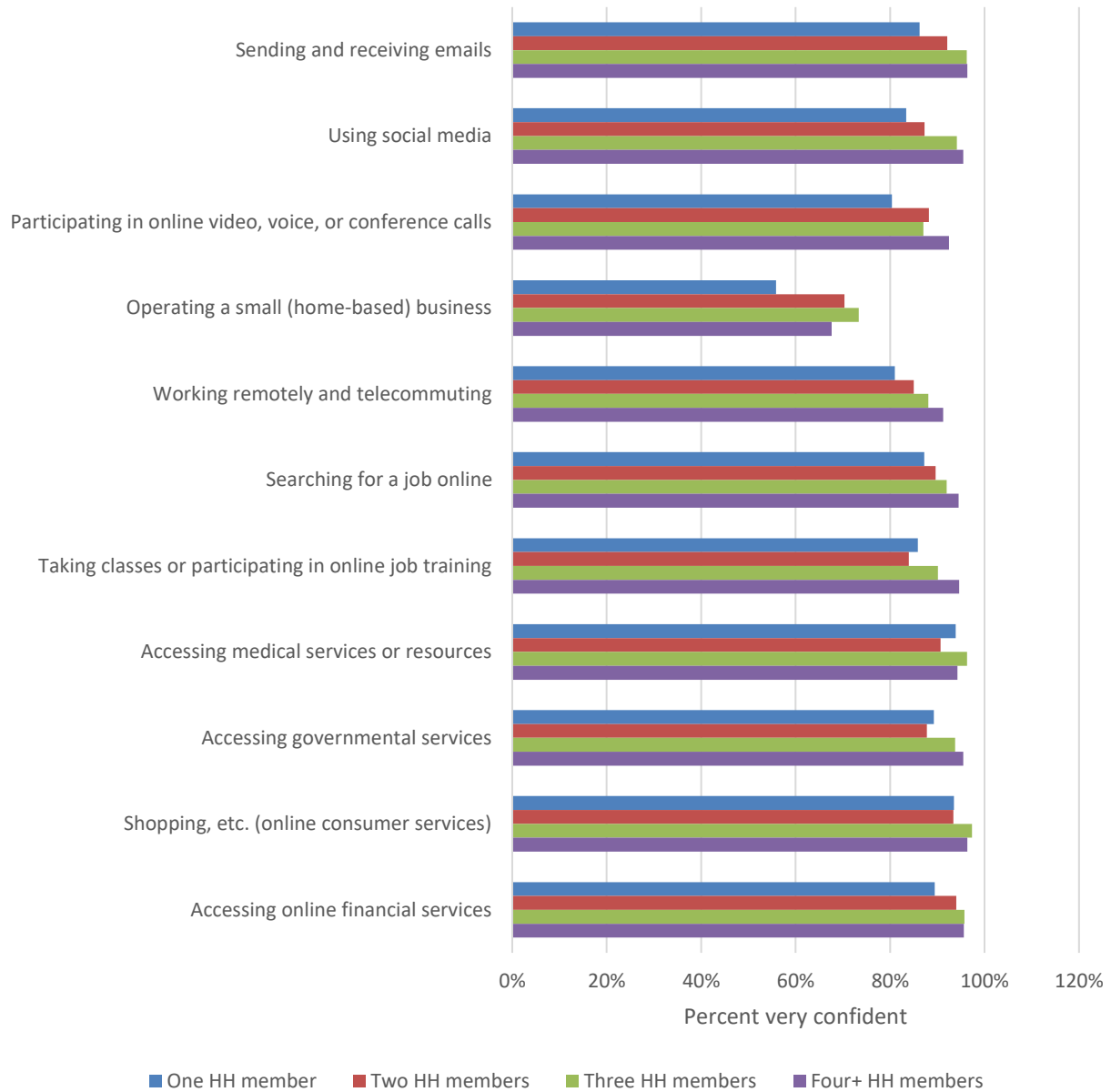


Table 51. Confidence in using the internet for various activities by student in household

		No student household	Student in household
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	2%	0%
	Slightly confident	7%	4%
	Very confident	90%	95%
	<i>Total</i>	856	651
Using social media?	Not confident	4%	1%
	Slightly confident	8%	8%
	Very confident	88%	92%
	<i>Total</i>	802	621
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	6%	4%
	Slightly confident	6%	10%
	Very confident	88%	86%
	<i>Total</i>	744	603
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	10%	14%
	Slightly confident	16%	28%
	Very confident	74%	58%
	<i>Total</i>	439	428
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	6%	1%
	Slightly confident	9%	11%
	Very confident	85%	87%
	<i>Total</i>	514	555
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	6%	0%
	Slightly confident	5%	8%
	Very confident	90%	92%
	<i>Total</i>	555	497
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	5%	1%
	Slightly confident	9%	8%
	Very confident	86%	91%
	<i>Total</i>	564	522
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	4%	1%
	Slightly confident	5%	4%
	Very confident	92%	95%
	<i>Total</i>	787	610
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	4%	1%
	Slightly confident	7%	6%
	Very confident	89%	94%
	<i>Total</i>	791	638
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	3%	1%
	Slightly confident	4%	2%
	Very confident	93%	97%
	<i>Total</i>	821	645
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	5%	5%
	Very confident	93%	94%
	<i>Total</i>	807	643

Figure 83. Very confident in using the internet for various activities by student in household

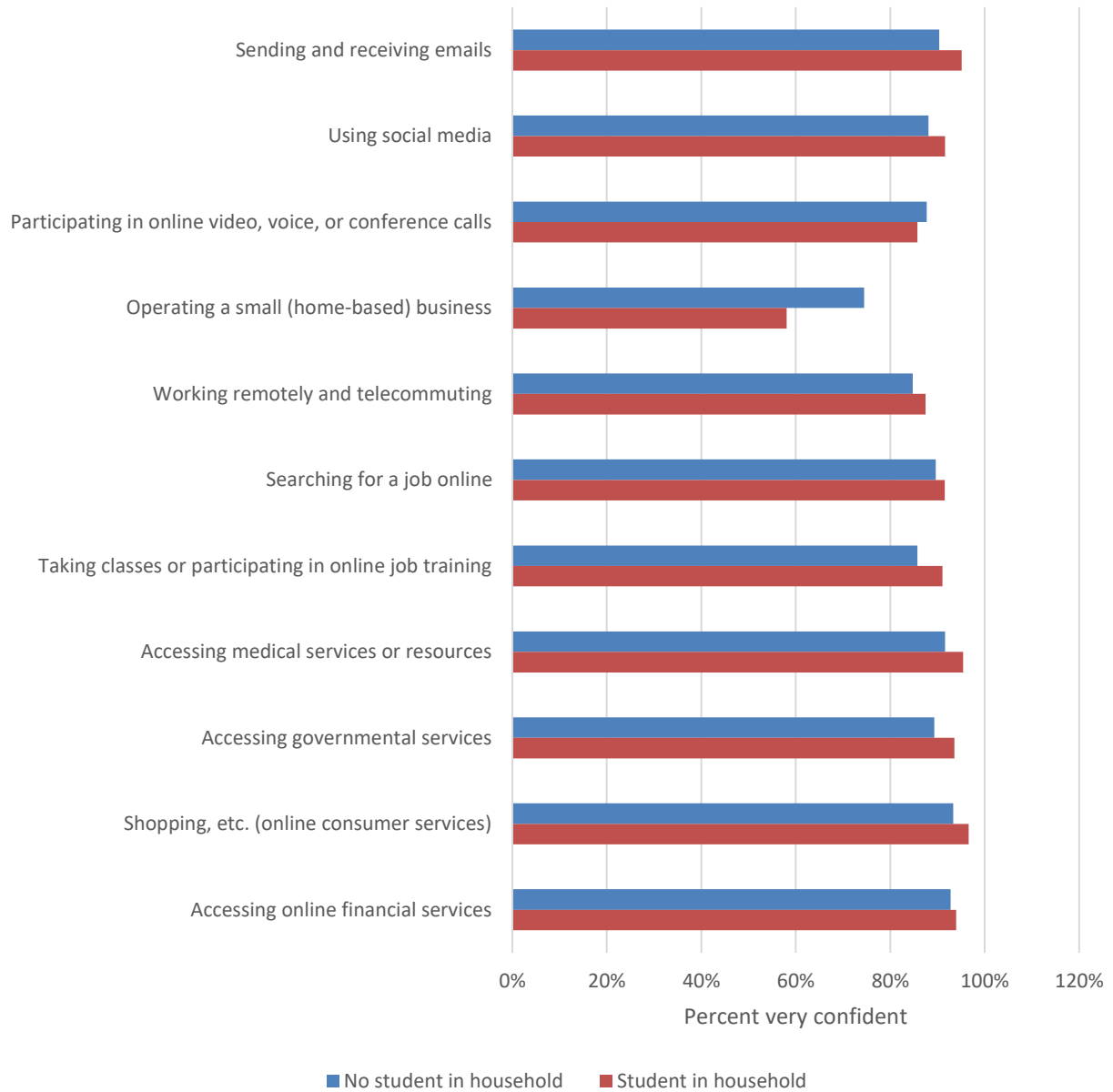


Table 52. Confidence in using the internet for various activities by ages of householders

		No child in household	Child in household	No senior in household	Senior in household
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	2%	1%	1%	2%
	Slightly confident	6%	6%	5%	10%
	Very confident	92%	94%	94%	88%
	<i>Total</i>	819	654	1143	330
Using social media?	Not confident	4%	1%	2%	4%
	Slightly confident	8%	7%	7%	10%
	Very confident	88%	92%	91%	85%
	<i>Total</i>	763	631	1109	285
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	5%	5%	3%	10%
	Slightly confident	5%	11%	9%	6%
	Very confident	90%	84%	88%	85%
	<i>Total</i>	708	609	1055	262
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	10%	13%	12%	10%
	Slightly confident	13%	30%	25%	6%
	Very confident	77%	56%	63%	84%
	<i>Total</i>	412	430	713	129
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	5%	2%	3%	8%
	Slightly confident	9%	11%	11%	6%
	Very confident	86%	87%	86%	86%
	<i>Total</i>	516	526	898	144
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	5%	1%	3%	6%
	Slightly confident	5%	7%	6%	7%
	Very confident	90%	92%	91%	87%
	<i>Total</i>	527	499	881	146
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	5%	1%	2%	8%
	Slightly confident	9%	8%	8%	10%
	Very confident	86%	91%	90%	82%
	<i>Total</i>	551	511	920	142
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	4%	1%	2%	4%
	Slightly confident	5%	3%	4%	5%
	Very confident	92%	96%	94%	92%
	<i>Total</i>	761	609	1057	313
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	3%	1%	1%	5%
	Slightly confident	8%	5%	6%	8%
	Very confident	89%	94%	93%	87%
	<i>Total</i>	764	637	1089	311
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	2%	1%	1%	5%
	Slightly confident	4%	2%	3%	3%
	Very confident	94%	96%	96%	92%
	<i>Total</i>	792	645	1123	315
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	2%	1%	1%	5%
	Slightly confident	4%	4%	4%	5%
	Very confident	93%	94%	95%	91%
	<i>Total</i>	772	650	1121	300

Figure 84. Very confident in using the internet for various activities by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

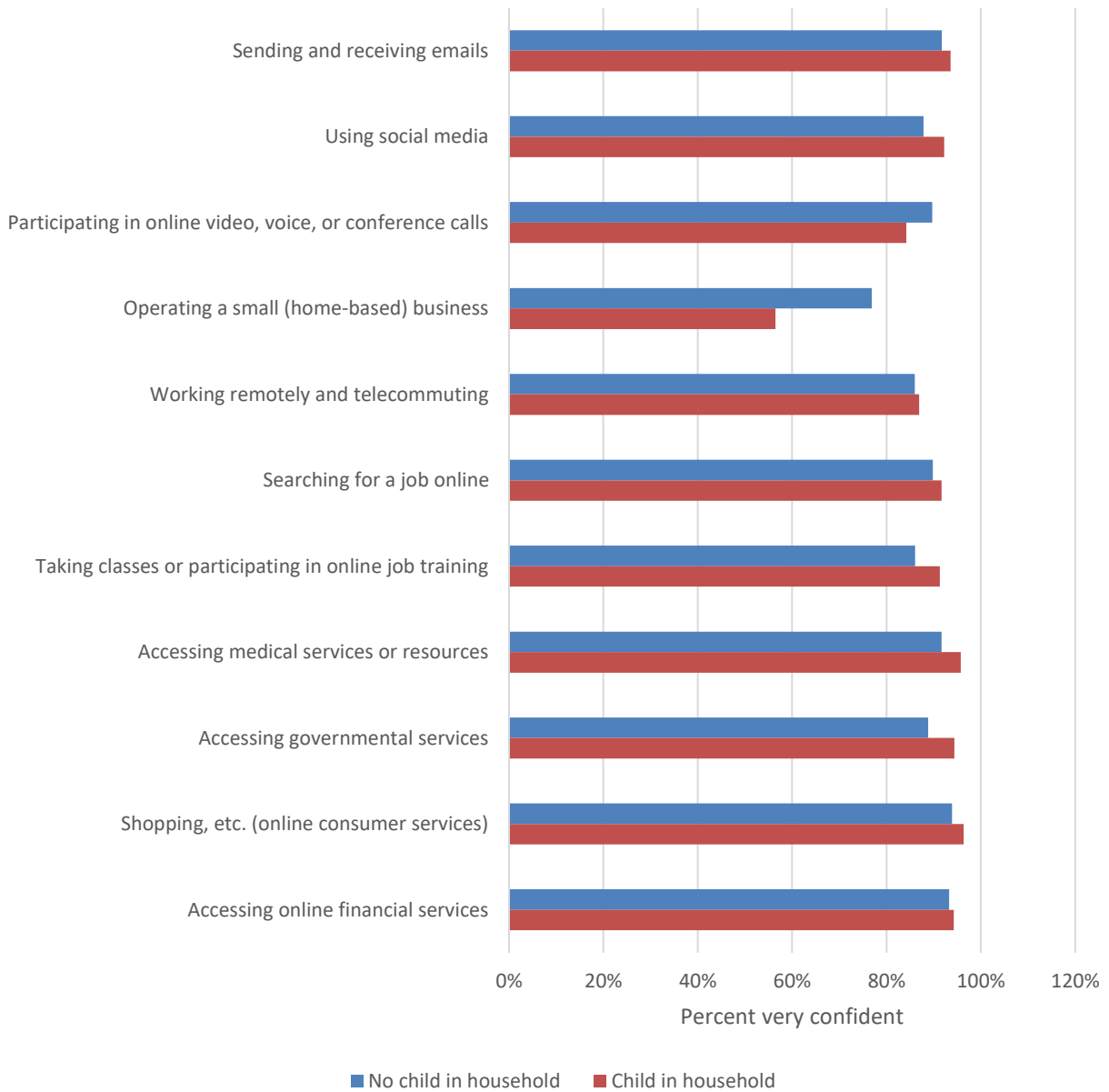


Figure 85. Very confident in using the internet for various activities by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

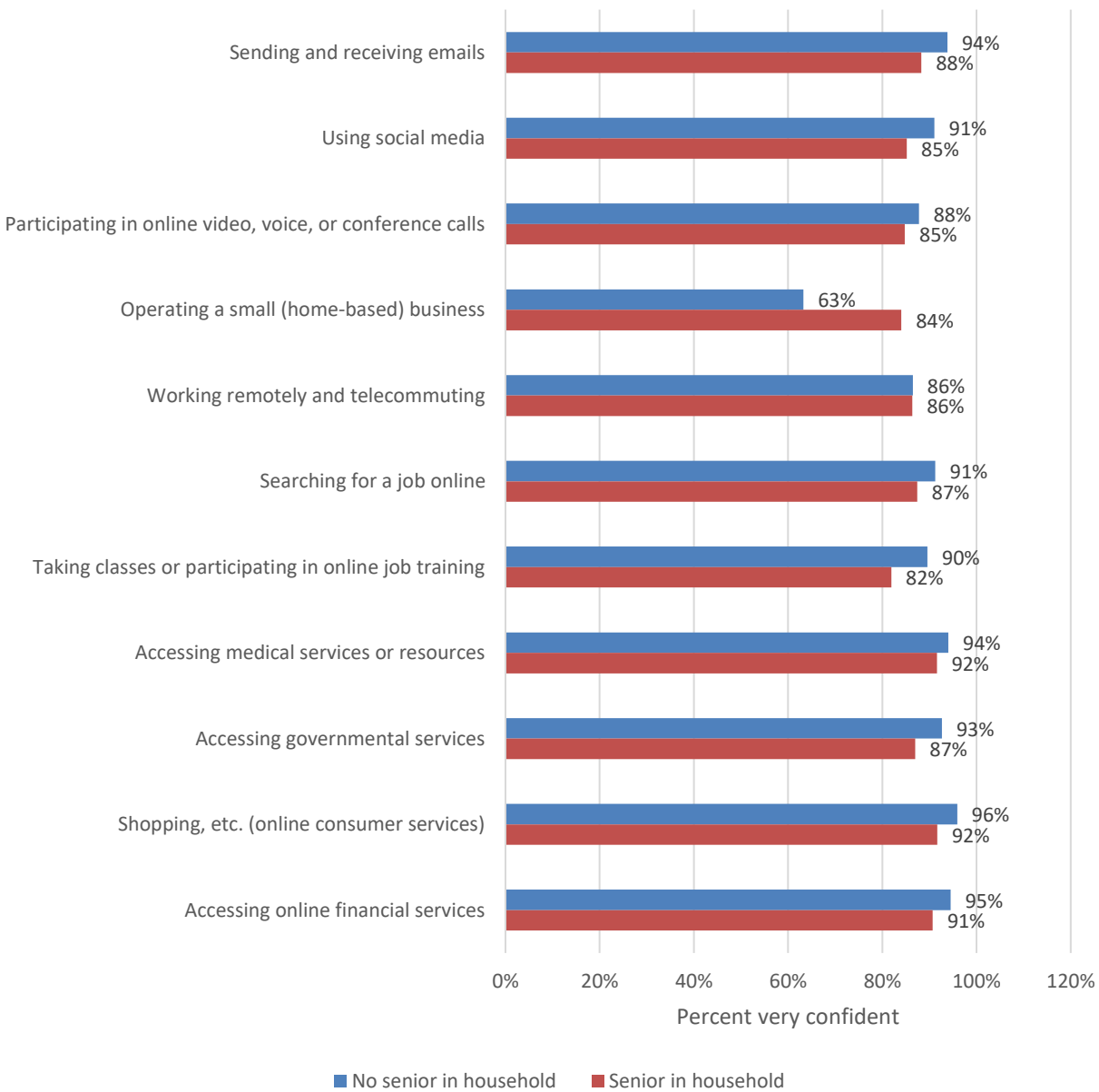
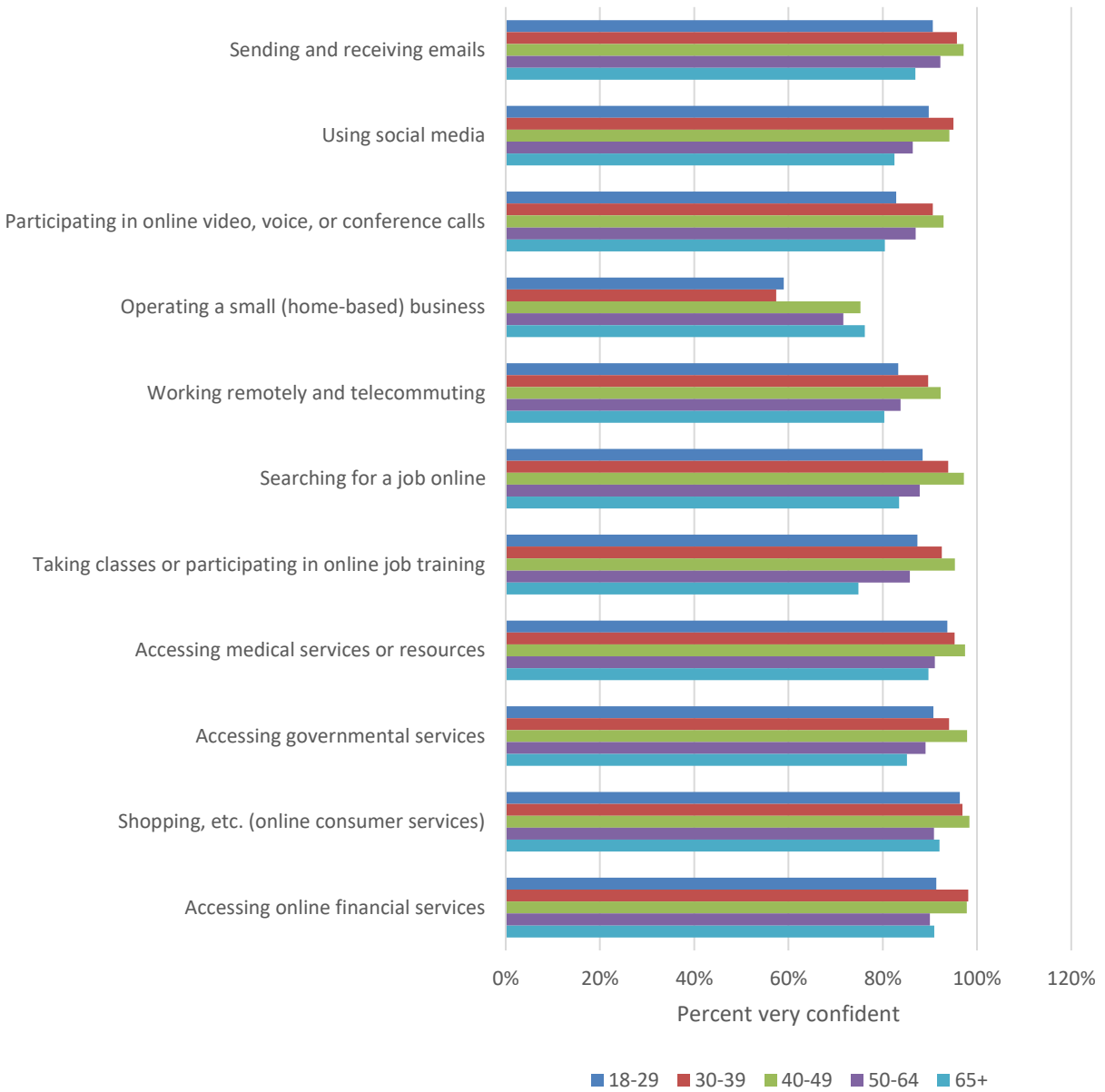


Table 53. Confidence in using the internet for various activities by respondent age

		18-29	30-39	40-49	60-64	65+
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	3%	1%	0%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	7%	4%	3%	6%	11%
	Very confident	91%	96%	97%	92%	87%
	<i>Total</i>	334	264	264	372	265
Using social media?	Not confident	3%	1%	1%	5%	5%
	Slightly confident	8%	4%	5%	9%	12%
	Very confident	90%	95%	94%	86%	82%
	<i>Total</i>	334	263	259	335	225
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	7%	2%	1%	4%	12%
	Slightly confident	10%	7%	7%	9%	7%
	Very confident	83%	91%	93%	87%	80%
	<i>Total</i>	318	246	250	320	206
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	20%	9%	4%	8%	14%
	Slightly confident	21%	34%	21%	20%	10%
	Very confident	59%	57%	75%	72%	76%
	<i>Total</i>	259	155	152	202	93
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	1%	3%	1%	6%	11%
	Slightly confident	16%	7%	6%	10%	9%
	Very confident	83%	90%	92%	84%	80%
	<i>Total</i>	281	211	218	253	97
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	3%	1%	1%	5%	8%
	Slightly confident	9%	5%	2%	7%	8%
	Very confident	88%	94%	97%	88%	83%
	<i>Total</i>	294	200	202	250	100
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	3%	1%	1%	4%	10%
	Slightly confident	10%	6%	4%	10%	15%
	Very confident	87%	93%	95%	86%	75%
	<i>Total</i>	299	214	214	253	100
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	4%	0%	1%	3%	5%
	Slightly confident	3%	4%	2%	6%	6%
	Very confident	94%	95%	97%	91%	90%
	<i>Total</i>	327	243	251	323	248
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	2%	0%	0%	3%	5%
	Slightly confident	7%	6%	2%	8%	10%
	Very confident	91%	94%	98%	89%	85%
	<i>Total</i>	330	258	256	331	250
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	1%	0%	0%	4%	5%
	Slightly confident	3%	3%	1%	6%	3%
	Very confident	96%	97%	98%	91%	92%
	<i>Total</i>	331	262	262	353	252
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	1%	0%	1%	4%	4%
	Slightly confident	8%	2%	2%	6%	6%
	Very confident	91%	98%	98%	90%	91%
	<i>Total</i>	334	259	258	353	240

Figure 86. Very confident in using the internet for various activities by respondent age



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your internet and computer skills?

Figure 87. Agreement with statements about internet skills

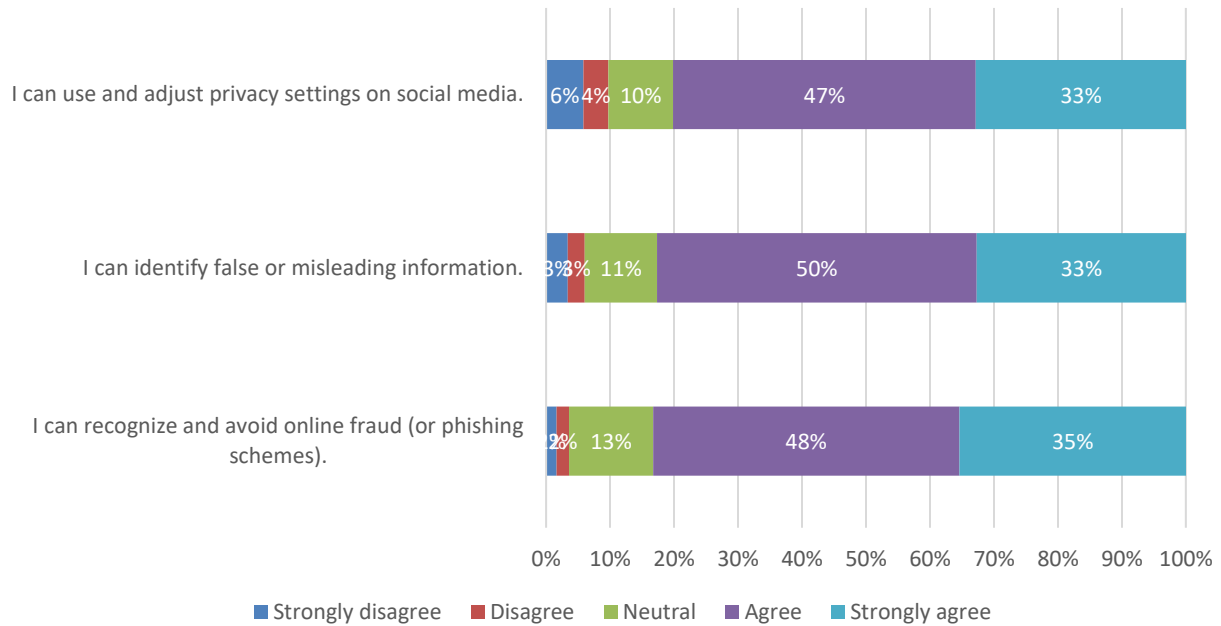


Figure 88. I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by household income

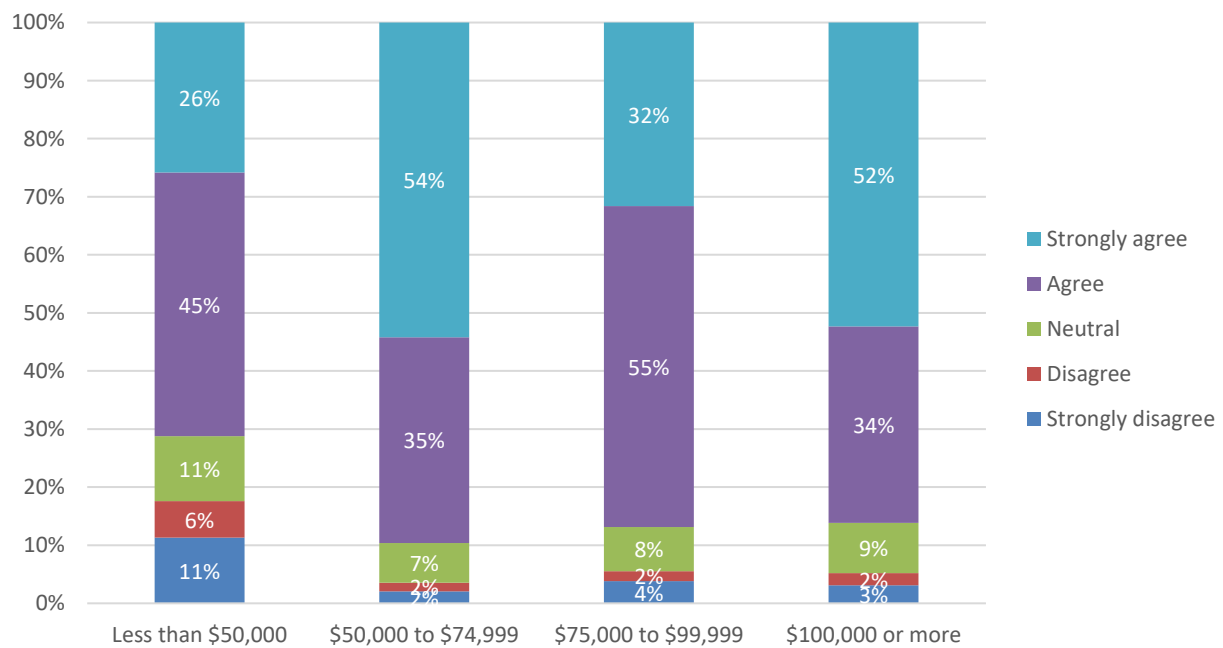


Figure 89. I can identify false or misleading information by household income

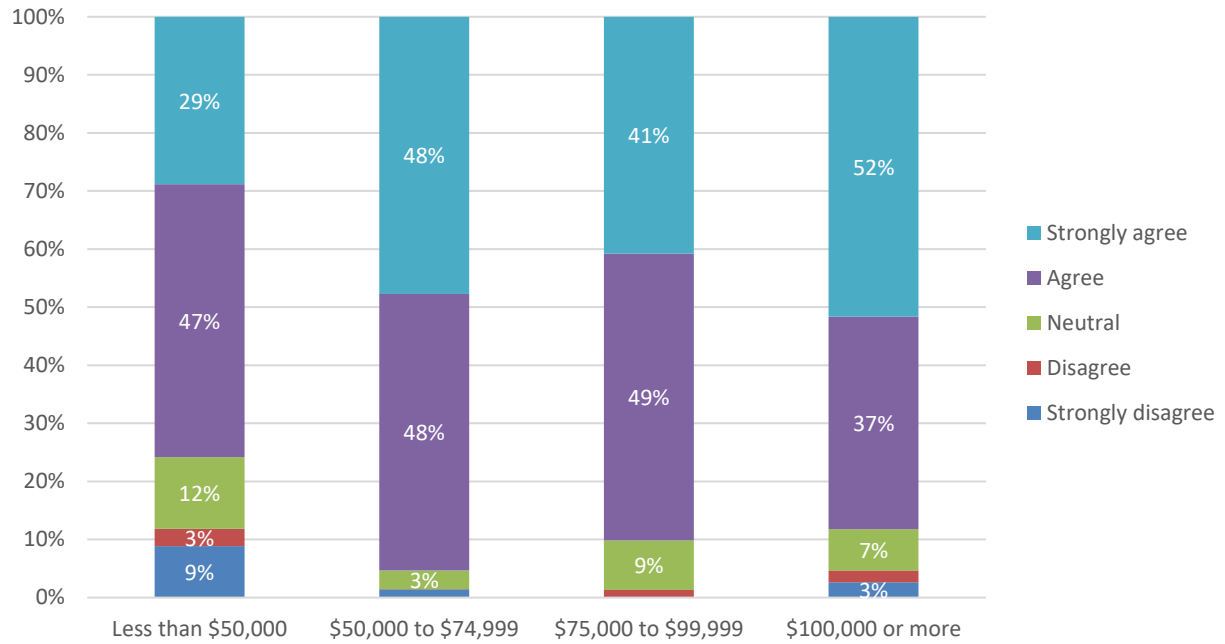


Figure 90. I can recognize and avoid online fraud by household income

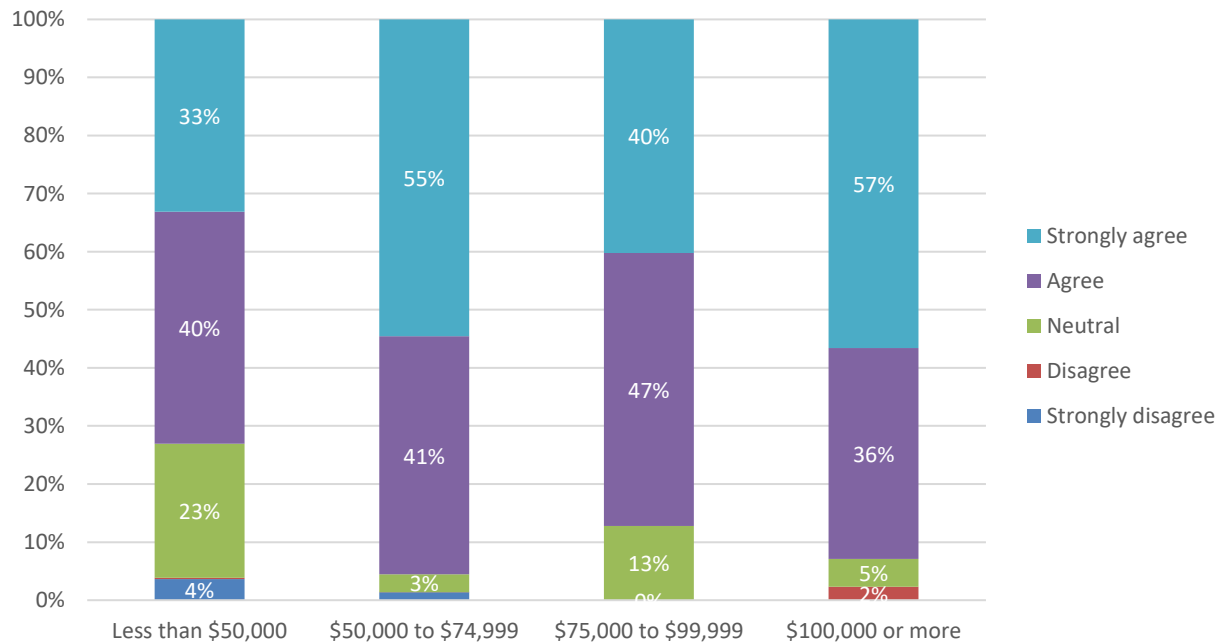


Figure 91. I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by race/ethnicity

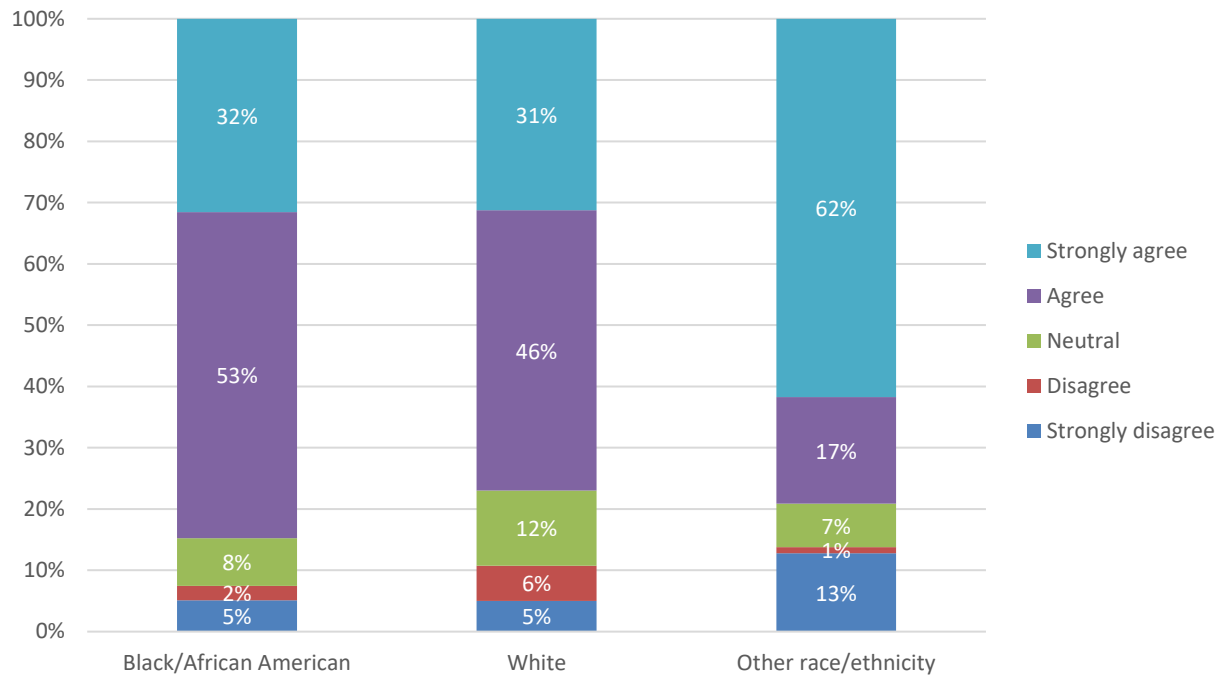


Figure 92. I can identify false or misleading information by race/ethnicity

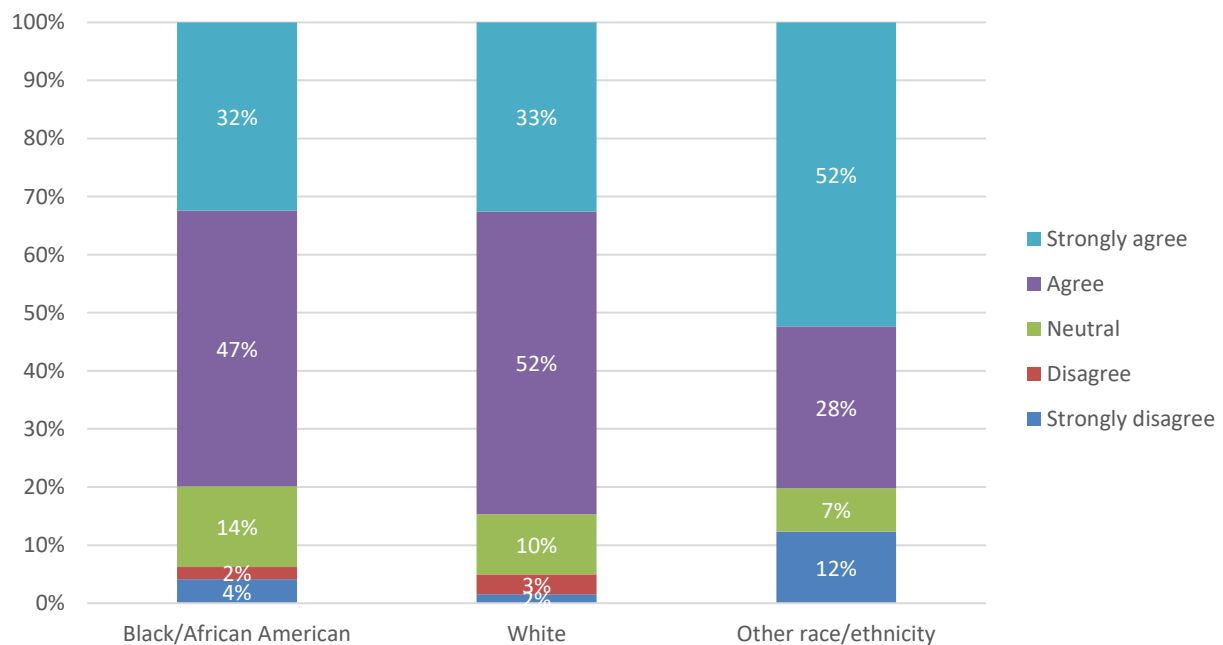


Figure 93. I can recognize and avoid online fraud by race/ethnicity

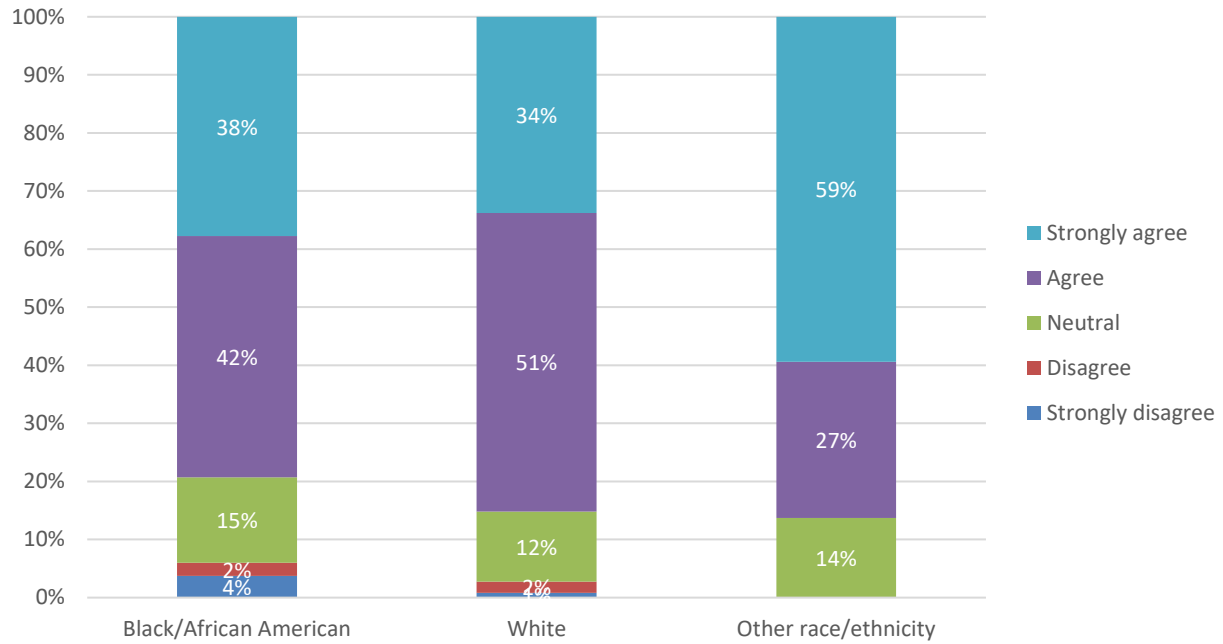


Figure 94. I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by student in household

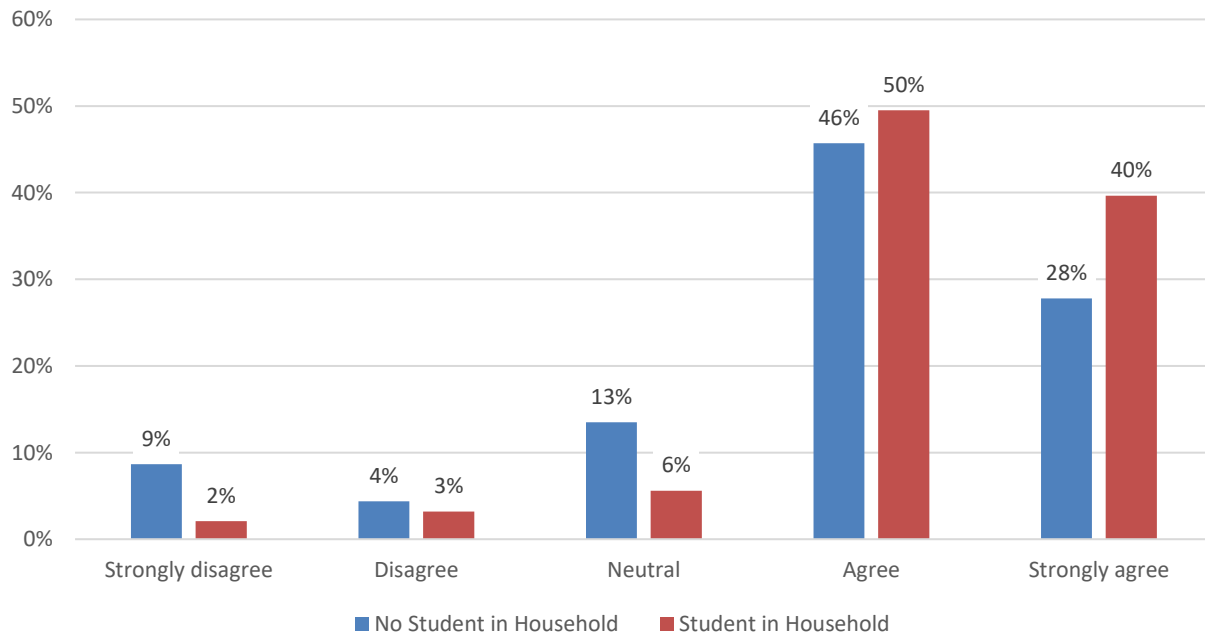


Figure 95. I can identify false or misleading information by student in household

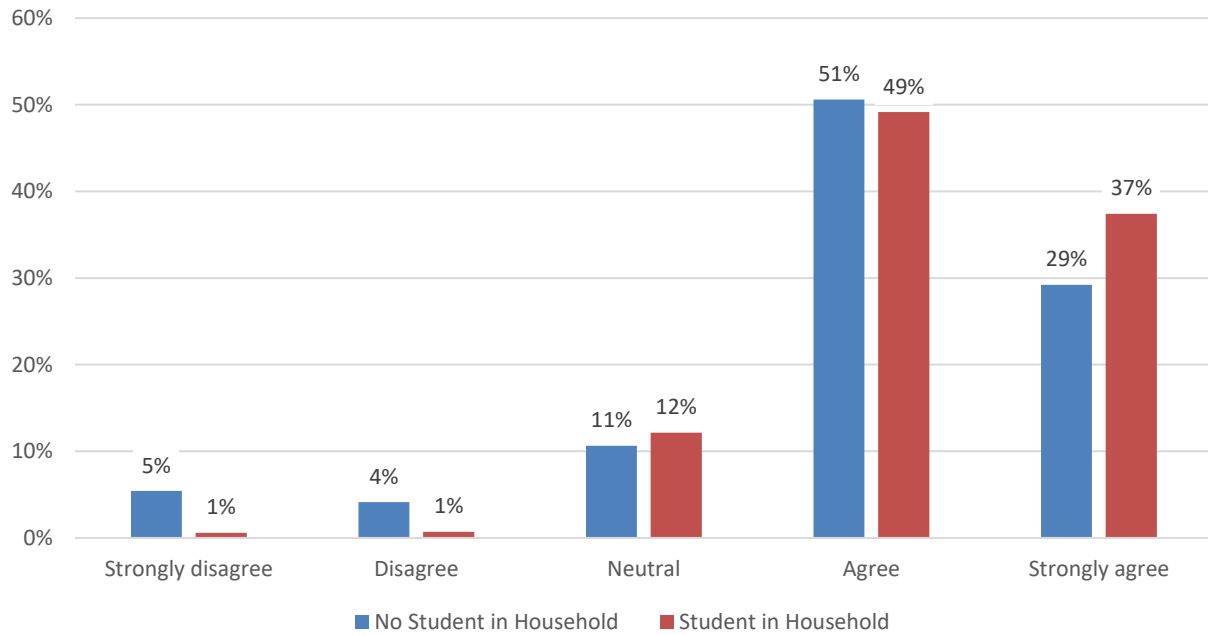


Figure 96. I can recognize and avoid online fraud by student in household

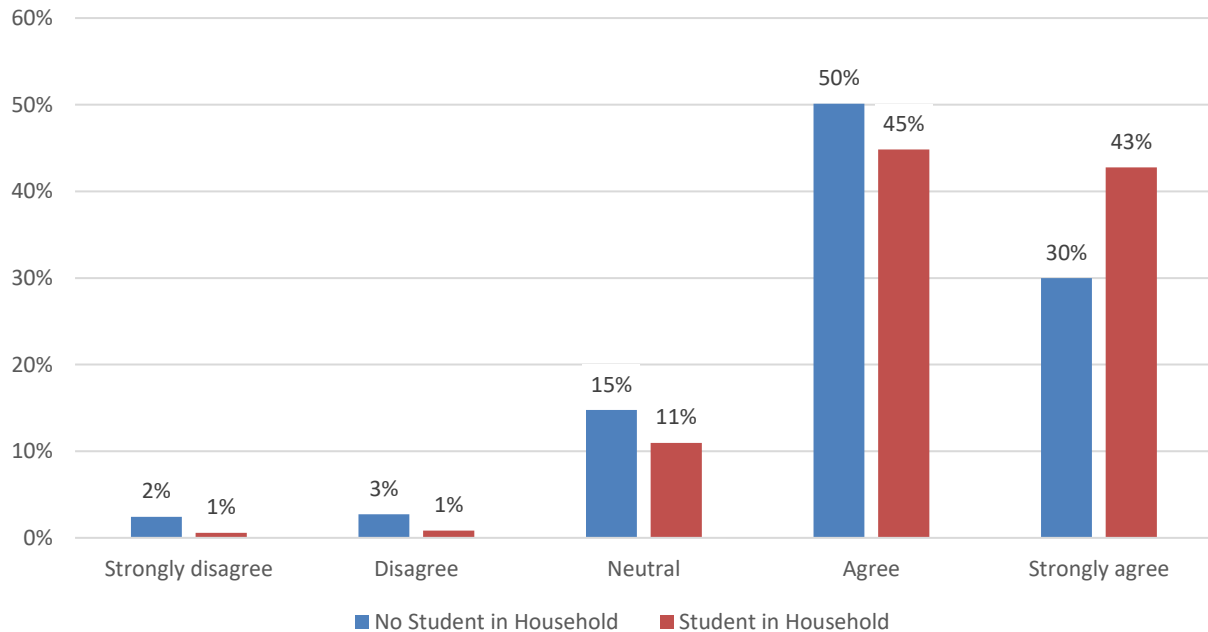


Figure 97. I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by household size

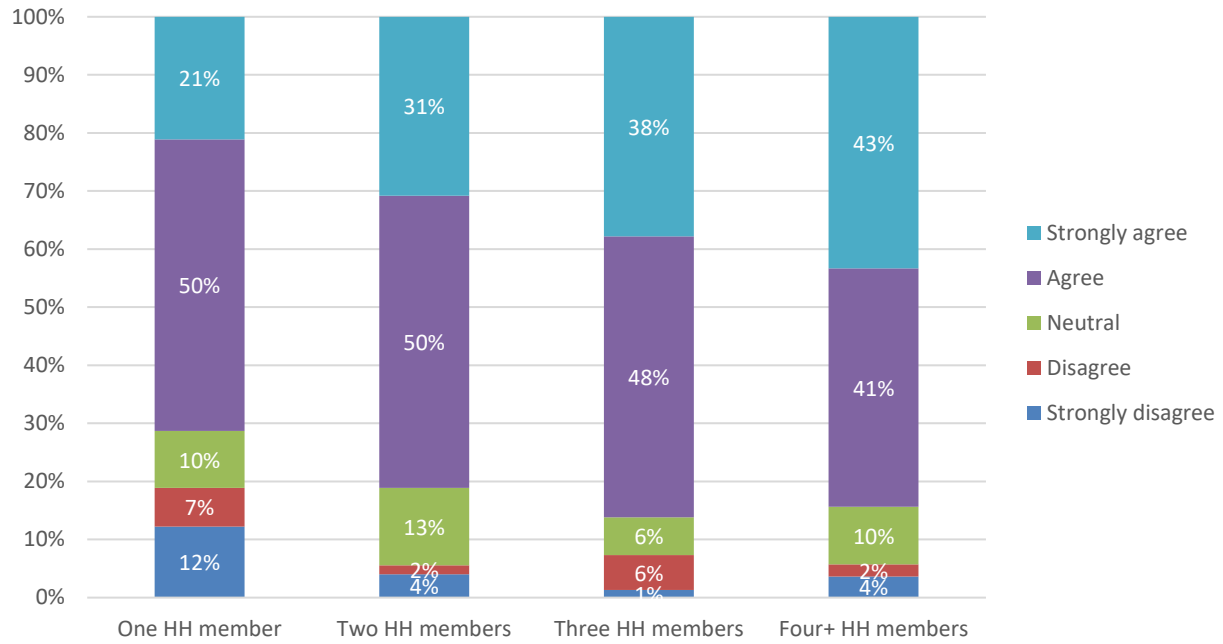


Figure 98. I can identify false or misleading information by household size

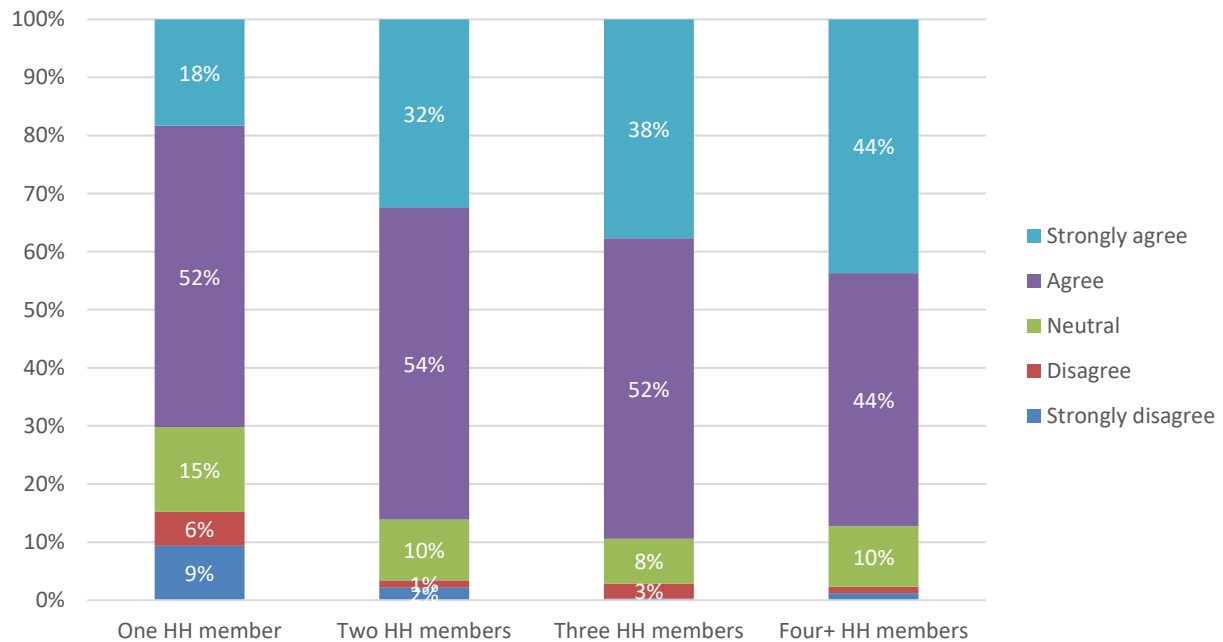


Figure 99. I can recognize and avoid online fraud by household size

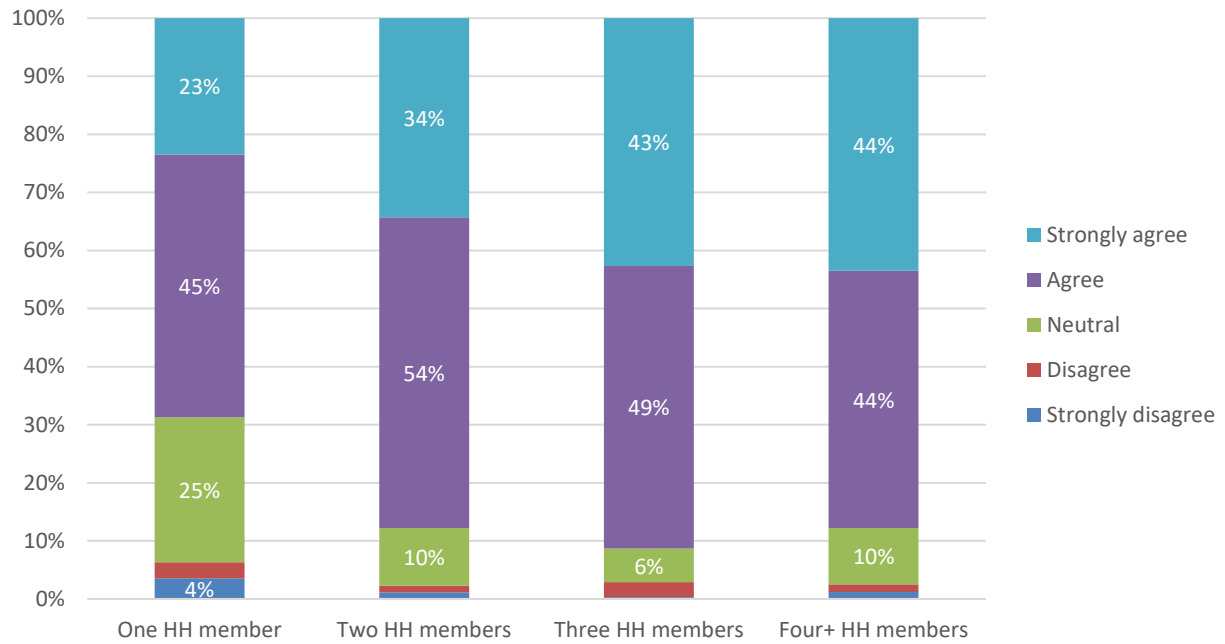


Figure 100. I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

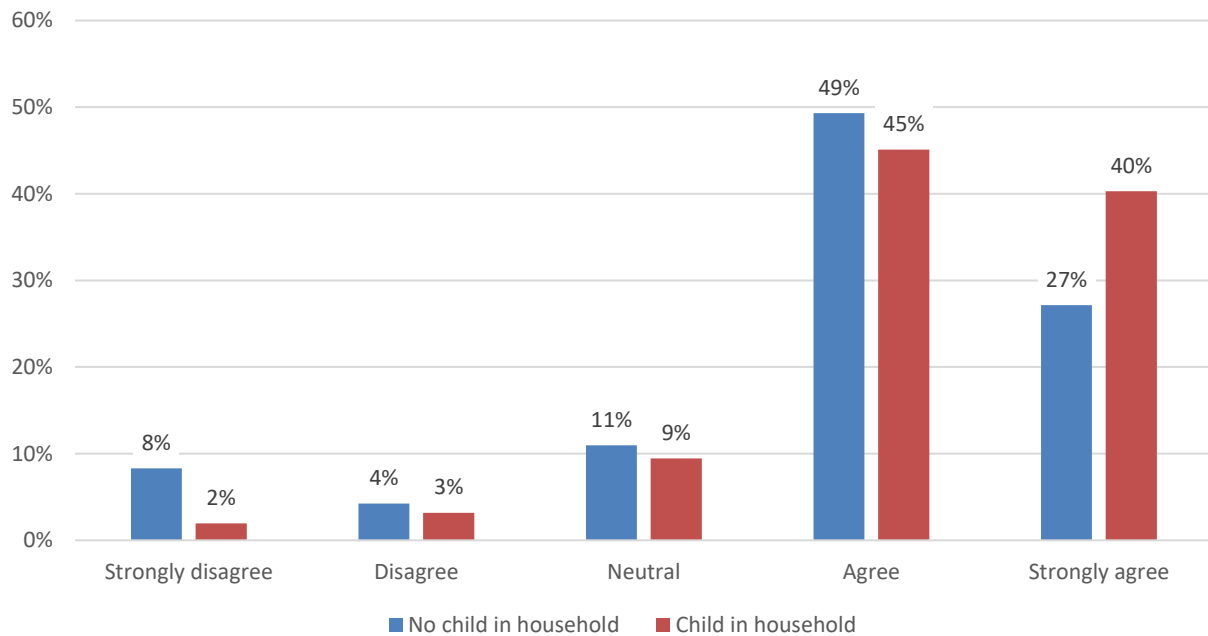


Figure 101. I can identify false or misleading information by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

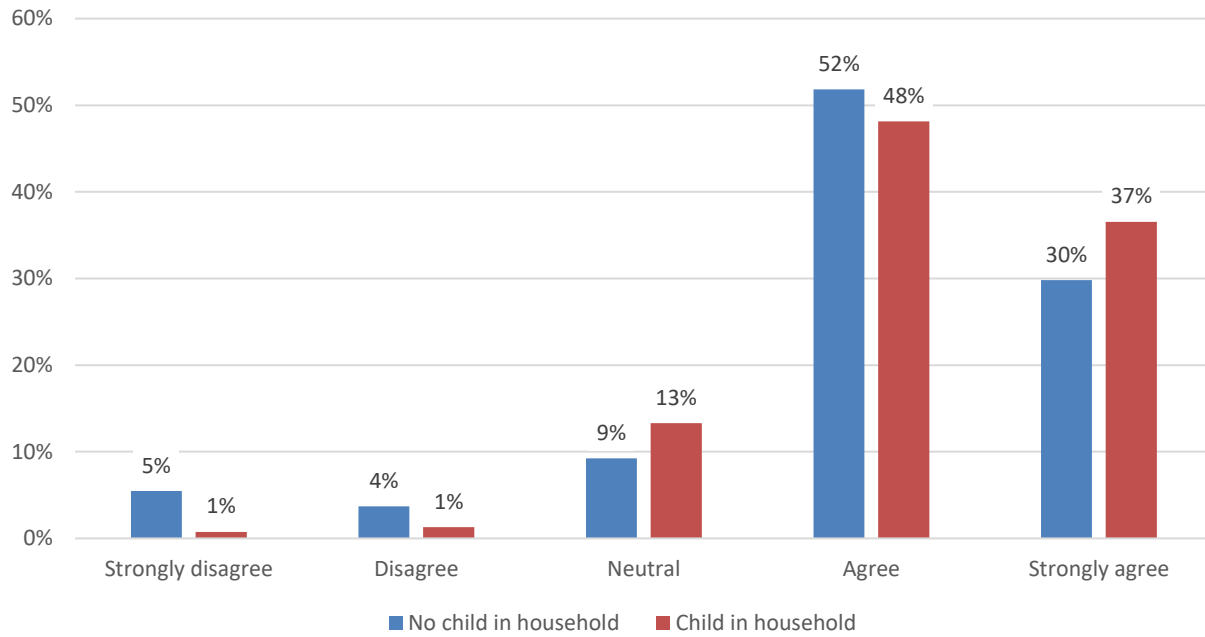


Figure 102. I can recognize and avoid online fraud by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

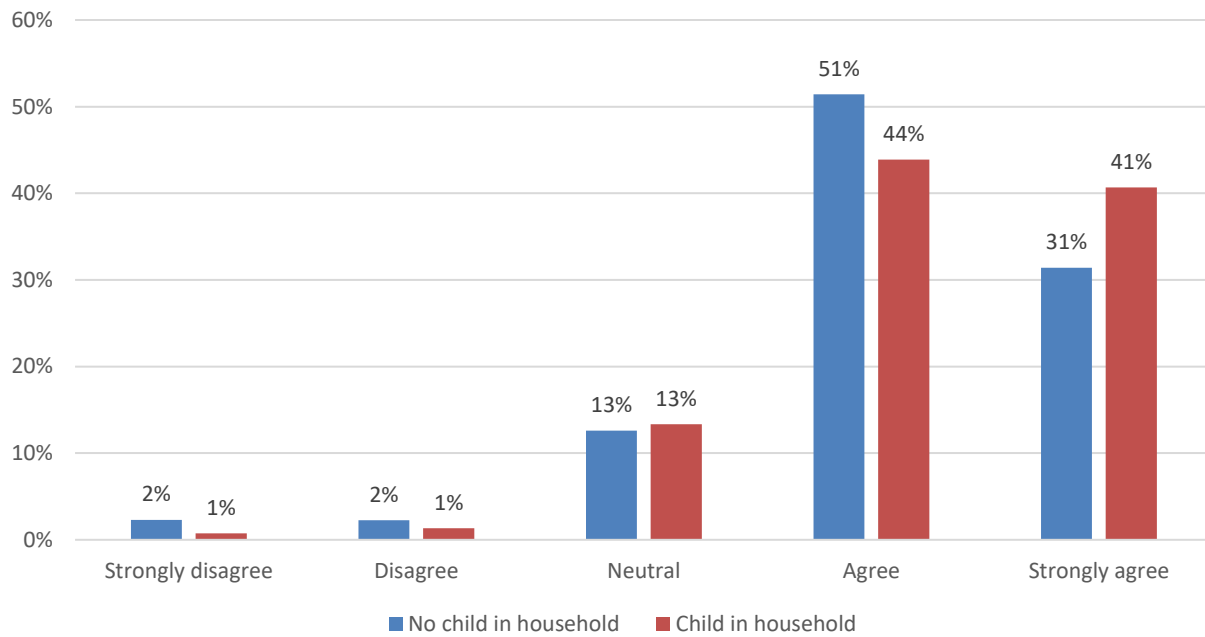


Figure 103. I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

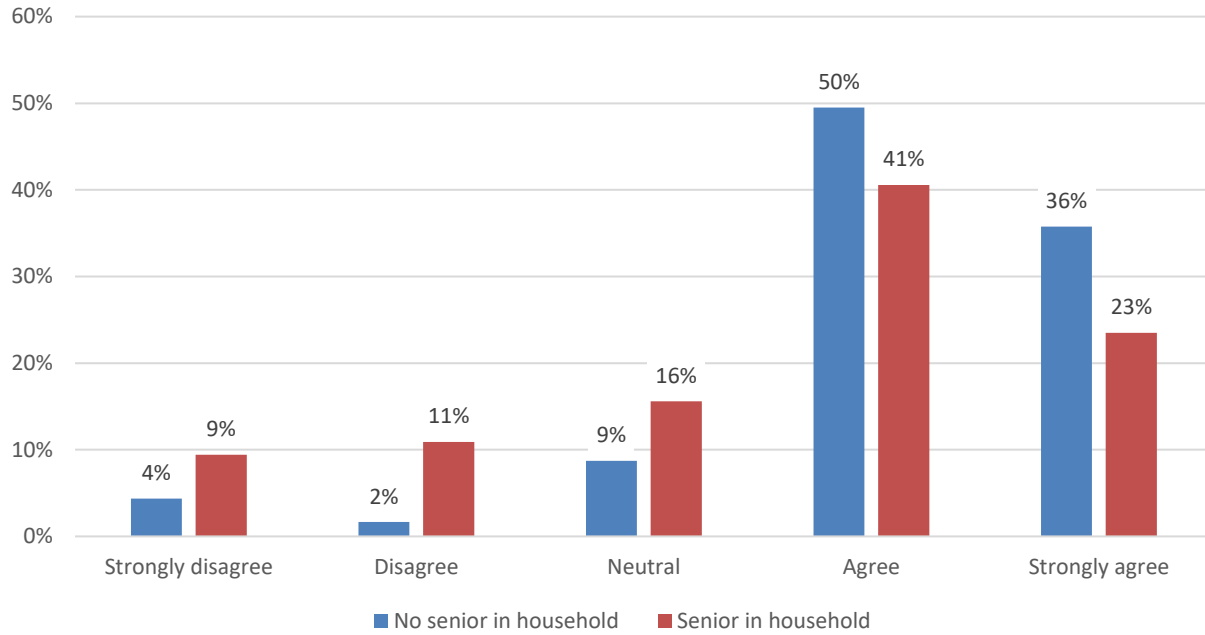


Figure 104. I can identify false or misleading information by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

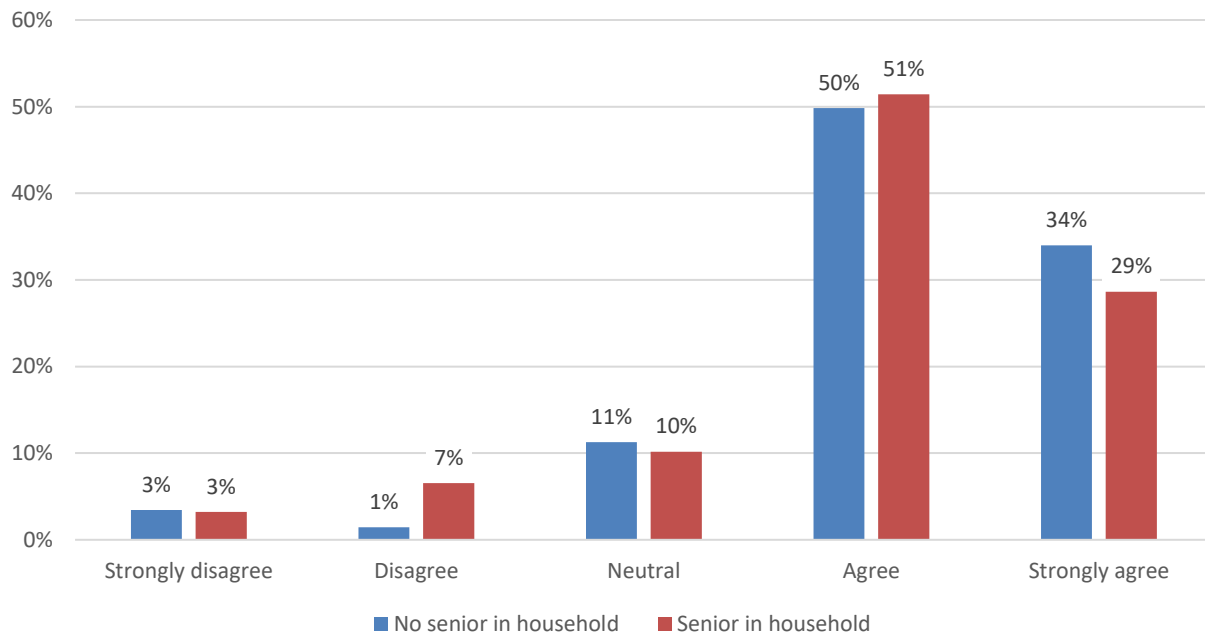


Figure 105. I can recognize and avoid online fraud by seniors in household (at least one household member age 65 or older)

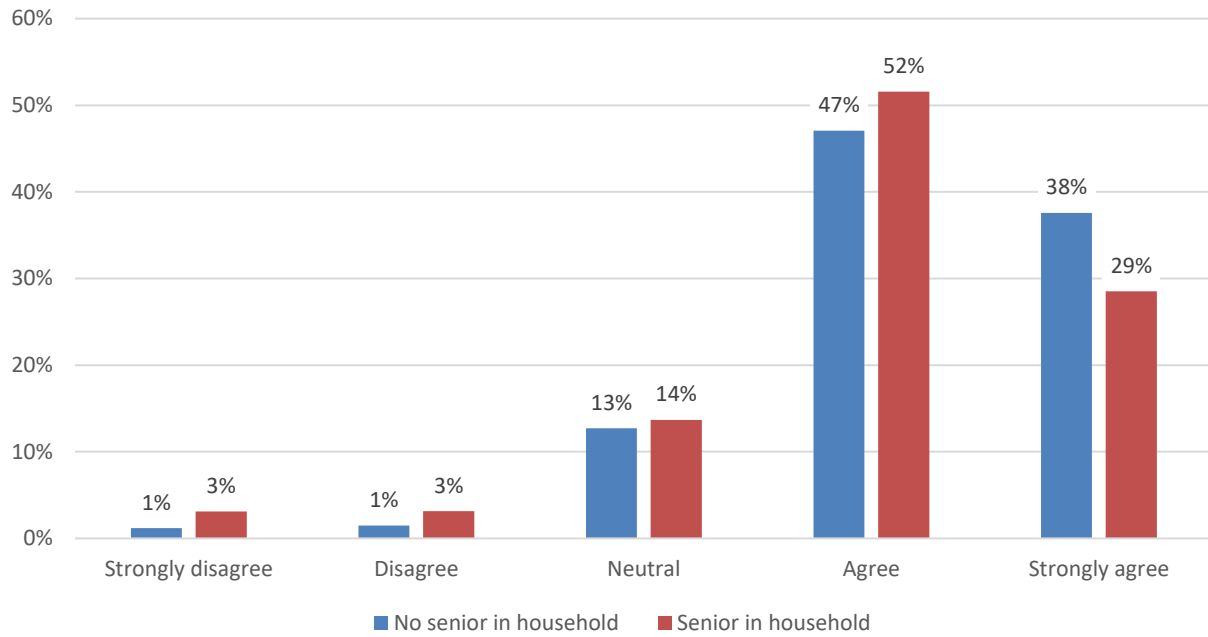


Figure 106. I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by respondent age

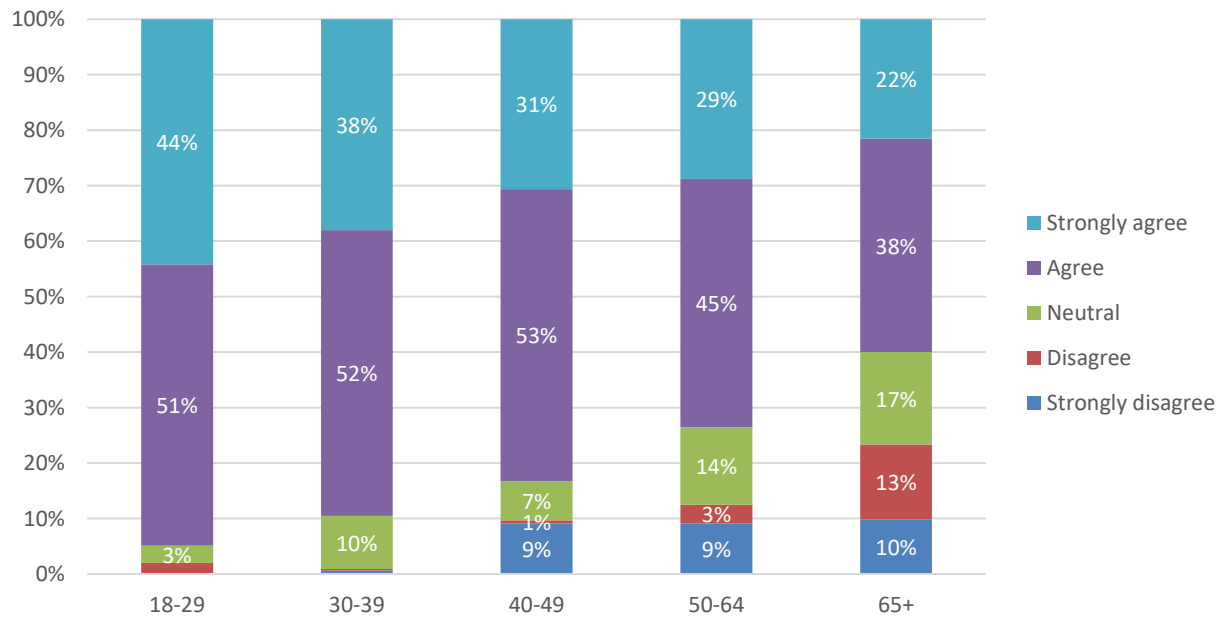


Figure 107. I can identify false or misleading information by respondent age

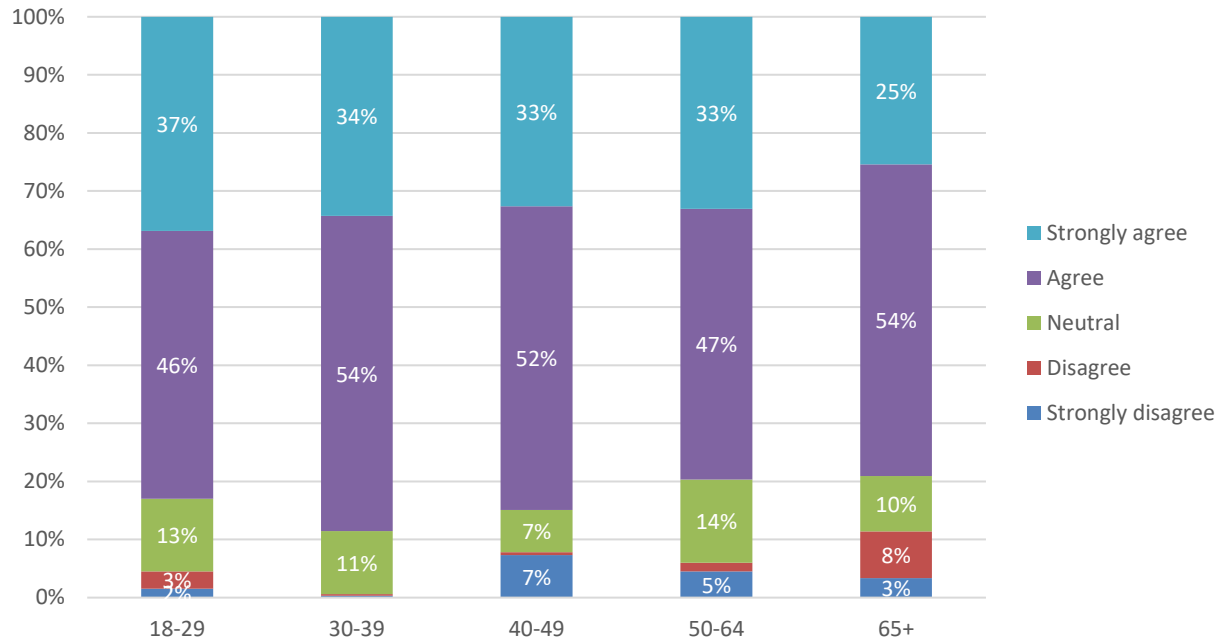
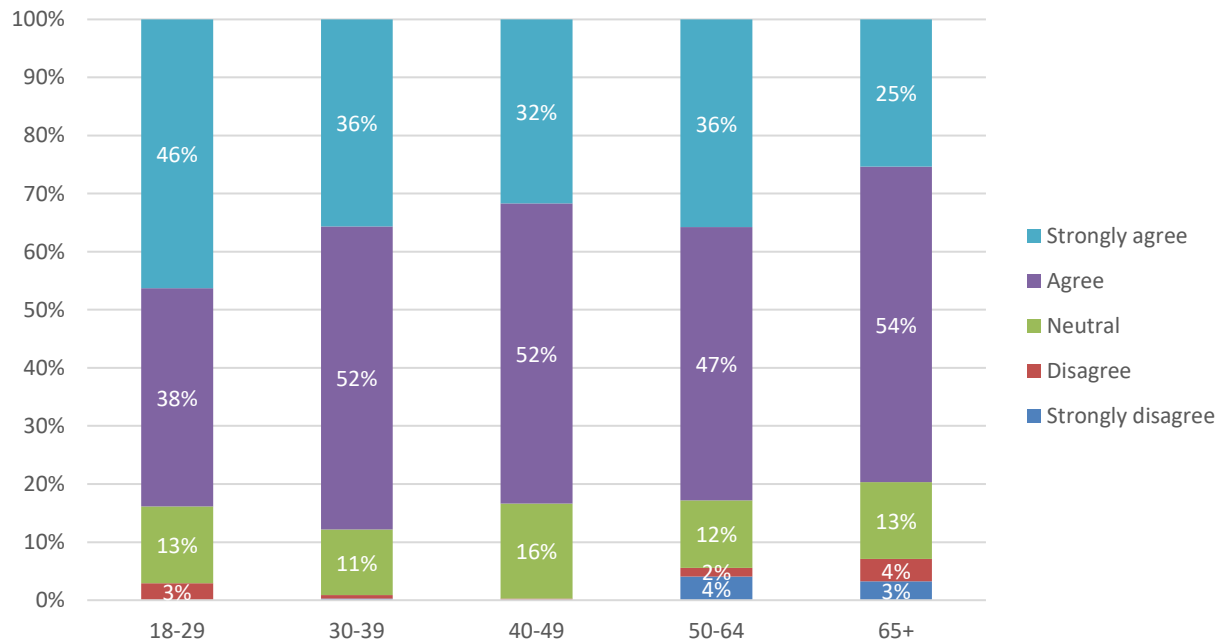


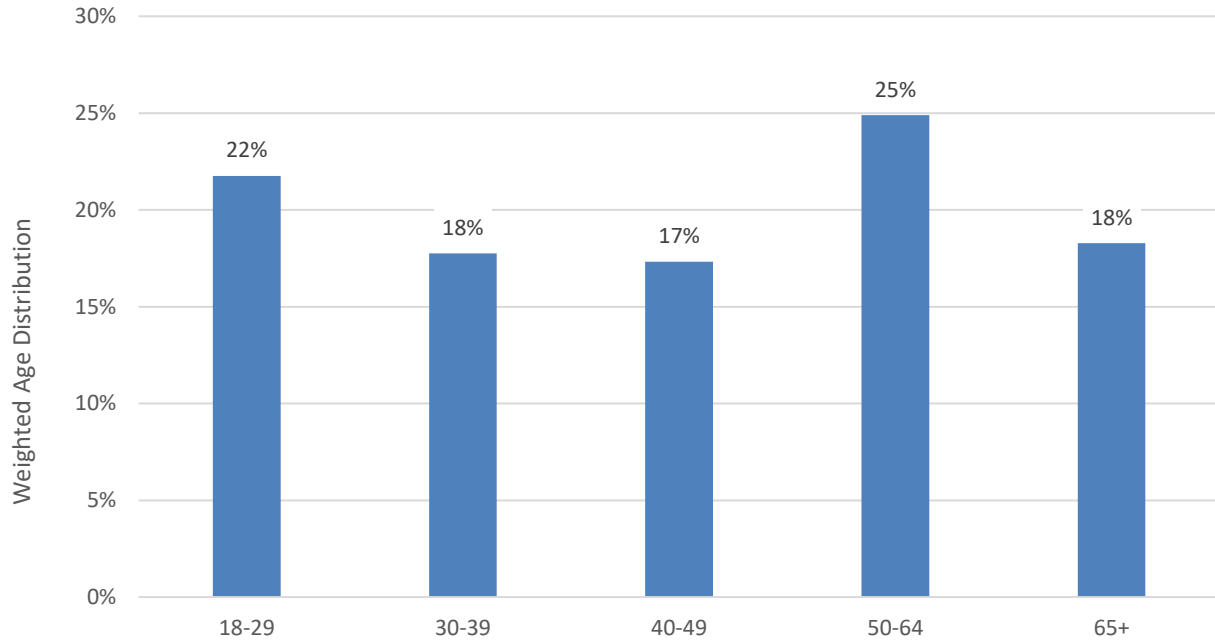
Figure 108. I can recognize and avoid online fraud by respondent age



Household questions

What is your age?

Figure 109. Age of respondent



How many people live in your household, and what are their approximate ages?

Figure 110. Percent of households with at least one member in each age category

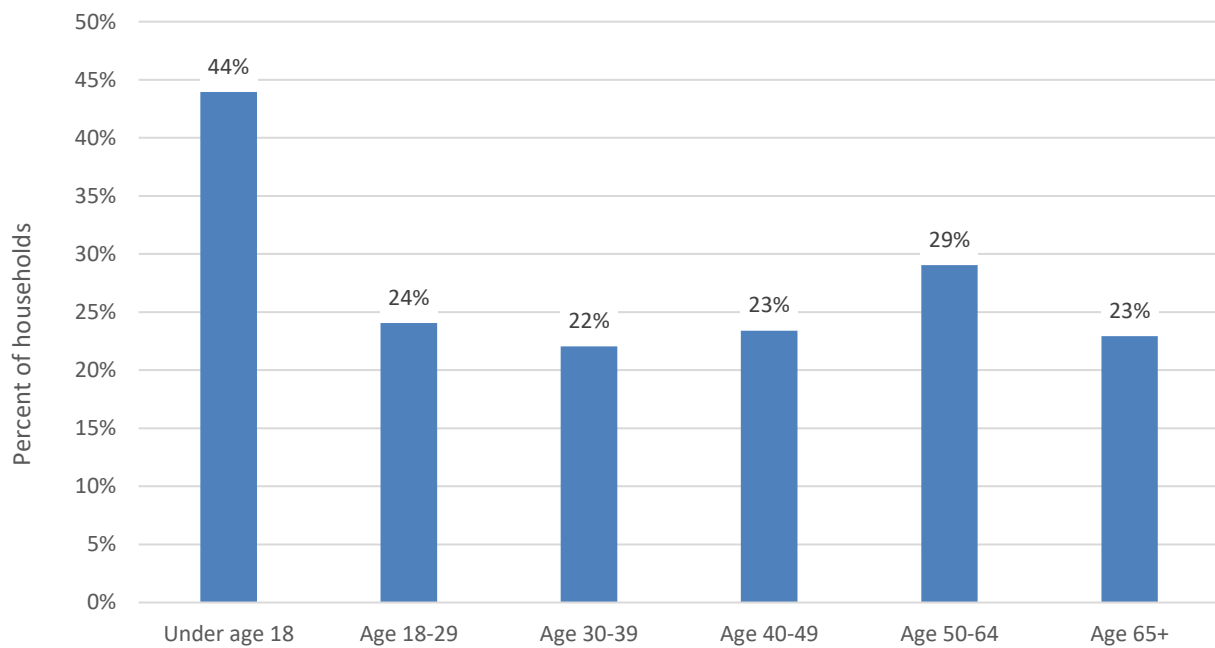


Figure 111. Average number of household members per age category (among households with at least one household member in that age group)

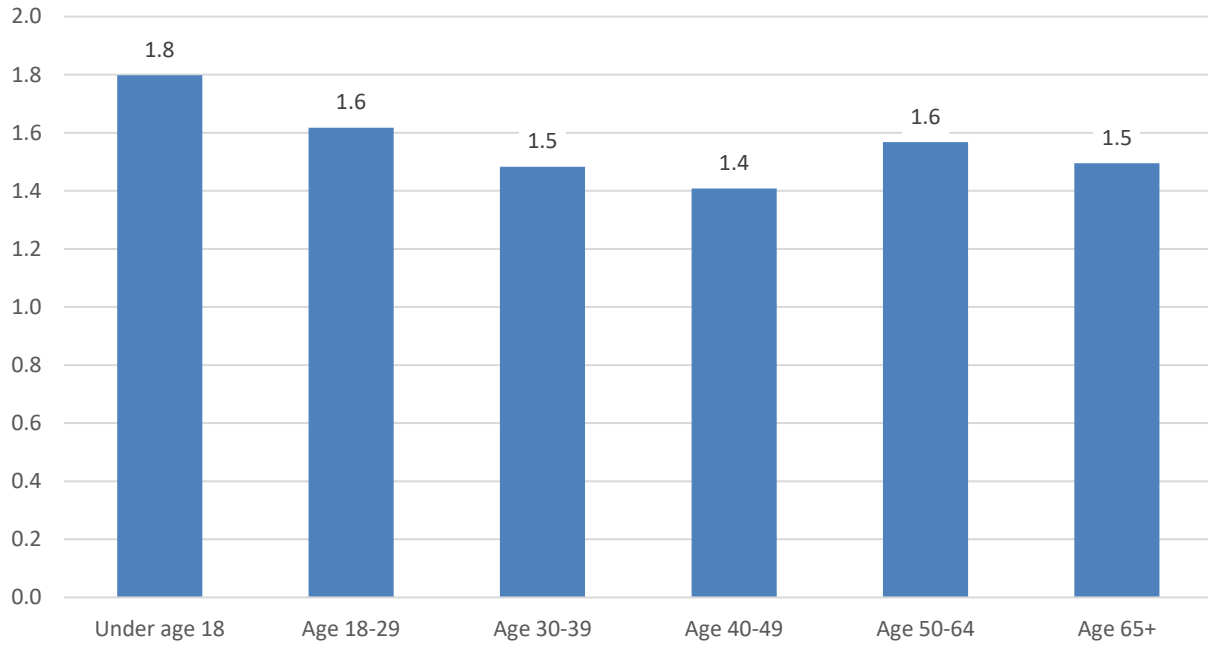
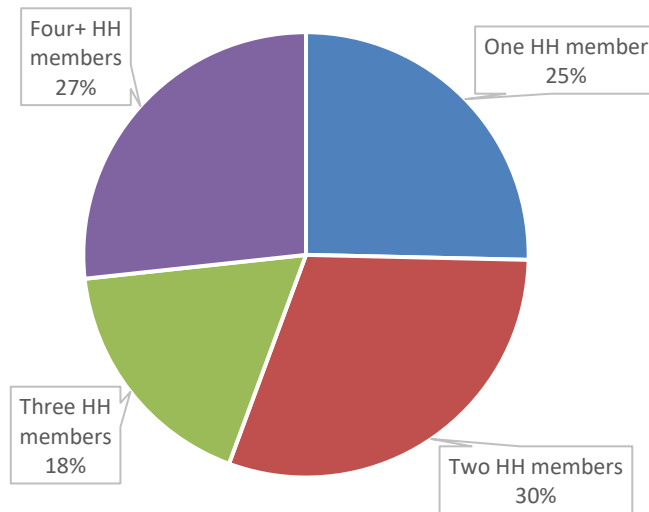
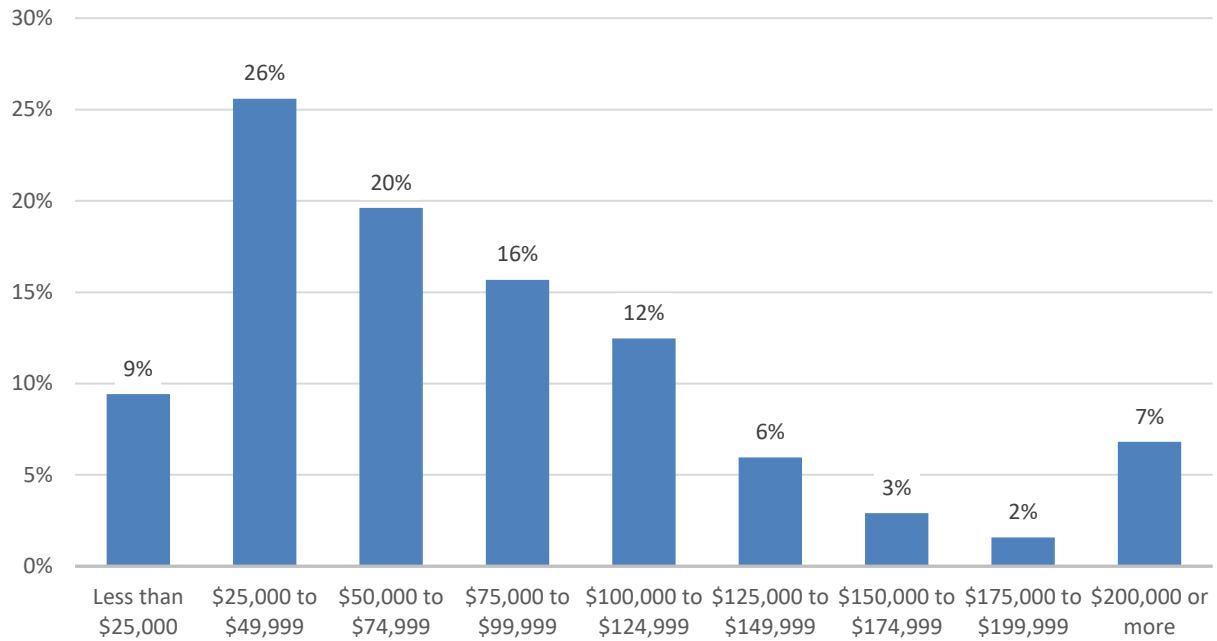


Figure 112. Number of household members (household size)



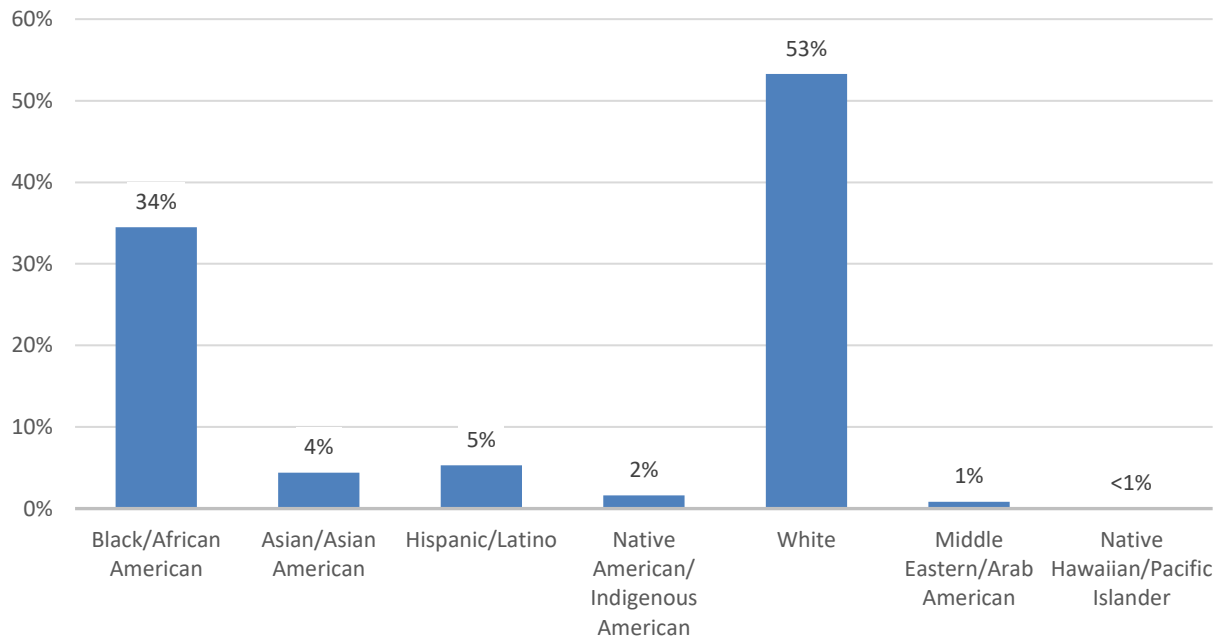
What is your approximate annual household income?

Figure 113. Approximate annual household income



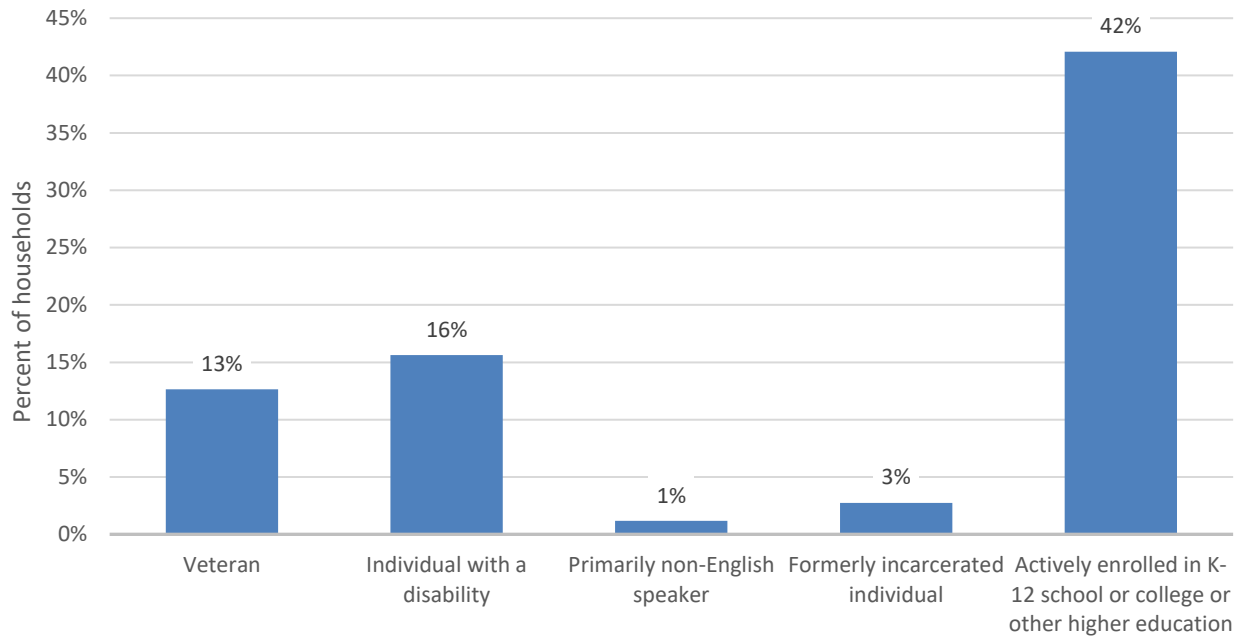
What race/ethnicities are represented in your household?

Figure 114. Race/ethnicity



Are you or anyone else living in your household a(n):

Figure 115. Percent of households with at least one household member in each at-risk group



Appendix E: Survey instruments

The State published targeted stakeholder surveys in conjunction with the stakeholder outreach efforts and continued to promote the surveys and encourage stakeholders to submit responses for an extended time during preparation of this Plan. The surveys aligned with the key categories identified in the Plan and included a focus on digital connectivity issues (i.e., “digital equity” in the IJJA’s parlance). The surveys were:

1. Workforce development – what organizations are doing to provide or facilitate training for jobs in broadband-related fields.
2. Digital connectivity programs – organizations’ and local governments’ digital connectivity programs, plans, and coalitions to provide community members skills and tools for participating in broadband-related opportunities.
3. CAIs – what community institutions/organizations are doing to advance Georgians’ opportunities to use broadband to work, learn, receive health care, and participate in civic events.
4. Agency asset inventory – infrastructure-related assets that a government entity owns or manages (conduit, fiber, structures, real estate, poles, etc.) and broadband-related workforce development efforts in place.
5. Covered population barriers – identifies unique obstacles to broadband access faced by vulnerable populations and the organizations that serve them.
6. ISPs – identifies recruiting and hiring for broadband-related positions, broadband development strategies, and collaboration with communities to close the digital divide.

Workforce development opportunity survey



Georgia Workforce Development Opportunity Survey

Broadband infrastructure deployment and network operations require a highly skilled workforce. Your responses to this brief survey will help the Georgia Technology Authority identify opportunities for workforce training and readiness programs to prepare residents for new job opportunities in this field. This information will be an important part of Georgia's work toward achieving statewide universal access to high-speed broadband with federal funding through the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity Planning programs.

1. Contact information

Your name	<input type="text"/>
Your job title	<input type="text"/>
Your e-mail	<input type="text"/>
Your phone number	<input type="text"/>
Organization name	<input type="text"/>
Organization address	<input type="text"/>
Organization website URL	<input type="text"/>

2. Type of organization (one selection only)

- Internet service provider (ISP)
- Labor union
- Trade association
- Industry certification or standards body
- Government agency (state, county, local, tribal, or regional consortia)
- Economic development association or agency
- Regional or local workforce development board or agency
- K-12 education (private, charter, public)
- Higher education organization (all levels, public or private)
- Trade, technical or vocational school (public, nonprofit, or for-profit)
- Community based or nonprofit organization



Georgia Workforce Development Opportunity Survey

3. Do you offer workforce development programs for job placement and training in the communications industry in Georgia?

Yes

No

4. Do you offer training in any of the following industries that have transferable skills that can be applied to communications network deployment? (Select all that apply)

Utilities such as electricity

HVAC

Computer science

Cybersecurity

General electrician

General construction

Other (please specify)

5. If you answered no to Question 3, are you interested in developing programs specifically targeted at employment opportunities in the communications industry?

Yes

No

Please describe your interest in developing these programs



Georgia Workforce Development Opportunity Survey

6. What type of workforce development programs do you offer? (Select all that apply)

- On-the-job training placement
- Standards certification and safety programs
- Training programs through a public or private K12 school
- Training programs through a school of higher education
- Trade or vocational certificate programs
- Job placement and recruiting services
- Formal apprenticeship opportunities

7. Which of the following communications designations are included in your programs? (Select all that apply)

- Construction laborers and heavy equipment operators
- Tower, line, equipment, maintenance, and testing specialists
- Supervisors / project managers
- Network design roles
- Locators

8. Does your program specifically reach out to any of the following populations for participation in your programs? (Select all that apply)

- Veterans or current military personnel
- People with disabilities
- Seniors
- Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated
- Those in low-income households or without reliable housing
- Those with a language barrier including English learners
- Those with a low level of literacy
- Specific racial or ethnic minority group(s)
- Those living in rural communities

9. How would you characterize your current capacity for developing and offering training programs to meet current workforce demands in the communications industry? (Select one)

- Underutilized
- Adequately utilized
- At capacity

10. How would you characterize your plans for developing and offering additional programs to meet future workforce demands in the communications industry? (Select one)

- We have plans to add capacity
- We have no plans to add capacity
- We are reducing our training capacity
- We are interested in adding capacity, but do not have resources to do so

Please describe your plans for additional or expanded programs or explain what additional resources you would need to add capacity.

11. What are the sources of funding for your training programs? (Select all that apply)

- Federal agencies and programs
- State agencies and programs
- County or local funding and programs
- Private foundations
- Fundraising and community grants
- Partnerships with employers
- Partnerships with unions or trade associations
- Fee-based services
- Other (please specify)

12. Do you serve "rural" communities?

Yes

No

What types of incentives are effective to recruit both skilled and manual labor to your rural community?

13. Please describe barriers to developing a diverse, skilled workforce in your community that can fill employment opportunities in the communications industry. Additionally, please provide examples or ideas of incentives or programs that can mitigate those barriers to create a diverse pool of highly skilled workers.



Georgia Workforce Development Opportunity Survey

14. Do you provide any in-house skills training, workforce development, or apprenticeship programs for your employees to support a highly skilled workforce?

- Yes
- No

15. If you answered yes above, please identify the types of programs. (Select all that apply)

- Mentorship
- Certification programs
- Apprenticeship
- Internship
- Sponsorships/scholarships for third-party training and classes
- Other (please specify)

16. In addition to any programs you directly provide, what other sources or programs do you use in Georgia to train and support workforce readiness among your employees? (Select all that apply)

- Standards certification and safety programs
- Training programs through a public or private K-12 school
- Training programs through a school of higher education
- Trade or vocational certificate programs
- Formal apprenticeship programs

17. What sources or programs do you use to recruit and hire employees, including technicians, linemen, construction laborers and managers, and similar positions? (Select all that apply)

- Internet-based employment posting sites
- Workforce development and community job placement centers
- Communications industry specific training classes
- Third-party hiring and recruitment firms
- Advertisements in relevant trade association publications and websites
- Incentivizing employee referrals

18. Do you have programs or incentives to support diversity among your employees when considering methods to attract, retain, and promote a skilled workforce?

19. Please describe your vision for workforce readiness programs, recruitment practices, and wrap around services to support broadband expansion in Georgia over the next five years.

Digital connectivity program inventory survey

* 1. Which category best describes your organization? Please select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> K - 12 school | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil rights organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community college and institution of higher education | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce development and adult literacy organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet Service Provider (ISP) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical and health care provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State government | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional or industry association or commission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County government | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organization that represents individuals with disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal government | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organization that represents veterans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council of governments (COG) or regional authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organization that represents aging individuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal government | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organization that represents incarcerated individuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public housing authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit organization that represents English learners |

2. Has your organization created a broadband and/or digital equity plan?

- Yes
 No

3. Is your organization part of a broadband coalition?

- Yes
 No

* 4. Please provide the information for a point of contact in your organization.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Organization name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
State/Province	<input type="text"/>
ZIP/Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>



Georgia Technology Authority Digital Connectivity Program Inventory

Program Details

Digital equity programs aim to ensure that communities have the skills, technology, and capacity to fully engage in the digital economy. Certain programs focus on populations which include low-income, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, incarcerated, English learners, ethnic minorities, and people in rural areas. Examples of digital equity programs include those that promote computer skills, internet access, and computing device access.

5. Does your organization offer digital equity programs?

Yes

No



Georgia Technology Authority Digital Connectivity Program Inventory

Program Details

6. What is the name of the program? (Please note there will be opportunities to provide information on additional programs below. Answers should only pertain to a single program)

Program name

7. What aspects of digital equity does the program address? Please select at least one.

- Availability and affordability of internet
- Digital literacy
- Data privacy and cybersecurity
- Desktop computers, laptops, or tablet and technical support
- Online accessibility and inclusivity

8. Does the program focus on certain populations? Check all that apply.

- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Aging individuals (60 and above)
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners; and have low levels of literacy
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who live in a covered household (household income is lower than 150% of the poverty level)
- No particular focus on a population
- Other (please specify)

9. What is the project budget?

- \$1 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$249,999
- \$250,000 to \$499,999
- Over \$500,000

10. How much does the program cost to the participant?

Cost in dollars

11. Please give us a sense of the geography you serve.

- State-wide
- County-wide
- City-wide
- Neighborhood-wide
- Other (please specify)

12. How long has the program been active, in months?

Program length in **months**

13. How many people were served by the program in the 2022 calendar year?

- Under 25 people
- 26 to 50 people
- 51 to 100 people
- More than 100 people

14. How many users do you expect to serve over the life of the program?

- 1 to 50
- 51 to 100 people
- 101 to 250 people
- 251 to 500 people
- More than 500 people

15. If you had the resources, would you want to scale the project to serve more communities and people?

Yes

No

16. Does your organization have another digital equity program?

Yes

No



Georgia Technology Authority Digital Connectivity Program Inventory

Program Details

17. What is the name of the program? (Please note there will be opportunities to provide information on additional programs below. Answers should only pertain to a single program)

Program name

18. What aspects of digital equity does the program address? Please select at least one.

- Availability and affordability of internet
- Digital literacy
- Data privacy and cybersecurity
- Desktop computers, laptops, or tablet and technical support
- Online accessibility and inclusivity

19. Does the program focus on certain populations? Check all that apply.

- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Aging individuals (60 and above)
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners; and have low levels of literacy
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who live in a covered household (household income is lower than 150% of the poverty level)
- No particular focus on a population
- Other (please specify)

20. What is the project budget?

- \$1 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$249,999
- \$250,000 to \$499,999
- Over \$500,000
- N/A

21. How much does the program cost to the participant?

Cost in dollars

22. Please give us a sense of the geography you serve.

- State-wide
- County-wide
- City-wide
- Neighborhood-wide
- Other (please specify)

23. How long has the program been active, in months?

Program length in **months**

24. How many people were served by the program in the 2022 calendar year?

- Under 25 people
- 26 to 50 people
- 51 to 100 people
- More than 100 people

25. How many users do you expect to serve over the life of the program?

- 1 to 50
- 51 to 100 people
- 101 to 250 people
- 251 to 500 people
- More than 500 people

26. If you had the resources, would you want to scale the project to serve more communities and people?

- Yes
- No

27. Does your organization have another digital equity program?

- Yes
- No



Georgia Technology Authority Digital Connectivity Program Inventory

Program Details

28. What is the name of the program? (Please note there will be opportunities to provide information on additional programs below. Answers should only pertain to a single program)

Program name

29. What aspects of digital equity does the program address? Please select at least one.

- Availability and affordability of internet
- Digital literacy
- Data privacy and cybersecurity
- Desktop computers, laptops, or tablet and technical support
- Online accessibility and inclusivity

30. Does the program focus on certain populations? Check all that apply.

- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- Aging individuals (60 and above)
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners; and have low levels of literacy
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who live in a covered household (household income is lower than 150% of the poverty level)
- No particular focus on a population
- Other (please specify)

31. What is the project budget?

- \$1 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$249,999
- \$250,000 to \$499,999
- Over \$500,000
- N/A

32. How much does the program cost to the participant?

Cost in dollars

33. Please give us a sense of the geography you serve.

- State-wide
- County-wide
- City-wide
- Neighborhood-wide
- Other (please specify)

34. How long has the program been active, in months?

Program length in **months**

35. How many people were served by the program in the 2022 calendar year?

- Under 25 people
- 26 to 50 people
- 51 to 100 people
- More than 100 people

36. How many users do you expect to serve over the life of the program?

- 1 to 50
- 51 to 100 people
- 101 to 250 people
- 251 to 500 people
- More than 500 people

37. If you had the resources, would you want to scale the project to serve more communities and people?

- Yes
- No



Georgia Technology Authority Digital Connectivity Program Inventory

Planned Programs

38. Is your organization in the process of developing a digital equity program?

Yes

No

39. What kind of digital equity program(s) is your organization developing? Please select the categories that best fits the program type.

Digital skills and literacy

Data privacy and cybersecurity

Devices (Laptops, computers, tablets)

Technical support

Digital navigators

Broadband access

Creating accessible and inclusive internet content

Other (please specify)

40. Does your organization want to develop a digital equity program?

Yes

No

41. What kind of digital equity program(s) is your organization interested in developing?
Please select the categories that best fits the program type.

Digital skills and literacy

Data privacy and cybersecurity

Devices (Laptops, computers, tablets)

Technical support

Digital navigators

Broadband access

Creating accessible and inclusive internet content



Georgia Technology Authority Digital Connectivity Program Inventory

42. Please describe how access to affordable, reliable, and secure high-speed broadband by the communities that you serve may impact programmatic outcomes of your organization?

43. Do you have metrics to measure progress on your programmatic outcomes?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe or provide a URL link with documentation.

Please provide examples or a discussion of metrics that you believe would be useful to track broadband related inputs and outcomes that are relevant to your mission, programs, and services.

44. Economic and workforce development outcomes - input and outcome metrics

45. Educational outcomes - input and outcome metrics

46. Health outcomes - input and outcome metrics

47. Civic and social engagement outcomes - input and outcome metrics

48. Delivery of other essential services outcomes - input and outcome metrics

Community anchor institution survey



Georgia Technology Authority Community Anchor Institution Survey

Community anchor institutions play a critical role in facilitating greater use of broadband by underserved and vulnerable populations. Your responses to this brief survey will help the Georgia Technology Authority identify programs to advance residents' opportunities to use broadband to work, learn, receive health care, and participate in civic events. This information will be an important part of Georgia's work toward achieving statewide access to high-speed broadband with federal funding through the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity Planning programs.

* 1. Contact information

Your name	<input type="text"/>
Your job title	<input type="text"/>
Your e-mail	<input type="text"/>
Your phone number	<input type="text"/>
Organization name	<input type="text"/>
Organization address	<input type="text"/>
Organization website URL	<input type="text"/>
Organization's number of employees	<input type="text"/>
Please indicate if your organization serves statewide, regionally, or locally	<input type="text"/>

2. Choose the option that best describes your organization. Select the one that best applies.

- K-12 school
- Higher education entity
- Library
- Health clinic, health center, hospital, or other medical provider
- Public safety entity
- Public housing organization (including HUD-assisted housing and tribal housing organizations)
- Neighborhood organization and community center
- Faith-based organization
- Community support organization that facilitates use of broadband service by low-income or other underserved populations

3. Which of the following programs or services do you offer to facilitate the use of broadband services by your constituents or clients? Select all that apply.

- Support for applicants to broadband subsidy programs such as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Loans or donations of devices (computers, tablets) to access the internet
- Hotspots and free or subsidized internet access
- Cybersecurity training
- Other digital literacy training
- Training, equipment, subsidized services, or other resources to facilitate access to telehealth and telemedicine services
- Training teachers of broadband skills and digital literacy
- Developing and distributing accessible online content or devices designed for us by persons with disabilities
- Developing and distributing accessible online content directed at populations with specific needs, such as seniors, low-income residents, those with low-literacy, and those whose first language is not English
- Broadband internet access services at community centers or other gathering spaces used by clients and constituents
- Funding of programs that provide any of the above programs, including broadband infrastructure, devices, and subsidies to support affordability
- Program development and planning of internet-related services
- Advocacy for digital inclusion, affordability, and the internet-related needs of vulnerable populations
- Emergency and disaster relief services such as evacuation centers, charging stations, replacement equipment, and information on grants, loans, and services to those impacted by disasters
- My organization does **not** offer programs that facilitate the use of broadband internet services
- Other (please specify)



Georgia Technology Authority Community Anchor Institution Survey

4. Is your organization located on Tribal land, affiliated with a Tribal or Native entity, or primarily serving Tribal or Native populations?

Yes

No

5. Does your organization conduct outreach or tailor its internet-related services to the needs of any of the following communities or groups? Select all that apply.

Veterans or current military personnel

Those with a language barrier including English learners

People with disabilities

Those with a low level of literacy

Seniors

Specific racial or ethnic minority group(s)

Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated residents

Those living in rural communities

Those in low-income households or without reliable housing

Not applicable

Other (please specify)

6. Based on your organization's observations and experience, please describe the barriers and obstacles (e.g. affordability, lack of digital literacy, language barriers) that prevent members of the communities your organization serves, including Tribal and Native populations, from accessing or using broadband internet services.

7. Do all of your organization's locations, offices, or community centers have access to broadband internet speeds of at least 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) symmetrical (both upload and download)?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

If **no**, please provide the addresses of the locations where your organization does not have access to broadband internet services of at least 1 Gbps symmetrical.

8. If your organization does not have access to, or does not purchase, service with symmetrical speeds of at least 1 Gbps, please describe why. Select all that apply.

- Service is unavailable
- Service is unreliable
- Service is expensive
- Customer service is inadequate
- Our operations do not require Gigabit-level services
- I do not know if 1 Gbps service is available at my location
- Other (please specify)

9. Does your current internet service meet the needs of your organization to deliver broadband-related programs to your clients and constituents?

- Yes
- No, service is unavailable
- No, service is unreliable
- No, service is expensive
- No, customer service is inadequate
- No, service is too complicated to set up and/or maintain
- Redundant connectivity necessary for our operations is too expensive/unavailable
- Other (please specify)

10. How essential is symmetrical Gigabit connectivity at your facilities to your ability to deliver your broadband-related services?

1 - Not important	2	3	4	5 - Critically important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Does your organization provide access to broadband internet services to clients, constituents, or visitors at each of your locations?

- Yes
- No

If **yes**, does your broadband internet service provide sufficient capacity to accommodate peak demand for such services at all of your locations? If **no**, is a lack of access to adequate internet services at your location preventing you from serving users?

12. Is it critical to your organization's mission and service delivery to maintain communications with **critical facilities** such as hospitals, schools, data centers, and public safety agencies during natural disasters and emergencies?

Yes

No

Please briefly describe your organization's need to remain connected to critical facilities and whether you believe your organization's current communications services meet this need.

13. Has your organization been consulted on disaster planning, emergency communications, or disaster recovery by your communications service provider or a local/regional government agency?

Yes

No

If yes, please briefly describe any plans or reports you think would be useful to the State's broadband and emergency communications planning efforts.

14. If you operate or sponsor any workforce development or training programs in the fields of telecommunications or technology, please select all that apply.

We do not sponsor programs

Pre-apprenticeships

Mentorships

Internships

Certification programs

Digital literacy training for specific employment opportunities

Registered apprenticeships

Job placement and recruitment services

Unregistered apprenticeships

Sponsorships/scholarships for third-party training and classes

Other (please specify)

15. Would your organization offer additional broadband-related services or programs to its constituents or clients if it had additional resources?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe those additional broadband-related services and the additional resources your organization would need to offer them (e.g. funding, skilled workforce, access to broadband internet services with faster speeds or more capacity).

16. Please describe how your organization can collaborate with the Georgia Technology Authority and participate in its efforts to achieve statewide access to high-speed broadband.

Agency asset inventory survey



Georgia Technology Authority Agency Asset Inventory Survey

By completing this short questionnaire, you will help the Georgia Technology Authority identify infrastructure-related assets that may potentially help facilitate broadband deployment in Georgia. As the State engages with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to extend network footprints and services, this information will support Georgia's goal of optimizing federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding to achieve statewide access to high-speed broadband.

* 1. Please provide your contact information

Agency name	<input type="text"/>
Government level (State, regional, county, local, tribal)	<input type="text"/>
Name of jurisdiction	<input type="text"/>
First and last name	<input type="text"/>
Title	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Phone number	<input type="text"/>
Agency website URL (if any)	<input type="text"/>

2. Does your agency own or manage physical assets (i.e. conduit, fiber, structures, real estate, poles, etc.) that are available for lease to Internet Service Providers (ISP) for broadband deployment?

Yes

No

What information about these leasable assets would you like the State to include in its broadband planning and communications with ISPs?

3. Will your agency oversee capital construction projects between now and 2027 that include opportunities for the placement of communications facilities by your agency, other state or local agencies, regional or local consortia, or ISPs?

Yes

No

What information about these projects (i.e. scope, location, schedule) would you like included in State broadband planning and in communications with ISPs?

4. Has your agency analyzed workforce readiness (i.e., the availability of skilled labor) in Georgia as it may impact State broadband policies and deployment goals?

Yes

No

Please provide a URL link where relevant documents, presentations, or analyses are located or send to the following email address: GTAbroadband@ctcnet.us

5. Does your agency have a role in workforce development that would support wired or wireless broadband deployment (including training and recruitment for equipment technicians, cable installation and repair, and construction jobs)?

Yes

No

Please describe programs or initiatives that your agency operates or supports or relevant programs operated by other agencies.

6. Are you aware of, or does your agency have reason to track and monitor frequent or widespread broadband or other communications outages that have significant impact on your community (or, if you represent a statewide organization, on the communities in Georgia)?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe your agency's role in monitoring or tracking communications reliability in your community and discuss the impact of significant outages.

7. Are you aware of, or is your agency involved in, planning efforts or development of regulations related to reliable and resilient emergency-level broadband or other communications services, especially services for critical facilities in Georgia (e.g. hospitals, schools, evacuation sites, utilities, data centers, public safety locations)?

Yes

No

Please provide a URL link to any publicly available materials relating to these issues and briefly describe the relevant issues related to critical facilities, including planning for climate and weather-related hazards. You may also email these materials to GTAbroadband@ctcnet.us

8. Has your agency developed any policies, regulations, or guidance regarding emergency communications, network redundancy, climate resilience, disaster preparedness, or disaster recovery planning applicable to the broadband and communications industry in Georgia?

Yes

No

Please provide a URL link to any publicly available documents and briefly describe policies and other materials that you believe would be helpful to Georgia's broadband planning efforts. You may also email these materials to GTAbroadband@ctcnet.us

9. Has your agency developed policies or strategic planning documents that will facilitate broadband access efforts in Georgia (e.g. publicly available information that directly addresses digital equity, infrastructure deployment, economic development, network resilience, partnerships, business planning, or other related efforts)?

Yes

No

Please briefly summarize the material and provide a URL link or email information to GTAbroadband@ctcnet.us

10. If applicable please share information regarding broadband-related planning efforts of other Georgia state and local agencies or contact information for agencies involved in broadband-related planning efforts, that you believe would be helpful to GTA's broadband planning efforts.

11. Please describe how your agency can collaborate with GTA and participate in its efforts to achieve statewide universal access to high-speed broadband.

Covered population barriers survey



Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations Broadband Barriers Survey

Organizations that serve or represent vulnerable populations have a critical role in shedding light on the unique barriers such populations face, and how their unique needs can best be addressed. Your responses to this brief survey will help the Georgia Technology Authority identify opportunities for programs to advance vulnerable residents' full participation in broadband-related opportunities to work, learn, receive health care, and participate in civic events. This information will be an important part of Georgia's work toward achieving statewide access to high-speed broadband with federal funding through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity programs.

1. Contact information

Your name	<input type="text"/>
Your job title	<input type="text"/>
Your e-mail	<input type="text"/>
Your phone number	<input type="text"/>
Organization name	<input type="text"/>
Organization address	<input type="text"/>
Organization website URL	<input type="text"/>
Organization's number of employees	<input type="text"/>



**Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations
Broadband Barriers Survey
Digital Literacy and Digital Skills**





**Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations
Broadband Barriers Survey**

Accessible Content

2. Does your organization provide programs and services that are primarily targeted to any of the following communities? (Select all that apply)

- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans or current military personnel
- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with low levels of literacy
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- No particular focus on a population or community
- Other (please specify)



Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations Broadband Barriers Survey

Internet Service

3. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population(s) you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as representing on the spectrum.

	1 - Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 - Strongly Disagree
Their households have access to some type of home internet service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The available internet service is high-speed, sufficient for their needs, and reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The available internet service is affordable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Their households can choose from among more than one provider for high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Are there unique barriers to reliable, affordable, and high-speed internet service for the population(s) you serve?

Yes

No

Please describe these barriers to accessing reliable, affordable, and high-speed internet service:



**Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations
Broadband Barriers Survey
Access to Computers**

5. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population(s) you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as representing on the spectrum.

	1 - Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 - Strongly Disagree
There are computers capable of utilizing highspeed internet services in the household of the populations we serve or represent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The households can troubleshoot computer issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The households can afford computer repairs or service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The households have enough devices to serve their needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are public computers that are convenient to use and close by to these households.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Are there unique barriers to accessing home computers for the population(s) you serve?

Yes

No

Please describe these barriers to accessing computers and similar devices:

7. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population(s) you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as representing on the spectrum.

	1 - Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 - Strongly Disagree
Individuals can find, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals can use technologies appropriately and effectively to retrieve information, interpret results, and judge the quality of that information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals can use the internet to support education, employment, health, and personal needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals have access to convenient and comprehensive digital literacy training.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Are there unique barriers to digital skills for the population(s) your serve?

- Yes
- No

Please describe these barriers to acquiring necessary digital skills:

9. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population(s) you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as representing on the spectrum.

	1 - Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 - Strongly Disagree
Individuals have access to meaningful website content that is written in plain language and is appropriate for the targeted user or audience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals have access to meaningful website content that is accurately translated into necessary languages.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals have access to meaningful website content that can be read by a screen reader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals have access to meaningful website content with closed captioning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals have access to adequate and appropriate assistive technologies to support access to the internet and use of website content by people with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Are there unique barriers to accessible content for the population(s) your serve?

Yes

No

Please describe these barriers to accessible content:



**Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations
Broadband Barriers Survey**
Data Privacy and Cyber Security

T1. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population(s) you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as representing on the spectrum.

	1 - Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 - Strongly Disagree
Individuals know how to protect their information online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals can recognize a phishing scam or other types of scams and illegal activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals use anti-virus and anti-malware software on their computers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Are there unique barriers to data privacy and cyber security for the population(s) your serve?

Yes

No

Please describe these barriers to acquiring literacy in data privacy and cyber security:



Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations Broadband Barriers Survey

Initiatives to Address Barriers

Thinking about the unique barriers you discussed:

13. What types of programs and initiatives would you recommend to address these barriers?

14. Does your organization currently offer any of these types of programs or initiatives?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe if you are interested in expanding your programs and, if so, what types of resources would you need to expand:

15. Would your organization be interested in adding new programs to its current portfolio?

Yes

No

If yes, what types of resources do you believe would be necessary to add new programs to your current portfolio?



**Georgia Technology Authority Covered Populations
Broadband Barriers Survey
Programmatic Impact of Broadband Access**

16. Please describe how access to affordable, reliable, and secure high-speed broadband by the communities that you serve may impact the programmatic outcomes of your organization.

17. Do you have metrics to measure progress on your programmatic outcomes?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe:

Please provide examples or a discussion of metrics that you believe would be useful to track broadband related inputs and outcomes that are relevant to your mission, programs, and services.

18. Economic and workforce development outcomes - input and outcome metrics

19. Educational outcomes - input and outcome metrics

20. Health outcomes - input and outcome metrics

21. Civic and social engagement outcomes - input and outcome metrics

22. Delivery of other essential services outcomes - input and outcome metrics

Internet service provider engagement survey



Georgia Internet Service Provider Engagement Survey

The Georgia Technology Authority seeks your input on a range of broadband-related issues. Your responses to this brief survey will be an important part of Georgia's work toward achieving statewide universal access to high-speed broadband with federal funding through the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity Planning programs.

1. Contact Information

Your name	<input type="text"/>
Your job title	<input type="text"/>
Your email	<input type="text"/>
Your phone number	<input type="text"/>
Organization name	<input type="text"/>
Organization address	<input type="text"/>
Organization website URL	<input type="text"/>
Organization's number of employees	<input type="text"/>

2. Choose the option that best describes your organization and the services it offers:

	Internet service provider (ISP)	Other provider
Provider type	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3. What recruitment and hiring sources does your organization use to hire technicians, lineworkers, engineers, construction laborers and managers, and similar positions? (Select all that apply)

- Internet-based employment posting sites
- Workforce development and community job placement centers
- Communications industry-specific training classes
- Third-party hiring and recruitment firms
- Advertisements in trade association publications and websites
- Incentivizing employee referrals

4. Does your organization offer, sponsor, or participate in any workforce development or apprenticeship programs?

- Yes
- No

5. If you answered yes to Q.4, please specify the type of programs. (Select all that apply)

- Mentorship
- Certification programs
- Apprenticeship
- Internship
- Sponsorships/scholarships for third-party training and classes
- Other (please specify)

6. How would you propose to work with Georgia on workforce development issues related to broadband deployment, including programs to support diversity among your organization's employees?

7. Does your organization participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

- Yes
- No

Appendix F: Digital Equity Act requirements

The following table displays this Plan’s fulfillment of all requirements of the Digital Equity Act as outlined in the NOFO and other guidance from the NTIA.

Table 54: Requirements of Digital Equity Act corresponding to sections of this Plan

	Requirement	Details	Section
Requirement 1			
1	Identification of digital equity barriers for each Covered Population	Individuals who live in covered households	3.2
		Aging individuals	3.2
		Incarcerated individuals	3.2
		Veterans	3.2
		Individuals with disabilities	3.2
		Individuals with a language barrier	3.2
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	3.2
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	3.2
Requirement 2			
2a	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting the availability of, and affordability of access to, fixed and wireless broadband technology	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.1
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.1
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.1
		Veterans	2.3.2.1
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.1
		Individuals with a language barrier	2.3.2.1
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.1
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	2.3.2.1
2b	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.3
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.3
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.3
		Veterans	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with a language barrier	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	2.3.2.3
2c	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting digital literacy	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.3
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.3
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.3
		Veterans	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with a language barrier	2.3.2.3

	Requirement	Details	Section
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	2.3.2.3
2d	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting awareness of and use of, measures to secure the online privacy of, and cybersecurity with respect to an individual.	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.3
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.3
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.3
		Veterans	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with a language barrier	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	2.3.2.3
2e	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.2
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.2
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.2
		Veterans	2.3.2.2
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.2
		Individuals with a language barrier	2.3.2.2
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.2
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	2.3.2.2
	Measurable objectives are all:	Future focused	2.3.2
		Quantifiable	2.3.2
Requirement 3			
3	Assessment of how aforementioned measurable objectives interact with States’s outcomes, including:	Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes	2.2 2.2.1
		Educational outcomes	2.2 2.2.2
		Health outcomes	2.2 2.2.3
		Civic and social engagement	2.2 2.2.4
		Delivery of other essential services	2.2 2.2.5
		All five items are mentioned for each covered population	
Requirement 4			
4	A description of how the State plans to collaborate with key stakeholders in the State, which may include:	Community anchor institutions	4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3 5.1.2

	Requirement	Details	Section
			5.1.4
		County and municipal governments	4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3 5.1.5
		Local education agencies	4.1.1 4.1.3 5.1.1 5.1.2
		Where applicable, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or Native Hawaiian organizations	
		Nonprofit organizations	4.1.1 5.1.3 5.1.5
		<i>Organizations that represent:</i>	
		Individuals with disabilities, including organizations that represent children with disabilities	4.1.1
		Aging individuals	4.1.1 5.1.2
		Individuals with language barriers	4.1.1
		Veterans	4.1.1
		Individuals in Georgia who are incarcerated	4.1.1 5.1.2
		Civil rights organizations	4.1.1
		Entities that carry out workforce development programs	4.1.1 4.1.3 5.1.1
		Agencies of the State that are responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities in the State	4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3 5.1.1
		Public housing authorities in Georgia	4.1.1
		A partnership between any of the above entities	4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3 5.1.2 5.1.5
Requirement 5			
5	A list of organizations with which GTA collaborated in developing the Plan		Appendix B
Programmatic Requirements			
1	A stated vision for digital equity	Vision is stated and defines digital opportunity within Georgia	2.1.1

	Requirement	Details	Section
2	A digital equity needs assessment , including:	A comprehensive assessment of the baseline from which the State is working	3.2
		The State’s identification of the barriers to digital equity faced generally	3.2
	The State’s identification of the barriers to digital equity faced by:	Individuals who live in covered households	3.2.1
		Aging individuals	3.2.1
		Incarcerated individuals	3.2.1
		Veterans;	3.2.1
		Individuals with disabilities;	3.2.1
		Individuals with a language barrier	3.2.1
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	3.2.1
Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	3.2.1		
3	An asset inventory , including current resources, programs, and strategies that promote digital equity, whether publicly or privately funded, for:	Individuals who live in covered households	3.1.1 3.1.3
		Aging individuals	3.1.1
		Incarcerated individuals	3.1.1
		Veterans	3.1.1
		Individuals with disabilities	3.1.1
		Individuals with a language barrier	3.1.1 3.1.3
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	3.1.1
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.	3.1.1 3.1.3
	An asset inventory including existing digital plans and programs already in place among municipal, regional, and Tribal governments	3.1.2	
	4	A coordination and outreach strategy , including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement with representatives of:	Individuals who live in covered households
Aging individuals			4.1 4.1.1
Incarcerated individuals			4.1 4.1.1
Veterans			4.1 4.1.1
Individuals with disabilities			4.1 4.1.1
Individuals with a language barrier			4.1 4.1.1
Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group			4.1 4.1.1
Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.			4.1 4.1.1

	Requirement	Details	Section
		The full range of stakeholders within the State	4.1 4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3
5	A description of how municipal, regional, and/or Tribal digital equity plans will be incorporated into the State Digital Equity Plan		3.1.2 3.1.3
6	An implementation strategy that:	Is holistic	5
		Addresses barriers to participation in the digital world, including affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation	5.1.1
			5.1.2
			5.1.3
			5.1.4
		Establishes measurable goals and objectives	5.1 2.1.2
		Establishes proposed core activities to address the needs of covered populations	5.1.1
5.1.2			
5.1.3 5.1.4			
Sets out measures ensuring the plan’s sustainability and effectiveness across State communities	5.1.5		
Adopts mechanisms to ensure that the plan is regularly evaluated and updated	5.1.5		
7	An explanation of how the implementation strategy addresses gaps in existing state, local, and private efforts to address barriers		5.1 2.3
8	A description of how the State intends to accomplish the implementation strategy by engaging or partnering with:	Workforce agencies such as state workforce agencies and state/local workforce boards and workforce organizations	4.1.3
		Labor organizations and community-based organizations	4.1.3
		Institutions of higher learning, including but not limited to four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, education and training providers, and educational service agencies	4.1.3
9	A timeline for implementation of the plan		5.2
10	A description of how the State will coordinate its use of State Digital Equity Capacity Grant funding and its use of any funds it receives in connection with the BEAD Program, other federal or private digital equity funding		2.2
			5.1.1