NEBRASKA

Draft
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan

December 4, 2023

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1 Executive Summary

Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan

Nebraska's Digital Opportunities Plan was developed with funding from the NTIA State Digital Equity Planning Grant. States which complete plans and have them approved by the NTIA will be eligible to apply for funding from the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program to implement their plans and set up a state digital opportunities grant program. Nebraska's Digital Opportunities Plan is for the majority of Nebraskans and focuses on eight covered populations:

- Rural residents
- Those 60 years or over
- Members of racial or ethnic minorities
- Members of low-income households
- Individuals with language barriers
- Individuals with a disability
- Veterans
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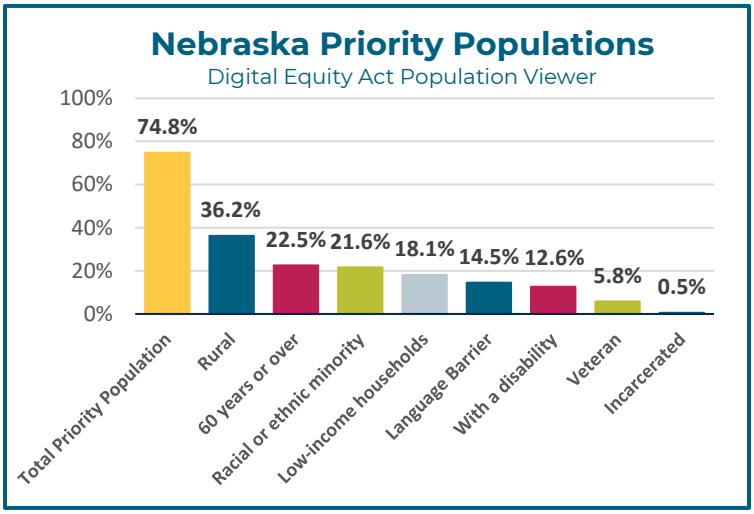


The chart above shows the percent of population of each covered population in Nebraska. Altogether, members of these eight covered populations comprise nearly 75% of Nebraska's population.

Needs Assessment

Broadband Availability

- Broadband availability and affordability were the two issues most frequently identified by participants in listening sessions across Nebraska.
- 86.9% of Nebraska locations and 67.8% of rural Nebraska locations have broadband of at least 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up according to the Nebraska Broadband Office (August 2023).

Broadband Availability for Agriculture

Broadband is important for agriculture. Farmers and ranchers need upload speeds of 50-100+ Mbps to transfer the immense amount of data generated to the cloud. In the future even greater upload speeds may be required.

Broadband Adoption

- To be fully connected in today's digital economy and society, most individuals need two kinds of connectivity: mobile and fixed connectivity. Nearly one-third of Nebraskans have no internet connectivity or only one kind of connectivity.
- Residents of rural areas and urban areas with high percentages of low-income households have lower rates of internet access at home. Members of covered populations also have lower rates of internet access at home.
- Even though rural areas and urban areas with high percentages of low-income households may differ in demographics and challenges, they express similar needs related to broadband access, including:
    - The ability for businesses to grow in the community
    - The need for older adults to access health care through telehealth
    - The need for broadband for completing homework and accessing online classes
    - The desire for their children to have opportunities to stay in their communities

    Recognizing that similarities exist between rural areas and low-income urban areas with high percentages of members of ethnic and racial minorities may aid in building statewide support for digital opportunities initiatives.

Broadband Affordability

A discount of $30 per month for low-income households is currently being provided through the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Residents of tribal lands and those in high-cost areas can receive $75 per month in support. Some participating telecommunications providers also offer discounted digital devices. Nearly 89,000 households out of 284,439 eligible households (31%) in Nebraska have enrolled in the program.

Digital Devices

Approximately 7.2% of Nebraska household have no digital device. To be fully connected, most individuals need a mobile and large screen device. Approximately 20% of Nebraska households have no digital devices or only one digital device.

Residents of rural areas and census tracts with a high percent of low-income households have lower rates of device access. Approximately 26.4% of rural Nebraska residents have either no device or one type of device versus 16.8% of residents of urban residents.

Digital Skills

Most Nebraskans are very confident or somewhat confident in their ability to complete tasks using the internet. Respondents to the Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey were asked to indicate how confident they were at completing 11 internet tasks. Members of many covered populations were generally less confident in their ability to complete tasks.

Privacy and Security

Fewer Nebraskans are very confident in their ability to use privacy and security practices. Respondents to the Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey were most confident in using strong passwords with 47% feeling very confident.

Assets

Nebraska has many assets which can be leveraged to increase digital opportunities in the state. A few assets are listed below.

- Do Space is a technology library in Omaha, providing free access to the latest software, devices, and ultra-fast internet. A variety of programs and events are offered at no cost.
- The Center for People EduTech program prepares students in Lincoln for a career in technology using the EduTech curriculum developed by Google.
- The Digital Express located on Metropolitan Community College's North Omaha campus is open to everyone and offers technology checkout and support, low-cost technology repair, and basic technology programs/training.
- The Nebraska Tech Collaborative, AIM Institute, Nebraska Chamber's Tech Nebraska, and Prairie STEM are working to build Nebraska's technology workforce and tech ecosystem.
- The Nebraska Career Scholarship program provides scholarships to students at the University of Nebraska, Nebraska state colleges, community colleges or private postsecondary institutions pursuing degrees in programs of study leading to high wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers.
- The University of Nebraska system, state colleges, community colleges and private colleges offer a number of technology-related courses and degrees.
- Libraries are key community partners in promoting digital opportunities across the state. Nebraska has 273 public libraries with 78% of libraries having a service population size of 2,499 or less. Many smaller libraries are limited in their ability to engage in digital access and literacy services by a lack of fiber connectivity and staff time.
- Nebraska's 145 multi-purpose senior centers can be a resource for older adults. Approximately two-thirds of the state's senior centers provide Wi-Fi access.
- The state's economic development districts are actively involved in regional digital opportunities planning.

Vision

Nebraska will grow its economy and improve the lives of Nebraskans by ensuring that Nebraskans have access to affordable, quality broadband, appropriate devices and the skills to use technologies at home, in school, on the farm or ranch, in businesses, in health care, and in government.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD)

Strategy: Utilize funding from BEAD and other sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska

Goal 2: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with a broadband subscription at home

Strategy: Increase awareness and utilization of the Affordable Connectivity Program by developing and strengthening partnerships

Goal 3: Improve internet access in Nebraska libraries and senior centers

Strategy: Increase the number of libraries with fiber connections and network infrastructure upgrades
Strategy: Increase the number of libraries applying for E-Rate
Strategy: Encourage and support libraries in utilizing the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program
Strategy: Support efforts to improve internet access in Nebraska senior centers

Goal 4: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with an appropriate internet device

Strategy: Review Nebraska Statutes and policies to identify barriers to state entities donating digital devices to refurbishment programs and to make recommendations for addressing these barriers
Strategy: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which refurbish and repair digital devices and/or distribute new devices to members of covered populations

Goal 5: **Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans including the development of a skilled workforce**

Strategy: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce

Goal 6: Increase the use of telehealth technologies in Nebraska in order to increase access to care in underserved areas and to reduce health disparities

Strategy: Support efforts by Nebraska hospitals, health care providers, associations and other stakeholders to increase the use of telehealth in Nebraska

Goal 7: Increase the use of precision agriculture technologies in Nebraska

Strategy: Support efforts by the Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska farmers and ranchers and other stakeholders to increase the use of precision agriculture in Nebraska

Goal 8: Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by local governments in Nebraska

Strategy: Assist local governments in implementing cyber governance and planning, increasing assessment and evaluation capabilities, prioritizing identified cyber risks, and helping to address cyber workforce changes through the Nebraska State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)

Goal 9: **Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by Nebraskans**

Strategy: Support the development or expansion of privacy and security training programs for Nebraskans

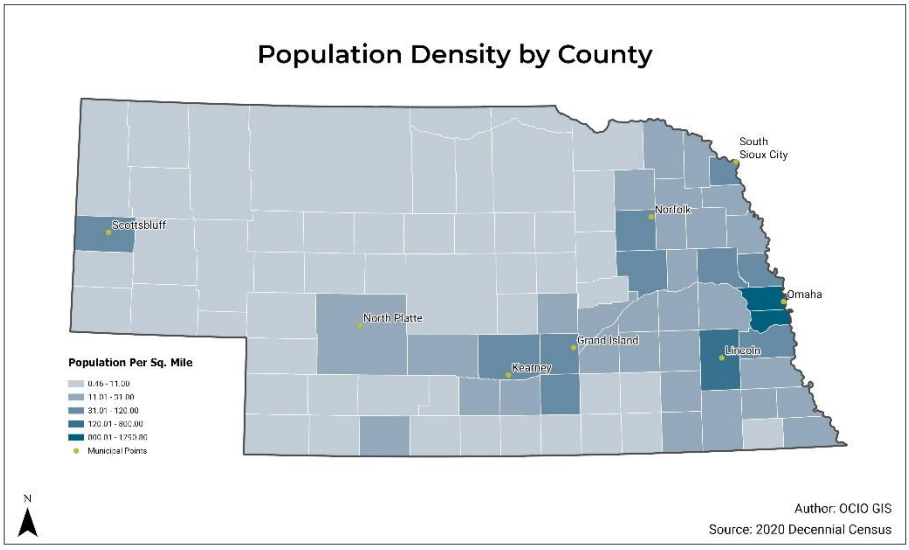
Goal 10: Improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services

Strategy: Increase awareness of accessibility issues with state agencies and local governments including accessibility of PDFs

2 Introduction and Vision for Digital Opportunities

Nebraska Overview

Located in the heartland of the United States, Nebraska is both an agricultural state and a state with growing metropolitan areas. With a population of nearly 2 million, Nebraska ranks 38th in population. Its land area of over 77,000 square miles is the 16th largest out of all the states. As shown in the map to the right, Nebraska's population is concentrated in the eastern and south central areas of the state.



Nebraska ranks 3rd in percent of households with fiber internet available, with 56% of households having fiber available. However, Nebraska ranks 30th in the availability of 25/3 Mbps and 100/20 Mbps broadband via copper, cable, fiber or licensed fixed wireless. (FCC broadband map, Dec. 2022). Ookla's speed test ranking for the second quarter of 2023 places Nebraska at 29th.

Omaha is the state's largest city. The Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area has a population of over 1 million and is the 58th most populous metropolitan area in the United States. Omaha is home to the headquarters of four Fortune 500 companies: Berkshire Hathaway; Kiewit Corporation, Mutual of Omaha and Union Pacific Corporation. Every summer, college baseball fans flock to Omaha for the College World Series and to visit Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo which was named the best zoo in the U.S. by USA Today.

Nebraska's second largest city, Lincoln, is the state capital and home to the University of Nebraska. The Lincoln metro area has a population of 340,000. On a football Saturday, Memorial Stadium is packed with over 85,000 fans, making it Nebraska's third largest "city." Memorial Stadium is also the site of the world's largest crowd to watch a women's sports event during Nebraska Volleyball Day on August 30, 2023.

Omaha and Lincoln are 50 miles apart along Interstate 80 in eastern Nebraska. Together, they are part of the Midwest's Silicon Prairie and home to a number of tech companies. Lincoln ranks #2 and Omaha ranks #72 in broadband speed according to Ookla's second quarter 2023 speed test ranking.

The Grand Island metro area has a population of approximately 83,000. Grand Island, Kearney (pop. 34,000), and Hastings (25,000) make up the Tri-Cities area in south central Nebraska.

Other regional hubs include:

- North Platte

- Scottsbluff
- Norfolk
- Fremont
- Columbus

Agriculture is important to Nebraska's economy. Nebraska ranks 3rd in the production of livestock, poultry and products and 5th in the production of crops.(USDA Census of Agriculture) Nebraska ranks second in the use of precision ag technologies with 55% of Nebraska farmers and ranchers using these technologies. (USDA Technology Use)

Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan

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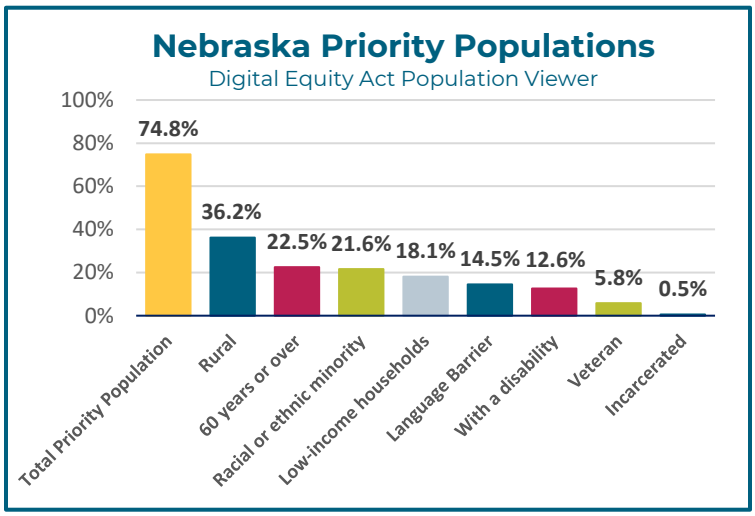

The chart above shows the percent of population of each covered population in Nebraska. Altogether, members of these eight covered populations comprise nearly 75% of Nebraska's population.

2.1 Vision

Nebraska will grow its economy and improve the lives of Nebraskans by ensuring that Nebraskans have access to affordable, quality broadband, appropriate devices and the skills to use technologies at home, in school, on the farm or ranch, in businesses, in health care, and in government.

Goals

1. Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD)
2. Increase the percent of Nebraska households with a broadband subscription at home
3. Improve internet access in Nebraska libraries and senior centers
4. Increase the percent of Nebraska households with an appropriate internet device
5. Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans including the development of a skilled workforce
6. Increase the use of telehealth technologies in Nebraska in order to increase access to care in underserved areas and to reduce health disparities
7. Increase the use of precision agriculture technologies in Nebraska
8. Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by local governments in Nebraska
9. Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by Nebraskans
10. Improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services.

2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

Broadband Infrastructure	
State Plans, Priorities Initiatives	**Recommendations, Priorities, Initiatives**
Governor's State of State Address, 2023	Governor Pillen's State of the State address recognized the importance of broadband infrastructure. *Infrastructure needs for Nebraska are more important than ever before. To grow Nebraska, we must address roads and broadband…Our team has also created the Nebraska Broadband Office. We have to get broadband across Nebraska completed. It will be the sole focus of the Nebraska Broadband Office*.
Blueprint Nebraska Growing the Good Life report	Blueprint Nebraska's Growing the Good Life report released in 2019 includes a recommendation to "increase rural broadband access."
Nebraska Hospital Association and Nebraska Rural Health Care Association Roadmap to Strong Rural Care	The Roadmap to Strong Rural Care includes the following recommendation: *Invest in health care infrastructure by expanding access to virtual care technologies and rural broadband….*
Rural Broadband Task Force 2023 Report to the Legislature and Governor	The Rural Broadband Task Force 2023 Report to the Legislature and Governor recognized the importance of state-administered broadband funding programs: *Over $130 million in funding has been awarded in Nebraska for broadband deployment projects through three state-administered grant programs since 2020, connecting over 39,000 unserved and underserved households.*

	The Broadband Access, Equity and Deployment (BEAD) Program will provide $405 million in broadband deployment funding for Nebraska. The Nebraska Broadband Office is administering the funding and anticipates opening funding opportunities in 2024.
Nebraska Broadband Office-BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 2	The Nebraska Broadband Office BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 2 includes the following goal and objectives: ***Goal One**: Bolster economic opportunity by connecting every Nebraskan household and business to high-speed internet.* ***Supporting Objectives:*** • *Target State grants and programs to unserved or underserved areas where private investment alone cannot sustain the investment needed to provide 100/100 Mbps broadband service.* • *Maximize private funding and investment in broadband buildouts to provide broadband service of 100/100Mbps and, where not practical, 100/20Mbps scalable to 100/100Mbps in Nebraska's most hard to serve areas.* • *Utilize the best available location-level mapping and analytics to assess areas of critical need and to target areas that require subsidies.*
Nebraska Department of Education Future Ready Nebraska PK-12 Digital Learning and Ed Tech Plan	The Nebraska Department of Education adopted the Future Ready Nebraska PK-12 Digital Learning and Ed Tech Plan in 2018. An updated plan is expected to be developed and released in 2024. The 2018 plan includes the following goal and action step: ***GOAL: CP4. BUILD EQUITY**: Support the creation of opportunities and programs that advance our vision of increased equity and access to technology for learning throughout the state.* ***Recommended Action Step 5**. Identify and work with families in the school district who do not have home access to technology for learning. (Q3 2020, ESU's & Districts.*
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goals and Strategies	Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goal 1 and the BEAD Initial Proposal directly support investments in rural broadband infrastructure. **Goal 1:** Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD) **Strategy**: Utilize funding from BEAD and other funding sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska

Workforce Development	
State Plans, Priorities Initiatives	**Recommendations, Priorities, Initiatives**
Governor Pillen's State of State Address, 2023	Governor Pillen's State of the State address recognized the importance of workforce development:

	My budget also includes a $10 Million dollar investment for the biennium to help recruit and train students in high-need fields, such as teachers, nurses, and food animal veterinarians for food security."
Blueprint Nebraska	The Blueprint Nebraska report recommends "scaling public-private partnerships that create more internships and apprenticeships per capita and customized workforce solutions than any state in the Midwest to meet the needs of expanding and relocating companies." The report recognizes the importance of STEM programming and proposes: "Communities will embrace the use of STEM mobile labs, especially in rural areas."
Nebraska Career Scholarship Program	The Nebraska Career Scholarship Act (LB 902) was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2022. The program provides scholarships to students at the University of Nebraska, Nebraska state colleges, community colleges or private postsecondary institutions pursuing degrees in programs of study leading to high wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers. Eligible programs include health care, computer information systems, engineering and those in a skilled trade or identified shortage area. LB902 requires each scholarship recipient to register with the appropriate campus office to obtain a Nebraska-based internship, apprenticeship, clinical position or employment in a field related to their program of study before they graduate.
Intern Nebraska Program	The InternNE, Powered by Aksarben initiative, previously recognized as the Intern Nebraska Grant Program, is a $20 million collaborative effort between the Aksarben Foundation and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The program aims to connect students and employers statewide by reimbursing eligible internship expenses. Although this in not exclusively a technology program, it is an important resource for developing a tech workforce in Nebraska.
Nebraska Tech Collaborative	The Nebraska Tech Collaborative (NTC) – an Aksarben workforce initiative – is business-led, and comprised of over 100 business, government, education, and non-profit partners all working together to drive results and scale to build a world class tech ecosystem in Nebraska. The Nebraska Tech Collaborative is working to increase the number of tech jobs in Nebraska by 10,000 and the number of new tech companies in Nebraska by 300 by 2025. The Nebraska Tech Collaborative has six programs which support the tech ecosystem. The State Digital Opportunities Program most closely aligns with the Teacher Externship program which strengthens teachers' tech skills through an immersive summer experience.
Nebraska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan (WIOA)	Nebraska's two-part statewide goal for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers is the: *1. selection and prioritization of development of career pathways; and* *2. alignment of the state's workforce development system.* The plan includes a goal of identifying the barriers to participation for many covered populations, including low-income individuals, older

	individuals, members of racial or ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, individuals who are English language learners, and individuals who have low levels of literacy. Priority in-demand industry sectors identified include: • Healthcare/medical • Manufacturing • Accommodation and food services • Heavy and tractor-trailer and transportation/warehouse • Construction • Education services • Agribusiness/natural resources • Technology • Finance and insurance
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goals and Strategies	Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goal 5 supports the workforce goals of state workforce priorities, plans and initiatives. The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant will likely provide funding for technology training programs which support workforce development. **Goal 5:** Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans including the development of a skilled workforce **Strategy**: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce

Educational Outcomes	
State Plans, Priorities Initiatives	**Recommendations, Priorities, Initiatives**
Nebraska Department of Education Future Ready Nebraska PK-12 Digital Learning and Ed Tech Plan	The Nebraska Department of Education adopted the Future Ready Nebraska PK-12 Digital Learning and Ed Tech Plan in 2018. An updated plan is expected to be developed and released in 2024. *GOAL: CP3. EXEMPLARS: Identify and share examples of existing successful school-community partnerships across the state that could be used as a resource for digital learning opportunities* *Recommended Action Step 2. Identify local business and industries that could benefit from an increase in digital learning opportunities within the community and share resources. (Q1 2019, ESU's & Districts)* *Recommended Action Step 3. Identify or develop opportunities or workplace experiences that could provide students with career readiness skills related to technology which allow them to be productive employees of local business and industry. (Q4 2019, Districts and ESU's)*
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goals and Strategies	Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goal 5 supports the community partnerships goals of Future Ready Nebraska. **Goal 5:** Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans including the development of a skilled workforce **Strategy**: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce

Health Outcomes	
State Plans, Priorities Initiatives	**Recommendations, Priorities, Initiatives**
Nebraska Hospital Association and Nebraska Rural Health Association Roadmap to Strong Rural Care r	The Roadmap to Strong Rural Care released in January 2023 by the Nebraska Hospital Association and the Nebraska Rural Health Association addresses the need for telehealth parity and investments in rural health care and broadband infrastructure. The report recommends: *Invest in health care infrastructure by expanding access to virtual care technologies and rural broadband, strengthening the capacity and capability for emergency preparedness and response, assisting hospitals in "rightsizing" to meet the needs of their communities, and ensuring adequate financing mechanisms are in place for hospitals and health systems, including training of the workforce.*
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goals and Strategies	Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goal 1 and the BEAD Initial Proposal directly support investments in rural broadband infrastructure. **Goal 1**: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD) **Strategy**: Utilize funding from BEAD and funding sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goal 6 supports efforts by the Nebraska Hospital Association and Nebraska Rural Health Association to advocate for telehealth parity by increasing awareness of the issue and building support for initiatives to address these barriers. The State Digital Equity Capacity grant may be a potential source of funding for virtual care technologies. **Goal 6**: Increase the use of telehealth technologies in Nebraska in order to increase access to care in underserved areas and to reduce health disparities **Strategy**: Support efforts by Nebraska hospitals, health care providers, associations and other stakeholders to increase the use of telehealth in Nebraska

Cybersecurity	
State Plans, Priorities Initiatives	**Recommendations, Priorities, Initiatives**
Nebraska Statewide Cybersecurity Plan (February 2023) and State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program	The Nebraska Statewide Cybersecurity Plan's overall objective is to reduce cyber risk while enhancing Nebraska's State and Local government cyber resilience. The State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program provides funding to states and local governments to assess and improve cybersecurity. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is administering Nebraska's State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program. Nebraska was allocated $2,555,930 for FY 2022 and $5,188,485 for FY 2023. Eighty percent of total state allocations must support local entities, while 25% of that 80% must support rural entities.
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goals and Strategies	Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goal 8 support investments in rural and local government cybersecurity infrastructure, policies, procedures and training. **Goal 8:** Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by local governments in Nebraska **Strategy:** Assist local governments in implementing cyber governance and planning, increasing assessment and evaluation capabilities, prioritizing identified cyber risks, and helping to address cyber workforce changes through the Nebraska State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)

Delivery of Other Essential Services	
State Plans, Priorities Initiatives	**Recommendations, Priorities, Initiatives**
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Service State Unit on Aging Nebraska State Plan on Aging Oct. 1, 2023-Sept. 30, 2017 Draft	The draft Nebraska State Plan on Aging includes the following goal: *Goal 4: Support and promote long-term services and supports for persons in all living arrangements.* The plan describes two ways that internet access could support services at senior centers: *The State Unit on Aging conducted a multiple-question survey for 145 multi-purpose senior centers across the state of Nebraska. The senior centers received introductory instruction along with an electronic link to the survey and a paper copy. The survey was initiated in July of 2022 and completed by September. There were 127 multi-purpose senior centers that completed this survey. The greatest needed amenity for multi-purpose senior centers was having computers available for participants, followed by tele-learning. Challenges included low attendance, funding, and staffing.*

	The demand for expanded broadband systems across Nebraska has also created a need to update food service systems and more specifically, in areas that have internet access, the ability to utilize bar code scanning. Some AAAs within Nebraska have utilized this technology at senior centers. The use of barcodes to check into a center helps to keep track of services, eases the burden of paper records, and has the potential to keep suggested contributions/services confidential and protected from theft. The SUA will assist AAAs in any way possible to incorporate more technology and barcode scanning systems within the senior centers. This continues to be a goal across the state.
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goals and Strategies	Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goal 3 supports improving internet access in Nebraska senior centers. **Goal 3:** Improve internet access in Nebraska libraries and senior centers **Strategy:** Support efforts to improve internet access in Nebraska senior centers
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services ACCESSNebraska/iServe Nebraska	The Department of Health and Human Services administers and manages eligibility for Medicaid and Economic Assistance programs through ACCESSNebraska which is being transformed to iServe Nebraska. Those with internet access, access to a device, and digital skills are better able to access the system.
Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan Goals and Strategies	Multiple goals and strategies from the Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan support better equipping and preparing those applying for economic assistance programs and managing their enrollment. **Goal 1:** Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD) **Strategy**: Utilize funding from BEAD and other sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska **Goal 2:** Increase the percent of Nebraska households with a broadband subscription at home **Strategy**: Increase awareness and utilization of the Affordable Connectivity Program by developing and strengthening partnerships **Goal 3:** Improve internet access in Nebraska libraries and senior centers **Strategy:** Increase the number of libraries with fiber connections and network infrastructure upgrades **Strategy:** Increase the number of libraries applying for E-Rate **Strategy:** Encourage and support libraries in utilizing the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program **Strategy**: Support efforts to improve internet access in Nebraska senior centers

	Goal 4: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with an appropriate internet device **Strategy**: Review Nebraska Statutes and policies to identify barriers to state entities donating digital devices to refurbishment programs and to make recommendations for addressing these barriers. **Strategy**: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which refurbish and repair digital devices and/or distribute new devices to members of covered populations **Goal 5**: Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans including the development of a skilled workforce **Strategy:** Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce **Goal 9**: Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by Nebraskans **Strategy:** Support the development or expansion of privacy and security training programs for Nebraskans

Civic Engagement

Access to the internet is essential for civic engagement. The Nebraska Legislature's website includes information on bills which have been introduced, hearing schedules, and allows for residents to submit testimony for legislative hearings online. Information on state government programs and services are available online. Many local governments also have information on their services and programs, budgets, and local ordinances online. In addition to providing information on websites, many state agencies and local governments also use social media to engage with residents. In order to provide information online and engage with constituents, local governments need to ensure that their websites, social media posts and other digital media are accessible and that they are using appropriate privacy and security practices. Residents with internet access, access to a device, and digital skills are better able to access government systems and information at all levels.

Multiple goals and strategies from the Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan support civic engagement.

Goal 1: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD)

Strategy: Utilize funding from BEAD and other funding sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska

Goal 2: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with a broadband subscription at home

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Strategy: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which refurbish and repair digital devices and/or distribute new devices to members of covered populations

Goal 5: Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans including the development of a skilled workforce

Strategy: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce

Goal 8: Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by local governments in Nebraska

Strategy: Assist local governments in implementing cyber governance and planning, increasing assessment and evaluation capabilities, prioritizing identified cyber risks, and helping to address cyber workforce changes through the Nebraska State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)

Goal 9: Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by Nebraskans

Strategy: Support the development or expansion of privacy and security training programs for Nebraskans

Goal 10: Improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services*

Strategy: Increase awareness of accessibility issues with state agencies and local governments including accessibility of PDFs

Coordination of BEAD and Digital Equity Funding

The Nebraska Broadband Office BEAD and Nebraska Digital Opportunities teams communicate on a regular basis and support each other's efforts. The two teams have partnered on outreach sessions and tribal consultations across the state and continue to work together on outreach efforts.

Although some smaller, more densely populated states may have BEAD funding remaining after funding broadband deployment to unserved and underserved locations, the Nebraska Broadband Office does not anticipate having BEAD funding available for digital equity projects and is leveraging the Nebraska State Digital Opportunities Plan to address digital equity.

The Nebraska Broadband Office's BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 2 clearly states the role of the State Digital Opportunities/Equity Plan under Goal 2:

Goal Two: Expand digital inclusion and adoption to achieve affordability, access, and digital literacy.

Connecting all Nebraskan households to high-speed internet access requires investment in digital equity. Nebraska's digital equity efforts are focusing on affordable access to service, access to internet-enabled devices, and digital literacy. The Nebraska State Digital Equity Plan will support the digital equity strategies of the Nebraska Strategic Broadband Plan and provide more detail.

Similarly, the Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan is relying on the Nebraska Broadband Office to utilize BEAD funding to address broadband deployment as reflected in Goal 1 of the Nebraska Digital Opportunities Plan:

Goal 1: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD)

Strategy: Utilize funding from BEAD and other sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska

Broadband Director Patrick Haggerty gives an update on the Nebraska Broadband Office and the BEAD grant to the participants of the State Digital Opportunities Planning Workshop in Kearney on August 8, 2023. Photo by Clint Mangen, Nebraska Department of Transportation.

2.3 Strategy and Objectives

Broadband Affordability and Availability

Goal 1: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with affordable, quality broadband service available (in conjunction with BEAD)

Strategy: Utilize funding from BEAD and other sources to ensure that broadband is available at all locations in Nebraska

Key Performance Indicator: % locations with 100/20 broadband available (served locations)

Baseline: 86.9% (Nebraska Broadband Office, includes locations with enforceable commitments)

Near Term Target 2026: TBD

Long Term Target 2029: 100%

Goal 2: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with a broadband subscription at home

Strategy: Increase awareness and utilization of the Affordable Connectivity Program by developing and strengthening partnerships

Key Performance Indicator: % of households with broadband access at home

Baseline: 90.1% (2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B2002)

Near Term Target 2026: 92%

Long Term Target 2029: 94%

Key Performance Indicator: % of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program

Baseline: 31% (Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Tracker-August 2023)

Near Term Target 2026: 40%

Long Term Target 2029: 50%

Broadband Affordability and Availability
Measurable Objectives for Covered Populations

Covered Population and Key Performance Indicator	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
Rural residents--% of households with internet access at home (Nebraska counties except Lancaster, Douglas, Sarpy and Hall Counties)	**86.5%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28002	**88.5%**	**92%**
% adults 65 and over with a broadband internet subscription at home ion	**76.0%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table S2802	**78%**	**80%**

White alone	**91.1%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**93%**	**95%**
Black or African American alone	**87.3%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**89%**	**91%**
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	**84.0%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**86%**	**88%**
Asian alone	**93.8%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**95%**	**96%**
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander alone	**86.7%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**89%**	**91%**
Some other race alone	**89.6%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**92%**	**94%**
Two or more races	**93.5%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**95%**	**96%**
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	**89.2%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**91%**	**93%**
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	**91.4%** 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	**93%**	**95%**
% of households with income less than $35,000 have a broadband subscription	**71.6%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28004	**74%**	**76%**
% of adults with less than a high school degree with a broadband subscription at home	**75.9%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table S2802	**78%**	**80%**
% who speak English not well with a broadband internet subscription at home	**78.8%** 2020 ACS Microdata	**81%**	**83%**
% who speaks English not at all with a broadband internet subscription at home	**83.7%** 2020 ACS Microdata	**86%**	**88%**
% of individuals with a disability with a broadband internet subscription at home	**80.1%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table S2802	**82%**	**84%**
% of Veterans with a broadband internet subscription at home	**76.0%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28002	**78%**	**80%**
Measurable Objective for Incarcerated Individuals--TBD			

Goal 3: Improve internet access in Nebraska libraries and senior centers

Strategy: Increase the number of libraries with fiber connections and network infrastructure upgrades

Key Performance Indicator: Number of libraries with fiber connections
Baseline: 173 libraries have fiber connections

Near Term Target 2026: 40 additional libraries obtaining fiber connections, secure networks, and updated network equipment

Long Term Target 2029: 85 total additional libraries obtaining fiber connections, secure networks, and updated network equipment

Strategy: Increase the number of libraries applying for E-Rate

Key Performance Indicator: Number of libraries applying for E-Rate

Baseline: Currently 69 libraries apply for E-Rate obtaining fiber connections, secure networks, and updated network equipment

Near Term Target 2026: 60 additional libraries obtaining fiber connections, secure networks, and updated network equipment

Long Term Target 2029: 105 total additional libraries obtaining fiber connections, secure networks, and updated network equipment

Strategy: Encourage and support libraries in utilizing the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program

Key Performance Indicator: Number of libraries utilizing E-Rate Special Construction Matching program

Baseline: Currently 12 libraries have utilized E-Rate Special Construction Matching program to connect to fiber.

Near Term Target 2026: 25 libraries utilizing E-Rate Special Construction Matching program to connect to fiber

Long Term Target 2029: 60 libraries utilizing E-Rate Special Construction Matching program to connect to fiber

Strategy: Support efforts to improve internet access in Nebraska senior centers

Key Performance Indicator: Number of multi-purpose senior centers with Wi-Fi for use by participants

Baseline: 67% of multi-purpose senior centers provide Wi-Fi for participants

Near Term Target 2026: 75% of multi-purpose senior centers provide Wi-Fi for participants

Long Term Target 2029: 90% of multi-purpose senior centers provide Wi-Fi for participants

Digital Device Access

Goal 4: Increase the percent of Nebraska households with appropriate internet devices

Strategy: Review Nebraska Statutes and policies to identify barriers to state entities donating digital devices to refurbishment programs and make recommendations for addressing these barriers

Key Performance Indicator: Review of statutes and policies and recommendations have been completed

Baseline: No review has been done

Near Term Target 2026: Review and recommendations have been completed

Long Term Target 2029: If the review and recommendations support donating used equipment to refurbishing programs, the necessary statutory and policies changes have been made.

Strategy: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which refurbish and repair digital devices and/or distribute new devices to members of covered populations

Key Performance Indicator: Number of devices distributed or repaired through programs funded by Nebraska's State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program

Baseline: 0

Near Term Target 2026: 100

Long Term Target 2029: 500

Key Performance Indicator: % of households with one or more digital devices

Baseline: 92.8% (2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28001)

Near Term Target 2026: 94%

Long Term Target 2029: 96%

Digital Device Access
Measurable Objectives for Covered Populations

Covered Population and Key Performance Indicator	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
% of rural households with one or more digital devices (Nebraska counties except Lancaster, Douglas, Sarpy and Hall Counties)	90.3% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28001	92%	94%
% of adults 65 and older with a laptop or desktop	85.1% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	87%	89%
% of adults 65 and older with a smartphone	65.6% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	68%	70%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- White alone	84.1% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	86%	88%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- Black or African American alone	70.3% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	72%	74%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- American Indian alone	68.5% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	70%	72%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- American Indian and Alaska Native tribes specified; or American Indian or Alaska Native, not specified and no other races	56.7% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	59%	61%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- Asian alone	82.8% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	85%	87%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	77.7% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	80%	82%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- Some Other Race alone	63.1% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	65%	67%
% population with a laptop or desktop-- Total Two or More Races	81.2% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	83%	85%
% population with a smartphone --White alone	87.6% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	90%	92%
% population with a smartphone --Black or African American alone	88.1% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	90%	92%
% population with a smartphone --American Indian alone	83.3% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	85%	87%
% population with a smartphone --American Indian and Alaska Native tribes specified; or American Indian or Alaska Native, not specified and no other races	84.2% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	86%	88%

% population with a smartphone --Asian alone	90.2% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	92%	94%
% population with a smartphone --Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	96.6% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	97%	97%
% population with a smartphone --Some Other Race alone	93.1% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	94%	95%
% population with a smartphone --Total Two or More Races	96.0% 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	97%	97%
% of households at 150% of poverty level or below with a laptop or desktop	65% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	67%	69%
% of households at 150% of poverty level or below with a smartphone	80.9% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	83%	85%
% of adults with less than a high school degree with a desktop or laptop computer in household	57.1% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	59%	61%
% who speak English not well with a desktop or laptop computer in household	55.7% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	58%	60%
% who speak English not well with a desktop or laptop computer in household	46.3% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	48%	50%
% of adults with less than a high school degree with a smartphone in household	73.5% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	75%	77%
% who speak English not well with a smartphone in household	77.6% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	80%	82%
% who speak English not at all with a smartphone in household	84.2% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	86%	88%
% of individuals with a disability with desktop or laptop in household	69.4% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	71%	73%
% individuals with a disability with a smartphone in household	68.8% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	71%	73%
% of Veterans with desktop or laptop in household	80.5% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	83%	85%
% of Veterans with a smartphone in household	59.6% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	62%	64%
Measurable Objective for Incarcerated Individuals--TBD	100%	100%	100%

Digital Skills

Goal 5: Improve the technology skills of Nebraskans including the development of a skilled workforce

Strategy: Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce

Key Performance Indicator: Number of participants in programs funded through Nebraska's State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program

Baseline: 0

Near Term Target 2026: 1,000

Long Term Target 2029: 5,000

Goal 6: Increase the use of telehealth technologies in Nebraska in order to increase access to care in underserved areas and to reduce health disparities

Strategy: Support efforts by Nebraska hospitals, health care providers, associations and other stakeholders to increase the use of telehealth in Nebraska

Key Performance Indicator	**Baseline:** 2021 NTIA Internet Use Survey/CPS Computer and Internet Use Supplement	**Near Term Target 2026:**	**Long Term Target 2029:**
Use electronic health monitoring	5.7%	7.7%	9.7%
Communicate with a doctor using the Internet	40.1%	42%	45%
Access health records online	49.2%	52%	55%
Research health information online	45.8%	50%	55%

Goal 7: Increase the use of precision agriculture technologies in Nebraska

Strategy: Support efforts by the Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska farmers and ranchers and other stakeholders to increase the use of precision agriculture in Nebraska

Key Performance Indicator: Percent of Nebraska farmers and ranchers using precision ag technologies

Baseline: 55% (2023 USDA Technology Use Survey)

Near Term Target 2026: 59%

Long Term Target 2029: 70%

Digital Skills
Measurable Objectives for Covered Populations

Covered Population and Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	2026 Target	2029 Target
Rural residents--# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	6	7	8
Older adults--# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	4	5	6
Not Hispanic or Latino--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	6	7	8
White only--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	6	7	8
African American Only--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	4	5	6
Asian only--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	4	5	6
Hispanic or Latino--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	3	4	5
Native American Only--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	9	9	9
More than 1 race--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	3	4	5
Respondents with household income under $25,000--# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills)	5	6	7
Those with less than a high school degree-- # of digital skills 50% or more of populations (those with less than a high school degree) is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	2	3	4
Individuals with difficulties/disabilities--# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	4	5	6
Veterans--# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	1	2	3
Measurable Objective for Incarcerated Individuals--TBD			

Knowledge and Use of Privacy and Security Practices

Goal 8: Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by local governments in Nebraska

Strategy: Assist local governments in implementing cyber governance and planning, increasing assessment and evaluation capabilities, prioritizing identified cyber risks, and helping to address cyber workforce changes through the Nebraska State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)

Key Performance Indicator: % of local grant fund grants awarded to local governments

Baseline: 56% of local government funding awarded to rural local governments

Near Term Target 2026: >25%

Long Term Target 2029: >25%

Goal 9: Increase awareness and adoption of internet privacy and security practices by Nebraskans

Strategy: Support the development or expansion of privacy and security training programs for Nebraskans

Key Performance Indicator: Number of participants in programs funded through Nebraska's State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program

Baseline: 0

Near Term Target 2026: 500

Long Term Target 2029: 2,500

Key Performance Indicator: # of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)

Baseline: 0

Near Term Target 2026: 1

Long Term Target 2029: 2

Knowledge and Use of Privacy and Security Skills
Measurable Objectives for Covered Populations

Covered Population and Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	2026 Target	2029 Target
Rural Residents--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Older Adults--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Hispanic or Latino--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
White only--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Not Hispanic or Latino----# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
African American only--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Asian only--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Native American only--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
More than 1 race--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Members of low-income households--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Individuals with less than high school education--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Individuals with difficulties/disabilities--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Veterans--# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0	1	2
Measurable Objective for Incarcerated Individuals--TBD			

Online Accessibility of Public Resources

Goal 10: Improve the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services

Strategy: Increase awareness of accessibility issues with state agencies and local governments including accessibility of PDFs

Key Performance Indicator	Baseline	Near Term Target 2026	Long Term Target 2029
Average Number of Total Errors and Alerts for Sampled School, Library, Municipality, County and State and Social Service Sites (average of 5 categories)	49.7	47	45
Average Number of PDF Test Items Failed for Sampled School, Library, Municipality, County and State and Social Service Sites (average of 5 categories)	19	17	15
Average % of websites with translations available for Sampled School, Library, Municipality, County and State and Social Service Sites (average of 5 categories)	43.1%	45%	47%

Accessibility of Public Online Resources
Measurable Objectives for Covered Populations

Covered Population-% Confident about searching for information about government services or resources -	Baseline Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	2026 Target	2029 Target
Rural Residents	65%	67%	69%
Older Adults	67%	69%	71%
Hispanic or Latino	51%	53%	55%
Not Hispanic or Latino	70%	72%%	74%
White only	69%	71%	73%
African American Only	47%	49%	51%
Asian only	31%	33%	35%
Native American Only	69%	71%	73%
More than 1 race	60%	62%	64%
Hispanic or Latino	51%	53%	55%
Not Hispanic or Latino	70%	72%%	74%
Households with income less than $25,000	49%	51%	53%
Those with less than a high school degree	38%	40%	42%
Individuals with difficulties/disabilities	60%	62%	64%
Veterans	65%	67%	69%
Incarcerated individuals--TBD			

3 Barriers and Assets

3.1 Asset Inventory

Digital inclusion assets were inventoried by the state's economic development districts and their regional digital opportunities planning committees as well as the state digital opportunities team. Links to these asset inventories are included in the appendix. Additionally, the Nebraska Library Commission provided information from its annual Public Library Survey and a supplemental survey on digital inclusion assets, activities, and barriers. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services State Unit on Aging provided data from their survey of senior centers in Nebraska. A number of key resources are highlighted in this section.

3.1.1 Assets by Covered Population

State Digital Inclusion Assets, Partners, and Assets for General Population

Nebraska Broadband Office

The Nebraska Broadband Office within the Nebraska Department of Transportation is administering the BEAD Program and is a key partner in addressing broadband availability. The Nebraska Broadband Office also developed and maintains the Nebraska Broadband Map.

Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC)/Office of the CIO (OCIO)

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission promotes the use of information technology in education, health care, economic development and all levels of government service. It has advisory groups including the Technical Panel, Community Council, eHealth Council, Education Council and GIS Council. The NITC/Office of the CIO is heading up the State Digital Opportunities planning effort. The NITC/OCIO also manages the state education network, Network Nebraska. The NITC/OCIO is partnering with the Library Commission on efforts to encourage and assist libraries in the E-Rate Special Construction process. A Special Construction RFP is being discussed to offer both Network Nebraska ethernet transport connections to bring non-fiber public libraries into the "gig-capable" status prior to 2024.

Nebraska Public Service Commission

The Nebraska Public Service Commission administers the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Grant Program/Capital Projects Fund, Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant (PRO-AG) Program, Nebraska Universal Service Fund including High Cost Program, E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program and Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program/Lifeline, and Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)/Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program (NSTEP).

Nebraska Attorney General's Office

The Nebraska Attorney General's Office provides free educational sessions on online privacy and security to community groups.

Nebraska Library Commission and Nebraska Libraries

The Nebraska Library Commission (NLC) is responsible for the statewide promotion, development and coordination of library services and is working with Nebraska libraries to build capacity to engage in digital equity activities. NLC is currently addressing barriers that libraries face migrate to fiber connections. Rural libraries mentioned these four factors frequently as barriers to improving connectivity, participating in E-Rate, and participating in the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Grant program: 1) Limited hours; 2)

limited staff; 3) tight budgets; and 4) difficulty finding IT support to manage technology software and hardware in the library.

Many libraries have access to fiber connections, but are limited by dated equipment that limits network capabilities NLC is now offering free Domain Name System (DNS) Filter access, centrally managed by NLC staff and Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliant. NLC is also providing free assessments of network infrastructure to libraries, especially those that are considering installing a fiber connection. NLC offers support to libraries by providing some new network equipment (routers, switches, and Wi-Fi mesh equipment), and assistance with network configurations.

Additionally, NLC is encouraging libraries without fiber connectivity to take advantage of filing for E-Rate Special Construction funding (NUSF-117), which includes matching funds to provide fiber at zero cost to the library. This has included training sessions, as well as personal contacts by NLC staff to encourage library directors to obtain fiber connections and participate in the Digital Equity Act and State Competitive Grant. NLC has also collaborated with the Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC) to inform and encourage community leaders and local government officials to utilize the Special Construction model to bring fiber to libraries that currently do not have fiber. This enables the community an opportunity to expand the fiber connectivity to local businesses and residences.

NLC recognizes that libraries are providing robust access to technology, but partnerships with community organizations, groups, and volunteers are lacking. NLC seeks to encourage more programs and services to offer and promote digital equity partnerships to increase digital equity learning opportunities in Nebraska communities.

Nebraska Libraries

Libraries are key community partners in promoting digital opportunities across the state. Nebraska has 273 public libraries with 78% of libraries having a service population size of 2,499 or less. Some of the smaller libraries have no paid staff. Other small libraries may only have one librarian working 20 hours per week. Lack of staff time to provide assistance and engage in digital equity activities is a significant barrier. While over half of all Nebraska public libraries offer fiber connections for patrons and healthy Wi-Fi connections, many libraries do not. Approximately 100 libraries currently do not provide fiber connections.

- 177 or 65% of Nebraska's 273 public libraries have fiber optic connections
- 95 or 41% of Nebraska libraries have makerspaces
- 223 or 97% provide public Wi-Fi Access
- 147 or 78% have Wi-Fi extended outside of the library building.
- 170 or 90% leave Wi-Fi on during hours not open to the public
- 19 libraries have hotspot lending programs, loaning out 151 hot spots.
- 108 or 58% offer digital equity training (formal or informal) to the public.
- 16 or 9% have partners to assist with digital equity programs.

Only 69 public libraries current apply for E-Rate support.

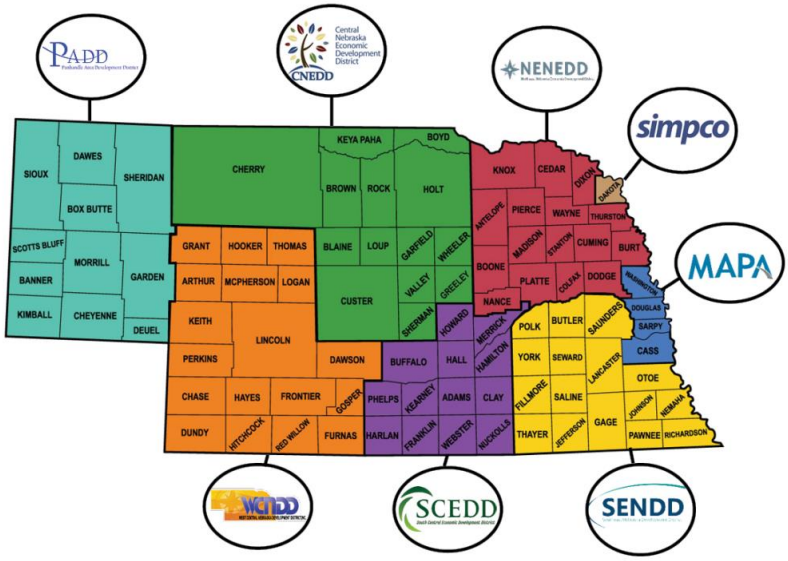
IT Support is an issue for some libraries—especially small rural libraries.

- 37 or 20% have library staff available
- 72 or 39% have contracted, city, or outside staff available
- 18 or 10% have volunteer staff available
- 34 or 18% have no tech help

Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC)/Economic Development Districts

The Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC) is the statewide organization of Nebraska's eight Economic Development Districts (EDDs). These professional organizations represent the entire state and are committed to enhancing the communities and businesses within each region. Economic Development Districts are engaged in a variety of activities including community development, business development, housing development, and transportation planning. Nebraska's eight economic development districts include:

- Central Nebraska Economic Development District (CNEDD)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA)
- Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD)
- Panhandle Area Development District (PADD)
- Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO)
- South Central Economic Development District (SCEDD)
- Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDD)
- West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD)



The state's economic development districts formed regional digital opportunities committees to conduct asset inventories, identify barriers and develop regional digital opportunities plans.

League of Nebraska Municipalities

The League of Nebraska Municipalities represents the interests of member municipalities and empowers municipal officials to shape the destiny of their municipality and improve the quality of life of their citizens. The League has been engaged in discussions about improving broadband availability, expanding digital inclusion efforts, and addressing the security of municipal websites.

Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO)

The Nebraska Association of County Officials is a non-profit organization that serves to represent the interests of all elected and appointed county officials in the state. NACO has been engaged in discussions about improving broadband availability, expanding digital inclusion efforts, and addressing the security of municipal websites.

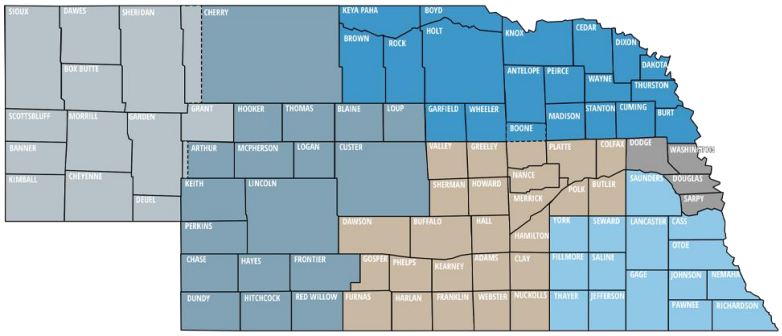
Nebraska Broadband Providers

Many Nebraska broadband providers are participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), offer low-cost programs, and/or are engaging in additional digital inclusion efforts.

Nebraska Community Colleges

The Nebraska Community College System is comprised of five member colleges located throughout the state:

- Central Community College
- Mid-Plains Community College
- Northeast Community College
- Southeast Community College
- Western Nebraska Community College



The community colleges provide adult education and credit and non-credit technology training at locations across the state. Community colleges can work with employers on training programs that meet their workforce needs.

Community colleges in Nebraska granted 422 computer and information sciences degrees and 326 engineering degrees in 2021-2022 according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

Computer and Information Sciences Degrees 2021-2022
National Center for Education Statistics

Institution Name	CIP Title	Total
Central Community College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	96
Metropolitan Community College Area	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	126
Mid-Plains Community College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	2
Northeast Community College	Communications Technologies/Technicians and Support Services	36
Northeast Community College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	69
Southeast Community College Area	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	75
Western Nebraska Community College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	18
Total		**422**

Engineering Degrees 2021-2022
National Center for Education Statistics

Institution Name	CIP Title	Total
Central Community College	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	105
Metropolitan Community College Area	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	51
Northeast Community College	Engineering	4
Northeast Community College	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	65
Southeast Community College Area	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	99
Western Nebraska Community College	Engineering	2
Total	-	**326**

Community College Programs, Non Credit Classes and Other Related Programs

Community College	Credit	Non Credit	Other
Central Community College	Precision Agriculture Diploma Precision Mapping Certificate Precision Technician Certificate Advanced Manufacturing Design Technology AAS and Diploma Health Information Technology AAS Degree Information Technology and Systems (A.A.S., diploma and certificate) Cisco Networking Certificate Cybersecurity Certificate	Excel Google Data Analytics Google Digital Marketing/E-Commerce Google Project Management Google UX Design Intro to Microsoft Publisher	
Metropolitan Community College	Administrative Technologies (Certificate) Computer Programming (Certificate, A.A.S.) Computer Technology Transfer (A.S.) Cybersecurity(A.A.S) Database and Data Science (Certificate) Health Data and Information Science (A.A.S.) Information Technology Cisco Network Technician (A.A.S.) Information Technology Computer Programming(A.A.S.) Information Technology Cybersecurity (A.A.S.) Information Technology Data Center Operations (A.A.S.) Information Technology Database Management and Data Analysis (A.A.S.) Information Technology Server Administration (A.A.S.) Precision Machine Technology-CNC and Tool and Die Technology (A.A.S.) Precision Machine Technology-CNC Technology (A.A.S.) Prototype Design (A.A.S.) Information Systems and Technologies (Certificate) Web Development (Certificate)	Computers and Technologies Senior Life-Tech Today with your iPhone/iPad	Digital Express RAP 180 Protype Design Lab is an open-access makerspace which is open to the public with rates from $25 per month.
Mid-Plains Community College	PC Support/Network Technology (A.A.S.) PC Support (Certificate) Business/Office Technology (Certificate) Networking (Certificate)	QuickBooks Microsoft/Office 365 One-on-One Computer Training CompTIA A+/Networking Robotics	
Northeast Community College	Administrative Professional-Computer Application Specialist (Certificate) Health Information Management Systems (Diploma, Certificate) Information Technology-Cisco Networking Academy & Technical Services Support (AAS) Information Technology-Cisco Networking Academy (Certificate) Information Technology-Cisco Networking Academy & Information Security (AAS) Information Technology-Cisco Networking Academy & System Administration (AAS) Information Technology-Computer Information Systems (CIS) Transfer (AA) Information Technology-Computer Science Transfer (AA) Information Technology-General (Certificate)	Accounting with QuickBooks Accounting with Excel Adobe Animate CC Training Adobe Illustrator CC Advanced CompTIA A+ Certification Prep Advanced CSS3 and HTML5 Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Suite Basic CompTIA A+ Certification Prep Basic Computer Skills Suite Blockchain Fundamentals Blogging and Podcasting for Beginners C# Programming Series Classroom Technology Suite Color Theory (for Web Design)	

	Information Technology-Information Security (Certificate) Information Technology-Information Security and Technical Services Support (AAS) Information Technology—Information Security and System Administration (AAS) Information Technology-System Administration (Certificate) Information Technology-System Administration and Technical Services Support (AAS) Information Technology-Technical Services Support (Certificate) Information Technology-Web and Visual Application Development (Certificate) Information Technology-Web and Visual Application Development & Cisco Networking (AAS) Information Technology-Web and Visual Application Development & Information Security (AAS) Information Technology-Web and Visual Application Development & Technical Services Support (AAS) Precision Agriculture (AAS)	CompTIA Network+ Certification Prep Computer Networking Suite Computer Skills for the Workplace Creating a Classroom Web Site Creating Mobile Apps with HTML5 Creating Web Pages Creating WordPress Websites Designing Effective Websites Digital Marketing Suite Explore a Career in Cybersecurity Getting Started with Google Workspace Google and Small Business Management Suite Integrating Technology in the Classroom Intermediate C# Programming Intermediate CompTIA A+ Certification Prep And more	
Southeast Community College	Agriculture-Precision Agriculture (Certificate) Biotechnology (A.S. Degree, Certificate, Diploma) Computer Information Technology (A.A.S. Degree, Certificate) Computer Information Technology-Applications Development (A.A.S. Degree, Diploma) Computer Information Technology-Computer Support (A.A.S. Degree, Diploma) Computer Information-Cybersecurity (A.A.S. Degree) Computer Information-Network Management (A.A.S. Degree, Diploma) Design & Drafting Technology (A.A.S. Degree) Design & Drafting—Designing Software (Certificate) Design & Drafting—Intro to Design Software (Certificate) Geographic Information Systems Technician (A.A.S. Degree, Certificate, Diploma) John Deere Tech (A.A.S. Degree) Manufacturing Engineering Technology (A.A.S. Degree) Office Professional (A.A.S. Degree, Certificate, Diploma) Certified Fiber Optics Technician (CFOT) Certified Fiber Optics Specialist/Splicing (CFOS/S) Certified Fiber Optics Specialist/Testing and Maintenance (CF0S/T)	Internet Introductory Computer Classes Smart Devices	Sandhills Global Technology Center scheduled to open by the fall of 2024 with additional space for Computer Information Technology, Electronic Systems Technology, Biotechnology, and Design and Drafting Technology Programs
Western Nebraska Community College	Business Technology (A.A.S.) Information Technology Technical Support (A.A.S.) Computer Science (A.S.) Cybersecurity (A.A.) Information Technology(A.A., A.A.S., Certificate) Health Information Technology (A.A.S.)	Beginning Excel QuickBooks Basics Certified Fiber Optics Training	

University of Nebraska System

The University of Nebraska contributes to digital inclusion efforts several ways. The University of Nebraska at Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research and Department of Gerontology conducted four focus groups of covered populations as part of the Nebraska State Digital Equity Planning Grant. In addition, the survey researcher at the University of Nebraska Department of Agricultural Economics surveyed over 1,500 on their digital access and skills as part of the grant.

In October 2023, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln launched a partnership with tech company SkillStorm to provide online, noncredit education— including some free courses — in growing computer technology related areas. Through SkillStorm's training platform, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln will offer a range of courses that lead to tech skills credentials in today's most in-demand areas, including AWS, CompTIA, Salesforce, Appian, and Pega.

The University of Nebraska at Lincoln also conducts research on precision agriculture and is developing a master's degree program in Internet of Things (IoT). The University of Nebraska Extension is involved in community development efforts across the state and is a potential partner in digital opportunities programs.

Graduates of the University of Nebraska system make up a significant portion of the state's STEM workforce, especially in engineering. In 2021-2022, the University of Nebraska system awarded 478 computer science degrees and 760 engineering degrees.

Computer and Information Sciences Degrees 2021-2022
National Center for Education Statistics

Institution Name	CIP Title	Total
University of Nebraska at Kearney	Computer and Information Sciences & Support Services	17
University of Nebraska at Omaha	Computer and Information Sciences & Support Services	322
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Computer and Information Sciences & Support Services	139
Total		**478**

Engineering Degrees 2021-2022
National Center for Education Statistics

Institution Name	CIP Title	Total
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Engineering	699
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	61
Total		**760**

Computer Science, Data Science and Engineering Programs of Study		
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	**University of Nebraska at Omaha**	**University of Nebraska at Kearney**
Agricultural Engineering Agricultural Systems Technology Architectural Engineering Chemical Engineering Statistics and Data Analytics Biological Systems Engineering Civil Engineering Computer Engineering Computer Science Data Science Environmental Engineering Mechanical Engineering Software Engineering Statistics and Data Analytics Construction Engineering Electrical Engineering	Artificial Intelligence Bioinfomatics Business Administration/Management Information Systems Communications Networks Computer Science Computer Science Education Computing and Information Science Cybersecurity Data Analytics Data Management Data Science Information Assurance Information Technology IT Administration IT Innovation Management Information Systems Public Administration/Management Information Systems Software Engineering Systems Analysis and Design Systems and Architecture Systems Development	Computer Science Cyber Security Operations Information Networking and Telecommunications Information Technology

State and Private Colleges

State and private colleges in Nebraska also offer computer science degrees. For example, Bellevue University, a private college, awarded 528 degrees in computer and information sciences and support services in 2021-2022. Bellevue University offers both online and in-person degree programs in Computer Information Systems, Computer Science, Cybersecurity and Data Science.

Computer and Information Sciences Degrees 2021-2022 National Center for Education Statistics		
Institution Name	**CIP Title**	**Total**
Peru State College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	10
Wayne State College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	27
Bellevue University	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	528
Bryan College of Health Sciences	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	7
Concordia University-Nebraska	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	2
Creighton University	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	17
Doane University	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	6
Hastings College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	5
Union College	Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	12
Total		**614**

Wayne State College, Creighton University and Doane University also awarded 51 engineering and engineer-related technologies/technicians degrees.

Engineering Degrees 2021-2022 National Center for Education Statistics		
CIP Title	**CIP Title**	**CIP Title**
Wayne State College	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	28
Creighton University	Engineering/Engineering-related Technologies/Technicians	2
Doane University	Engineering	21
Total		**51**

Nebraska Career Scholarships

The Nebraska Career Scholarship Act (LB 902) was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2022. The program provides scholarships to students at the University of Nebraska, Nebraska state colleges, community colleges or private postsecondary institutions pursuing degrees in programs of study leading to high wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers. Eligible programs include health care, computer information systems, engineering and those in a skilled trade or identified shortage area. LB902 requires each scholarship recipient to register with the appropriate campus office to obtain a Nebraska-based internship, apprenticeship, clinical position or employment in a field related to their program of study before they graduate.

Nebraska Department of Economic Development Programs

Nebraska Department of Economic Development funds several workforce development programs including:

- **Customized Job Training grant program**, which provides assistance for employee training to businesses that create or retain quality jobs in Nebraska, including funding for on-the-job training; classroom training, onsite or at a local community college; and tuition and fees, training manuals, and other reasonable costs;
- **Developing Youth Talent Initiative**, which creates collaboration between Nebraska businesses and public schools and connects young Nebraskans to learning opportunities in the workforce that can play an important role in their decision to build their careers in our state.

Intern Nebraska

The InternNE, Powered by Aksarben initiative, previously recognized as the Intern Nebraska Grant Program, is a $20 million collaborative effort between the Aksarben Foundation and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The program aims to connect students and employers statewide by reimbursing eligible internship expenses. Although this in not exclusively and technology program, it is an important resource for developing a tech workforce in Nebraska.

Nebraska Department of Education and Local School Districts

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) promotes the use of current and emerging technologies through initiatives and partnerships that expand opportunities for learning beyond the boundaries of the school and classroom. The Nebraska Department of Education administered federal ESSER and GEER funding to districts for devices to students and provide connectivity to students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nebraska's 454 school districts serve 327,055 students. Nearly all (97%) of high schools and 83% of K-8 programs provide digital devices for all students.

4-H Tech Changemakers and Other Programs Utilizing Youth as Digital Trainers and Assistants

The 4-H Tech Changemakers program trains and equips teens to bring digital skills trainings to their communities. Through the program these young people are helping their communities thrive by advocating for increased digital inclusion and providing access to in-demand digital skills.

Assets for Rural Residents

Nebraska Farm Bureau

Nebraska Farm Bureau has been very engaged in discussion about rural broadband availability and has partnered with Starlink to provide a discount for its members Nebraska Farm Bureau also partnered with the FBI's Omaha Field Office to hold an Agricultural Threats Symposium June 6-7, 2023 at the University of Nebraska Innovation Campus. Over 400 individuals attended the symposium.

Rural Broadband Task Force

Nebraska's Rural Broadband Task Force was established by LB 994 in 2018. The Task Force submitted its latest report to the Governor and the Legislature on Oct. 31, 2023. The Task Force has been effective in identifying needs and barriers related to broadband in rural areas and in recommending strategies to address these needs.

Pro Ag Grant Program

Recognizing the importance of precision agriculture, the Nebraska Legislature created the Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant (PRO-AG) Program through LB 1144 in 2022. The Legislature appropriated $1 million a year for fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 for the program. Half of the funding would be allocated for wireless farm connectivity projects. The remaining half would be allocated for:

- On farm traceability solutions;
- Products that improve soil health, water management tools and sensors that facilitate judicious use of water resources, and products that promote the use of water efficiency seed technologies that lower agriculture's water, carbon, and nitrate footprint; and
- Products that use autonomous solutions in agricultural machinery, including, but not limited to, grain carts, spreaders, precision drone scouting, and scouting robots.

The Nebraska Public Service Commission opened a docket (BEAD-1/C-5529) on August 16, 2022 to implement the Act. The most recent order was issued on September 19, 2023. The Commission expects to open a grant round before the end of 2023.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Office of Rural Health

Both the Nebraska Office of Rural Health and Nebraska Rural Health Association are advocates for the use of telehealth in Nebraska. The Office of Rural Health promotes the development of a health care system that assures the availability and accessibility of quality health care services to meet the needs of people living in rural Nebraska. Programs and activities are designed to assist rural Nebraskans get high quality health care through: recruitment and retention, hospital maintenance, community planning, health care networks and cooperative ventures, identifying community leaders, developing leadership skills, and having an information clearinghouse. The Office develops state rural health policy in consultation with the Rural Health Advisory Commission.

Nebraska Rural Health Association

The Nebraska Rural Health Association includes a variety of medical professionals and organizations invested in the wellness of rural Nebraskans.

State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program

The State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program provides funding to states and local governments to assess and improve cybersecurity. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) administers the Nebraska's State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program for which Nebraska was allocated $2,555,930 for FY 2022 and $5,188,485 for FY 2023. Eighty percent of total state allocations must support local entities, while 25% of that 80% must support rural entities.

For Federal Fiscal Year 2023 funding for the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant (SLCG), the committee will be awarding 43 sub-awards totaling $2.4 million to support cybersecurity initiatives across the state. The projects supported security planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise activities. Currently, 81% of the impact of dollars is on local entities, while 56% of those 81% are categorized as rural entities and local.

The project submission window is open for FY24 funding, where the state can allocate roughly $4.1 million to net new cybersecurity projects. The application period for local governments for the second round is November 13,2023- Feb.4, 2024.

Assets for Older Adults

AARP Nebraska

AARP Nebraska is very engaged in efforts to address the needs of older adults regarding the affordability and availability of broadband as well as promoting opportunities for adults to learn technology skills and privacy and security practices.

Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) and Senior Planet

OATS aims to empower older adults with the tools and training necessary to take advantage of today's technology and use it to enrich their lives. Through its flagship program, Senior Planet from AARP, OATS offers online classes on using technology and other topics. Through the licensing program, local organizations can use the Senior Planet curriculum to offer classes. Goodwill Omaha has a Senior Planet site license.

State Unit on Aging

The State Unit on Aging oversees funding to help Nebraskans stay in their homes. These funding sources include the Older Americans Act, the Nebraska Community Aging Services Act, and the Aging & Disability Resource Center Act.

GetSetUp

The Nebraska State Unit on Aging has teamed up with GetSetUp to provide hundreds of live online classes to keep older adults mentally, physically and socially active. Classes on using technology and other topics are offered.

Area Agencies on Aging and Senior Centers

Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) provide information and assistance on available services and advocate for needed or improved services for older adults, people with disabilities of all ages, and their caregivers. Each Area Agency on Aging provides a different suite of services although there are basic services that are provided by nearly all AAAs. Nebraska has eight Area Agencies on Aging:

- Aging Office of Western Nebraska

- Aging Partners AAA & ADRC
- Blue Rivers AAA & Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging & ADRC
- Midland AAA& ADRC
- Northeast Nebraska AAA & ADRC
- South Central Nebraska AA & ADRC
- West Central Nebraska AAA

Nebraska's 145 multi-purpose senior centers can be a resource for older adults. The State Unit on Aging surveyed senior centers in 202 and found:

- 67% of multi-purpose senior centers provide Wi-Fi for everyone
- 30% of multi-purpose community centers provide computer access for everyone

Many senior centers that do not currently provide these services also indicated an interest in providing these services in the future:

- 30% would like to provide computer access for everyone
- 28% would like to offer telelearning
- 18% would like to offer Wi-Fi for everyone

Cyber Seniors

Every Wednesday morning senior citizens can bring their technology questions to the DoSpace in Omaha. Cyber Seniors volunteers are 55+. AARP Nebraska has provided funding for this program.

Assets for Members of Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Tribal Programs

Tribal entities in Nebraska have been awarded several grants which are addressing digital opportunities. Additional grants for broadband deployment are described in the Broadband Adoption Assets section.

- The Omaha Tribe of Nebraska received a $167,504 grant from the Treasury Capital Projects program to renovate a multipurpose community facility to provide internet access.
- The Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC) received a $2,938,816.00 grant from the NTIA Connecting Minority Communities Program. There are four main project activities: NICC will hire four key staff to significantly expand the school Information Technology department; increase campus cybersecurity; obtain and distribute laptops and hotspots for students and for select in-need community stakeholders; and purchase software for improved distance learning. On each campus, NICC will also build a One Button Studio, a simplified recording studio that gives users the ability to create a high-quality video recording.
- The Ponca Tribe of Nebraska received a received a $167,504 grant from the Treasury Capital Projects program to purchase technology that enables Tribal members to access the internet.
- The Santee Sioux Nation received a $167,504 grant from the Treasury Capital Projects program to renovate a multipurpose community facility to provide internet access.
- The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska received a $167,504 grant from the Treasury Capital Projects program to connect Tribal-owned buildings, enhancing broadband access for the entire community.

Additionally, the Center for Rural Affairs has launched a makerspace on Nebraska Indian Community College campuses in Macy and Santee for making, learning, exploring and sharing.

Cultural Centers

Cultural centers such as the Intercultural Senior Center in Omaha and Centro Hispano have computers and internet access for individuals to use.

Assets for Individuals with Low Incomes

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

The FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program provides a discount of $30 per month for eligible low-income households. Residents of tribal lands and those in high-cost areas can receive $75 per month in support. Some participating telecommunications providers also offer discounted digital devices. Nearly 89,000 households out of 284,439 eligible households (31%) in Nebraska have enrolled in the program. Nebraska's enrollment rate is higher than six of our neighboring states, but lags the U.S. participation rate of 39%.

Percent of Eligible Households Enrolled in Affordable Connectivity Program
August 2023
Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Tracker

Geography	Percent of Eligible Households Enrolled
Colorado	28%
Iowa	22%
Kansas	28%
Missouri	35%
Nebraska	31%
South Dakota	16%
Wyoming	24%
United States	39%

Southeast Nebraska Economic Development District ACP Outreach

The Southeast Nebraska Economic Development District (SENND) received a grant from the Federal Communications Commission to promote the ACP and increase enrollment numbers in Nebraska statewide. SENDD partnered with the other economic development districts in order to collaborate and effectively reach each part of the state through informed outreach to Nebraska's distinct communities. SENDD's outreach includes building partnerships with community-based organizations that give direct services to qualifying participants – such as nonprofits, school districts, and government agencies – and conducting presentations filled with resources and best ACP outreach practices. Many social service agencies also provide information on the program and assistance in enrolling. Additional outreach efforts, however, could improve Nebraska's enrollment rate.

Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program is expected to be exhausted in April 2024 unless Congress reappropriates funding for the program.

NUSF Lifeline Program

The Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program (NTAP)/Lifeline Program assists qualifying low-income individuals with keeping telephone services affordable by lowering monthly service rates. Individuals can qualify for the NTAP/Lifeline Program by participating in Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Veterans Pension/Benefit/Survivors Pension Benefit, Federal Public Housing Assistance, or if household income is at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty level.

Center for People

The Center for People based in Lincoln provides programs and services aimed at addressing the basic needs of low-income individuals and families while providing access to the training and education necessary to improve employment and increase wages. EduTech is a free educational program focused on preparing students for a career in the well-paid, growing area of technology. EduTech uses curriculum developed by Google and will enroll 40 participants each year. Groups of 10 will take classes for 4-6 months and have access to supports like food, diapers, clothing and household goods distributions, gas vouchers, childcare vouchers, and stipends for interview clothing to ensure success.

Metropolitan Community College Digital Express

The Digital Express located on Metropolitan Community College's North Omaha campus is open to everyone, but it is located in an area with a high proportion of low-income and African American and Black residents. The Digital Express offers:

- Technology checkout and support
- Low-cost technology repair
- Basic technology programs/training
- Meeting rooms
- Family rooms
- Print, fax and scan

Do Space Tech Pack Program

With funding from Emergency Connectivity Fund from the Federal Communications Commission, 945 low-income Omaha residents received a computing device and free internet access for one year from the Do Space from June 30, 2022 to June 29, 2023. Additionally, participants received computer basics training and technology tutoring. Although the program has ended, the program evaluation demonstrated the positive impact that having a device, internet access and training can have on low-income families.

Capital Projects Funding for Multi-Purpose Community Centers

Nebraska has allocated $35 million in Capital Projects funding for multi-purpose community centers which enable work, education and health monitoring in qualified census tracts in Omaha. The U.S. Department of the Treasury recently approved Nebraska's plan for this program. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development will administer the grant program.

Community Action Programs and Social Service Agencies

Many Community Action Programs and social service agencies provide information on the Affordable Connectivity Program and may also offer public access to the internet and computers.

PCs for People

PCs for People sells refurbished devices online to individuals currently participating in a government-based assistance program or having a qualifying household income (less than 200% of federal poverty guidelines or 60% of area median income).

Made New Makerspace

Made New Makerspace, a nonprofit organization based in Omaha, Nebraska, provides free 4G LTE modems with included internet service and refurbished laptop computers to underserved youth, through a program called Laptops for Learners.

Assets for Individuals with Language Barriers

Adult Education Programs at Community Colleges and Other Locations

Adult Education GED programs include computer literacy education components. Adult Education Class sites are listed below.

Ainsworth	Grand Island	Nebraska City	Scottsbluff
Alliance	Hastings	Norfolk	Sidney
Beatrice	Hebron	North Platte	South Sioux City
Broken Bow	Holdrege	Ogallala	Tecumseh
Chadron	Imperial	Omaha	Valentine
Columbus	Kearney	O'Neill	Wahoo
Crete	Kimball	Ord	Wakefield
Falls City	Lexington	Pawnee City	

Fremont	Lincoln	Plattsmouth	West Point
Gordon	McCook	Schuyler	York

Cultural Centers

Cultural centers such as the Intercultural Senior Center in Omaha and Centro Hispano have computers and internet access for individuals to use.

Lincoln Literacy Center Computer Literacy Classes

Lincoln Literacy Center offers beginning and intermediate-level computer literacy classes which cover how to type, use a keyboard, and use a mouse/mouse pad. Participants work on understanding how to use the internet, email, and social media. Classes also explore Google Suite and Microsoft Office depending on student interest and skill level.

Assets for Individuals with Disabilities

Nebraska Vocational Rehab (VR)

Nebraska VR is an eligibility program that helps people with physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, and learning disabilities to identify their strengths and abilities in order to find success in the world of work. Nebraska VR offers customized and individualized services that are tailored to an individual's specific needs and job goal.

Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)

ATP is a state agency in the Department of Education that connects Nebraskans to opportunities through assistive technology. ATP has offices in Lincoln, Kearney, Norfolk, Omaha and Scottsbluff.

iCanConnect (iCC)

The National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program, also known as iCanConnect, is a federally funded program coordinated by ATP in Nebraska. If you have significant combined vision and hearing loss and meet federal income guidelines, iCanConnect can provide telecommunication equipment and training for individuals with significant combined vision and hearing loss and who meet federal income guidelines.

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)

The Nebraska Telecommunications Relay Service program provides access to telecommunications services and equipment for individuals who are hearing, speech impaired or deaf/blind impaired.

The Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program (NSTEP)

The Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program (NSTEP) provides financial assistance to aid in the purchasing of specialized telephone equipment such as amplifiers, signaling devices and TTY/TTs.

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing offers a number of services:

- Management of applications for hearing aids through Nebraska Hearing Aid Banks.
- Provision of behavioral health service coordination by:
    - Meeting the communication needs of the people who are deaf or hard of hearing, which includes interpreting and auxiliary aids
    - Educating and training mental health, alcoholism and drug abuse professionals

    - Placing assistive listening devices in mental health, alcoholism and drug abuse facilities
- Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) offers an Assistive Devices Loan Program to individuals/consumers who live in Nebraska. Devices available for loan include:
    - Amplified phones / corded & cordless - loaned for a three-month period
    - Personal listening device - loaned for a three-month period
    - Teletypewriter (TTY) - loaned for a three-month period
- An Education Advocate provides assistance to clients who are experiencing educational and/or vocational needs in the school setting.
- The Commission also licenses sign language interpreters and maintains list of interpreters.

Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides a number of services.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services assist blind and low vision Nebraskans to enter the workforce, retain employment, and advance in their chosen career fields. Each consumer is assigned a vocational rehabilitation counselor who guides them through the process. This may include providing financial assistance for college or trade school, purchasing computer technology, or providing assistance with developing a résume. Employment retention services, such as mobility and technology training, are also provided for people who are currently in the workforce and need these services in order to remain employed.
- Independent Living (IL) Services provides training to blind and visually impaired individuals age 55 and older who want to maintain their independence.
- The NCBVI Technology Program provides technology services to blind and visually impaired Nebraskans, as well as current and potential employers of people who are blind. Technology Specialists instruct NCBVI consumers in the use of access technologies such as screen reading software, refreshable Braille displays, screen magnification software, and personal note taking devices. In addition, instruction is provided in the use of mainstream technologies such as web browsing, use of smartphones and tablets, the Windows and Macintosh/Apple operating systems, and word processing skills consumers need to achieve their vocational goals. Technology Specialists also work with employers to ensure that current and perspective blind employees have the appropriate technology to do their jobs efficiently and effectively.
- Individuals with intellectual and or developmental disabilities in Nebraska's workforce receive coordinated employment services through Vocational Rehabilitation, a partnership between the Nebraska VR Program, a division of the Nebraska Department of Education; the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired; and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The partnership works toward competitive integrated employment that includes pay at or above minimum wage that is not less than what others without a disability are receiving for the same type of job at a location where the employee interacts with other employees without disabilities in comparable positions and has opportunities for advancement, when appropriate. The partnership also provides career counseling, employment information, and referrals for individuals with disabilities who want to work.

Great Plains ADA

The Great Plains ADA Center provides information, guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act and related laws in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Services are designed to meet the needs of a wide range of users, from individuals with disabilities and their families to architects, building code officials, educators, state and local governments, and businesses.

Disability Rights Nebraska

Disability Rights Nebraska is the protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in Nebraska. Disability Rights Nebraska protects, supports and promotes the rights of people with disabilities. This includes people with just about any disability including intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental illness and physical disabilities.

Nebraska Aging and Disability Resource Center

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is for Nebraskans aged 60 years or older, people with disabilities of all ages, family members, caregivers and advocates. Local ADRCs provide information, referral and assistance for accessing community services and long-term care options.

Easter Seals Nebraska

Easter Seals has been helping individuals with disabilities and special needs, and their families, live better lives for nearly 100 years. From child development centers to physical rehabilitation and job training for people with disabilities, Easter Seals offers a variety of services to help people with disabilities address life's challenges and achieve personal goals.

Assets for Veterans

Veterans Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC)

Veterans may be eligible for the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program that matches veterans with a leading training provider to help them develop high-tech skills in one of the following areas:

- Computer software
- Computer programming
- Data processing
- Information science
- Media applications

Digital Divide Consult

The Digital Divide Consult is a process that connects veterans who don't have internet access or a video-capable device with programs and resources that provide the internet service or technology needed for VA visits. Using the Digital Divide Consult option in veterans' electronic medical records, a VA care team can refer veterans to social workers who will assist them with internet and technology options, such as

- **Connected Devices Program.** Lends eligible Veterans with internet-connected tablets at no cost so they can access VA care through telehealth. Help with initial device set up and 24/7 tech support is provided.
- **Mobile Carrier Partnerships.** The Department of Veteran's Affairs has partnered with AT&T, SafeLink by TracFone, T-Mobile, and Verizon to help veterans avoid data charges when using VA Video Connect to meet with their VA providers. If veterans have an eligible cellular plan, no action is required. The participating mobile networks will automatically recognize when veterans or their caregivers are using VA Video Connect.

Clinical Resource Hubs

Clinical Resource Hubs are established at all of the VA's 18 health care networks to offer a combination of in-person care and telehealth services.

VA Apps

A number of apps are available to help veterans, health care professionals and family members. Apps for veterans include VA: Health and Benefits, VA Health Chat (for use with the Omaha VA Medical Center and Sidney Clinic), and VA Online Scheduling.

Assets for Incarcerated Individuals

Vocational and Life Skills Program

Each year NDCS grants $3.5 million to provide community-based opportunities for people who are in prison, discharged from prison, or serving a period of supervision on parole or probation. Funding for the Vocational and Life Skills (VLS) program originates from LB 907, passed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2014, with the intent of addressing barriers to successful reentry and reducing recidivism. Several of the Vocational and Life Skills Programs provide recently released individuals with a pre-paid phone so that they can communicate with prospective employers and their parole officer. Assistance in using the phone is also provided if needed.

ReConnect, Inc. has provided approximately 75 phones to recently released individuals as of September 2023. The phones make it possible for employers to contact individuals directly. Most of the individuals ReConnect works with have had some access to digital technology. ReConnect is based in Omaha.

RISE is the largest nonprofit organization in Nebraska focused solely on habilitative programming in prisons and reentry support. RISE offers three different programs inside and in the community. RISE has distributed at least 150 phones to recently incarcerated individuals. RISE's main office is in Omaha, but it also has an office in Lincoln and a staff members in Hastings.

Metropolitan Community College's 180 Re-entry Assistance Program (180 RAP) serves over 1,000 currently incarcerated, individuals leaving jail, prison and treatment centers and people involved with problem solving courts a year. 180 RAP provides services and support to help these populations make successful transitions to achieve their education and employment goals. The Re-entry Center is based out of MCC's Fort Omaha Campus. Educational opportunities may include credit or noncredit classes. Transition support connects participants to the largest on-campus re-entry center in the United States, which hosts a job center, education center, computer center and pantry. A two-hour digital literacy class is taught weekly. Participants can take the class six times when they are incarcerated and can take it as often as they need after they are released. 180 RAP also provides a pre-paid phone for newly released individuals.

The Center for People's Opening Doors, formerly known as TRADE, is a community reentry program for current and formerly incarcerated individuals. The program focuses on providing practical training to translate new and existing abilities into reentry success. Participants may choose job-skill training in forklift operation, proficient Microsoft Office computer classes, welding or online manufacturing courses through ToolingU.com. All participants are trained on effective communication, workplace etiquette, workplace diversity, basic computers, job readiness (including résume writing and mock interviews), goal setting, boundaries, core values, empathy and communication and conflict resolution.

3.1.2 Existing Digital Equity Plans

Seven regional digital opportunities plans were developed by the state's economic development districts.

- Central Nebraska Economic Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District and Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Panhandle Area Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- South Central Economic Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Southeast Nebraska Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- West Central Nebraska Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)

3.1.3 Existing Digital Equity Programs

Do Space

Do Space is a technology library open to everyone in Omaha, providing free access to the latest software, devices, and ultra-fast internet. A variety of programs and events are offered at no cost.

Metropolitan Community College Digital Express

The Digital Express located on Metropolitan Community College's North Omaha campus is open to everyone and offers:

- Technology checkout and support
- Low-cost technology repair
- Basic technology programs/training
- Meeting rooms
- Family rooms
- Print, fax and scan

Makerspaces in Nebraska

The Nebraska Library Commission's database on makerspaces in Nebraska lists 57 makerspaces in the state. Many are in libraries across the state. The prevalence of makerspaces in Nebraska libraries was spurred by a $715,732 National Leadership Grant awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to the Nebraska Library Commission. The Nebraska Library Commission partnered with the Nebraska Innovation Studio, the University of Nebraska's makerspace, on the Library Innovation Studios: Transforming Rural Communities project. With funding from the grant, mobile makerspaces were purchased and hosted on a rotating basis by 35 rural and small libraries In total 2,709 individuals/makers were certified to operate equipment at the Library Innovation Studios. Makers reported making and selling products, starting businesses, purchasing equipment, and gaining skills. The project began July 1, 2017 and concluded March 31, 2022. Nearly all the libraries have purchased makerspace equipment and many have impressive makerspaces today. Nearly all 35 libraries reported that the process helped them to develop local partners, brought new people to the library, and paved the way for the majority of host libraries to establish a permanent makerspace. The grant provides an innovative model that could be modified or utilized for other digital equity programs.

Nebraska Tech Collaborative

The Nebraska Tech Collaborative is an Aksarben workforce initiative convening leaders across the state to attract, develop, and retain tech talent and entrepreneurs to enable greater economic prosperity for Nebraska. The Nebraska Tech Collaborative has developed a data dashboard with information on Nebraska's tech workforce. The Nebraska Tech Collaborative has six programs:

- Scholars—Engaging Nebraska-based tech interns through peer and partner networking events
- Pioneers—Connecting Nebraska innovators to grow the startup ecosystem
- Engineers in Residence—Connecting engineers to startups for product development support
- Teacher Externships—Strengthening teachers' tech skills through an immersive summer experience
- Pitch Days—Connecting high-growth tech startups with Nebraska companies to pitch their products
- Laid Off Tech Worker Support—Streamlining placement of laid off tech workers in and out of the state

Nebraska Chamber Tech Nebraska

Formed in 2023 in partnership with the Nebraska Chamber, Tech Nebraska will convene technology partners, foster a more diverse and inclusive technology workforce and advocate for pro-growth, tech-focused public policies spanning from Scottsbluff to Omaha, Valentine to McCook.

AIM Institute

The nonprofit AIM Institute provides training and resources for new and experienced tech professionals, making educational opportunities and career training accessible to all. Most of AIM's programming is focused on the Omaha area, although AIM has an Educational Opportunity Center in Scottsbluff offering assistance for people-especially veterans and first generation students—looking to pursue postsecondary education. Programs include:

- Youth in Tech partners with multiple schools for technology education opportunities
- The AIM Brain Exchange provides thousands of area youth with free, hands-on technology learning experiences.
- College and Tech Access programs include free workshops, academic support and advising services, after-school activities, and mentorship opportunities.
- AIM Code School offers accelerated training for high-demand tech skills to adults and career-changers. Led by industry experts, AIM Code School students gain access to a professional network.

Prairie STEM

Prairie STEM's goal is to improve critical thinking and creativity in all students using STEM and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) integration to engage and provide hands-on learning for optimal impact and sustainability. Working with certified teachers, Prairie STEM creates and teaches customized lessons aligned with district-approved curriculum. Professional development and continuing education areavailable for teachers looking to fulfill career enrichment or new program implementation.

3.1.4 Broadband Adoption—Assets

Percent of Residents with Internet Access at Home: 91%

Programs that Provide Digital Literacy and Digital Skills Training

A number of organizations and programs provide digital literacy and digital skills training, including:

- Nebraska Community Colleges
- Do Space
- Metropolitan Community College Digital Express
- Prairie STEM
- AIM Institute
- Center for People in Need EduTech Program

- GetSetUp
- Senior Planet
- 108 or 58% of public libraries in Nebraska offer digital equity training (formal or informal) to the public. Sixteen or 9% of public libraries have partners to assist with digital equity programs.

Programs that Provide Subsidized or Low-Cost Devices

Several programs in Nebraska provide subsidized or low-cost devices, including:

- Do Space Tech Pack Program
- PCs for People
- Some internet providers offer devices through the ACP program

Digital Navigator Programs

There are no full digital navigator programs in Nebraska, though several programs and organizations (e.g., libraries, community action agencies, and social service organizations) offer one or more of the services typically provided by these programs.

Existing ISP Programs that Promote Adoption

Most Nebraska broadband providers participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program. We identified only eight small, rural telecommunications not participating in the program. Companies offering a $30 low-cost program in Nebraska include:

- Allo Communications
- AT&T
- Cox Communications
- Frontier
- Google Fiber (currently building out in Omaha and Bellevue)
- Spectrum

Companies offering discounted devices include:

- Vistabeam
- NextLink
- Cox Communications
- Santee Communications

Several broadband providers have additional digital equity programs:

- Cox Communications offers a number of programs including the Cost2 Compete program which offers internet service for low-income families with students for $9.95/month, a low-cost option for low-income households, a partnership with PCs for People to provide low-cost devices, and the Cox Digital Academy which offers online digital learning resources. In addition, Cox Communications, in collaboration with Internet2 and Network Nebraska through the ConnectEd Nebraska program, announced a first-of-its-kind pilot initiative to expand eduroam access for participating K-12 schools across the Omaha metro area on October 26, 2023. With the eduroam global Wi-Fi access service and an expanded network of hotspots in community spaces, students will be able to obtain internet connections across the metro area even when visiting locations outside their day-to-day school campuses.
- Google Fiber awarded Do Space a grant to support digital equity and technology accessibility in the Omaha community. This support will enable Do Space to continue providing access to dozens of types of software made publicly available for free to the community, as well as provide a wide range of free technology education opportunities for adults throughout the year.

- Nextlink is a Microsoft Airband Partner. Benefits of the Airband partnership include access to technical expertise, digital skills training and a free technical hotline for its customers through PCs for People, another Airband partner. Nextlink also collaborates with National 4-H, another Airband partner, to deliver a digital skills education program entitled Tech Changemakers, which empowers youth to train other community members on digital literacy. Additionally, Microsoft is providing a one-time $25,000 grant to assist Nexlink in the establishment of digital navigator cohorts in strategic locations to help increase broadband adoption.
- Vistabeam is providing the Chappell Senior Center with a computer, monitor, keyboard, a mouse, a camera and microphone. The equipment allows seniors to take advantage of the Empowerment Center's digital skills program. Two employees in the Chappell area will act as "digital navigators" who will learn the computer program modules, and then train others.
- The Northeast Nebraska Telephone Company applied for $5,000 in funding from the National Telephone Cooperative Association (NTCA) Foundation for Rural Service to construct a telehealth room in the Clearwater Public Library.

Public Computing Labs/Wi-Fi Access

Do Space and Metropolitan Community College's Digital Express offer public computing labs and Wi-Fi access as well as other services.

Public libraries are a key provider of public computing labs/Wi-Fi Access.

- 177 or 65% of Nebraska's 273 public libraries have fiber optic connections.
- 95 or 41% of Nebraska libraries have makerspaces.
- 223 or 97% provide public Wi-Fi Access.
- 147 or 78% have Wi-Fi extended outside of the library building.
- 170 or 90% leave Wi-Fi on during hours not open to the public.

Nebraska's 145 multi-purpose senior centers can be a resource for older adults. The State Unit on Aging surveyed senior centers in 202 and found:

- 67% of multi-purpose senior centers provide Wi-Fi for everyone.
- 30% of multi-purpose community centers provide computer access for everyone.

K-12 School System One-to-One Computer Programs

Nearly all (97%) of high schools and 83% of K-8 programs provide digital devices for all students.

Computer Refurbishing Programs

Made New Makerspace, a nonprofit organization based in Omaha, Nebraska, provides free 4G LTE modems with included internet service and refurbished laptop computers to underserved youth, through a program called Laptops for Learners.

PCs for People does not have a physical presence in Nebraska. However, qualified individuals in Nebraska can order low-cost refurbished devices from PCs for People. Some Nebraska businesses donate their computers to PCs for People.

Digital Equity/Digital Inclusion Coalitions

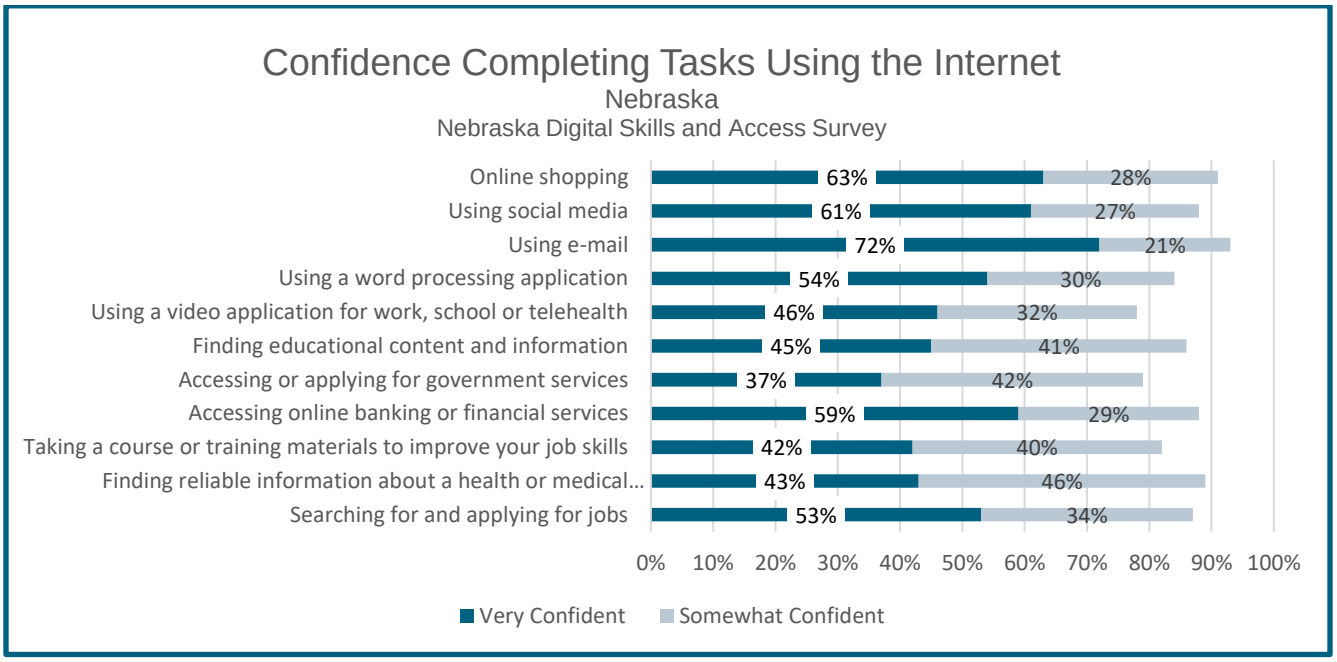
Tech Nebraska and the Nebraska Tech Collaborative are coalitions focused on developing a tech workforce and growing tech businesses.

Meaningful Use

The Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey found that over 80% of Nebraskans are very confident or somewhat confident in the following tasks:

- Online shopping
- Using social media
- Using e-mail
- Using a word processing application
- Finding educational content and information
- Accessing online banking or financial services
- Taking a course or training materials to improve job skills
- Finding reliable information about a health or medical condition
- Searching for and applying for jobs

Additionally, according to the USDA Technology Use (Farm Computer Usage and Ownership) survey, 55% of farmers and ranchers are using precision agriculture. Nebraska ranks second in the U.S. in the use of precision agriculture.



3.1.5 Broadband Affordability Assets

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Nearly 89,000 households out of 284,439 eligible households (31%) in Nebraska have enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program. Nebraska's enrollment rate is higher than six of our neighboring states, but lags the U.S. participation rate of 39%.

The Southeast Nebraska Economic Development District received a grant from the Federal Communications Commission to promote the ACP and increase enrollment numbers in Nebraska statewide. SENDD partnered with the other economic development districts in order to collaborate and effectively reach each part of the state through informed outreach to Nebraska's distinct communities. SENDD's outreach includes building partnerships with community-based organizations that give direct services to qualifying participants – such as nonprofits, school districts, and government agencies – and conducting presentations filled with resources and best ACP outreach practices. Many social service agencies also provide information on the program and assistance in enrolling. Additional outreach efforts, however, could improve Nebraska's enrollment rate.

Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program is expected to be exhausted in April 2024 unless Congress reappropriates funding for the program.

NUSF Lifeline Program

The Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program (NTAP)/Lifeline Program assists qualifying low-income individuals with keeping telephone services affordable by lowering monthly service rates. Individuals can qualify for the NTAP/Lifeline Program by participating in Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Veterans Pension/Benefit/Survivors Pension Benefit, Federal Public Housing Assistance, or if household income is at or below 135 percent of the poverty level.

3.2 Needs Assessment

Nebraska Needs Assessment

Participants at the Nebraska Broadband and Digital Opportunities listening session in Ord discuss privacy and security.

The needs assessment draws from multiple sources of data, including:

- Publicly available data sources including the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, FCC broadband availability data, the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, and USDA Farm and Computer Use Survey
- Data from the Nebraska Broadband Office on unserved and underserved locations in Nebraska
- Input from 26 listening sessions and four tribal consultations held across Nebraska
- The Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey conducted by the University of Nebraska
- Four focus groups of members of covered populations conducted by the UNO Center for Public Affairs Research and the Department of Gerontology
- 14 webinars featuring 27 speakers
- 7 regional digital plans
- Statewide digital planning workshop
- Meetings with key stakeholders and resource providers

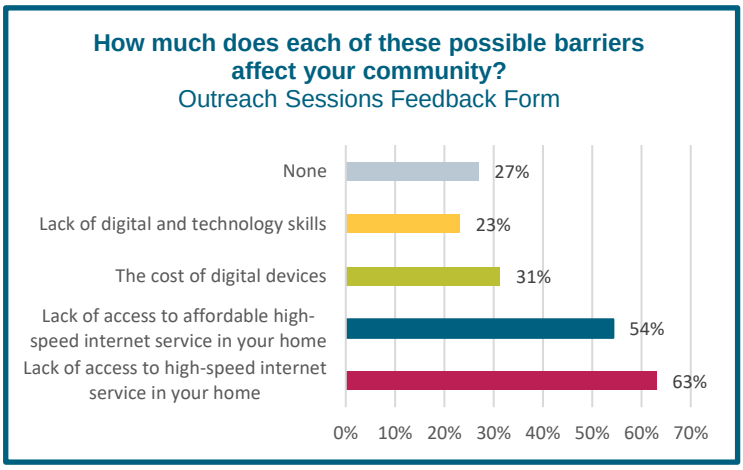
Nebraska Overview

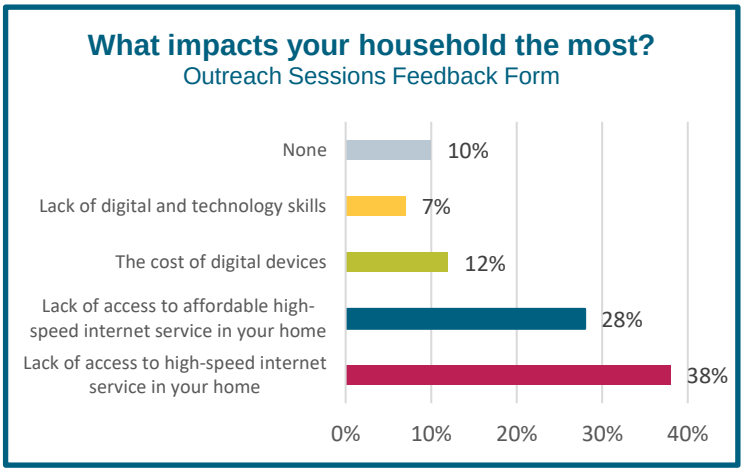
Broadband Availability

Broadband availability and affordability were the two issues most frequently identified by participants in listening sessions across Nebraska. The Nebraska Digital Opportunities team in cooperation with the Nebraska BEAD grant held 26 listening sessions across Nebraska. Over 300 individuals attended the listening sessions and over 200 answered a feedback form. Sixty-three percent of the respondents indicated that lack of access to high-speed internet service in the home has a high impact on their community. Thirty-eight percent indicated that it has a high impact on their household.

Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that lack of affordable high-speed internet access has a high impact on their community. Twenty-eight percent said that lack of access to affordable high-speed internet impacts their household.

86.9% of Nebraska locations and 67.8% of rural Nebraska locations have broadband of at least 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up according to the Nebraska Broadband Office (August 2023). The Nebraska Broadband Office has identified 37,166 underserved locations and 66,905 unserved locations.





Rural residents are the covered population which is most challenged by broadband availability. Approximately 99% of the unserved and underserved locations in Nebraska are in rural areas. 67.8% of rural locations in Nebraska are served, compared to 86.9% of locations statewide.

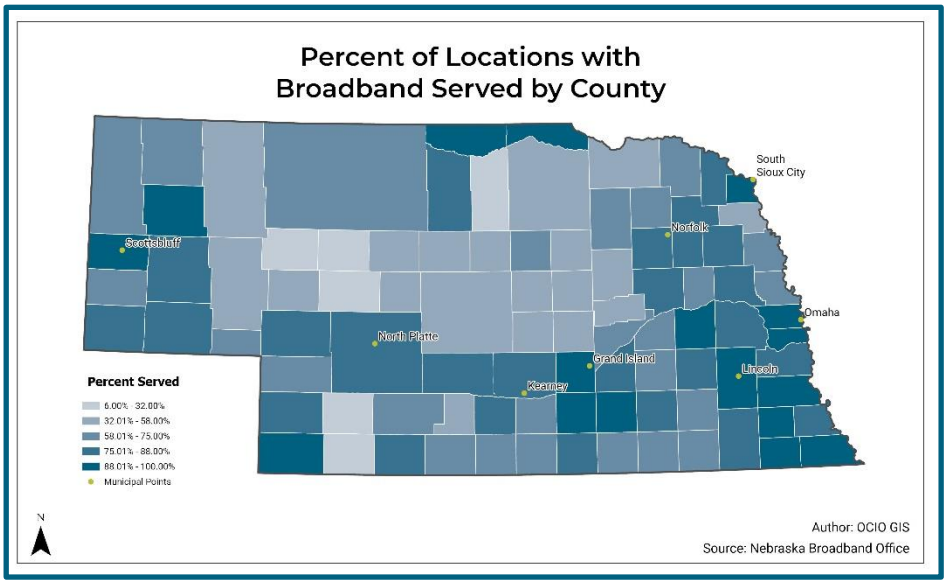
Served, Underserved and Served Locations
Nebraska Broadband Office, Sept. 2023

Measure	Nebraska	Rural Nebraska	Urban Nebraska
Broadband Serviceable Locations	791,617	320,279	471,338
Served Locations (100/20 or greater)	687,546	217,115	470,431
% Served Locations	86.9%	67.8%	99.8%
Underserved Locations (less than 100/20 but at least 25/3 available)	37,166	36,760	406
% Underserved Locations	4.7%	11.5%	0.1%

The map to the right shows the percent of served locations by county.

The ten Nebraska counties with the highest percent of unserved rural locations are listed below. These counties are, not surprisingly, all very rural counties.

The ten Nebraska counties with the most unserved locations are listed below. This list includes urban (Lancaster), micropolitan (Platte and Dodge), and rural counties.



Percent Rural Broadband Availability Nebraska Counties
Ranked by % Unserved
Nebraska Broadband Office, September 2023

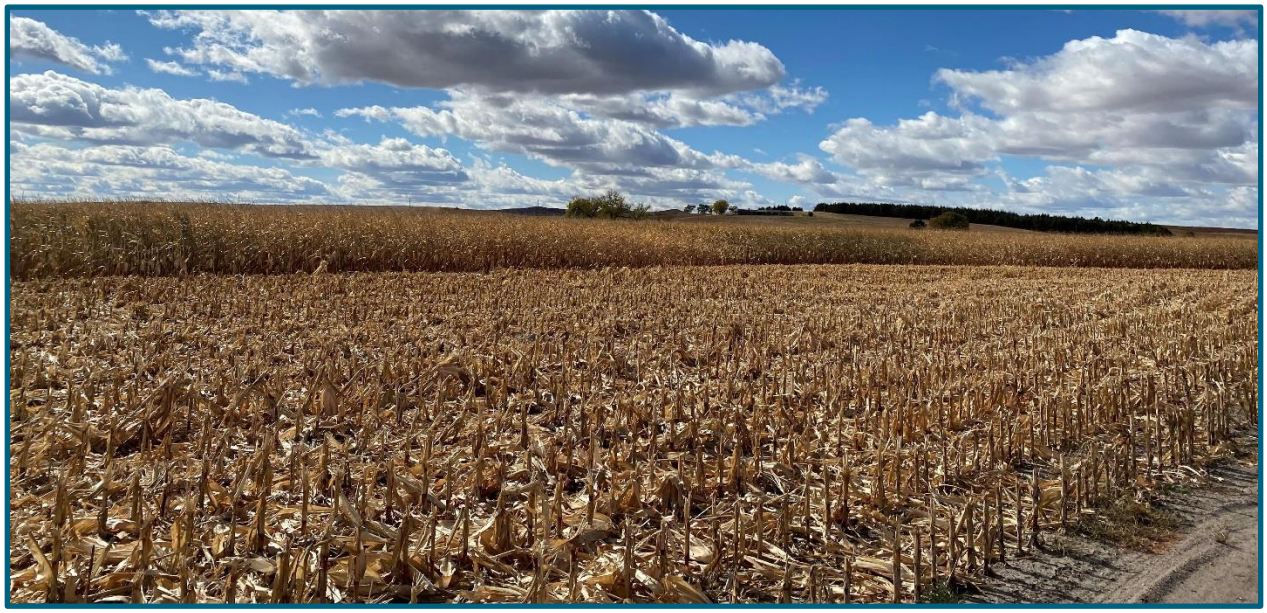
County	Percent Served Rural	Percent Underserved Rural	Percent Unserved Rural
McPherson	16.0%	29.0%	55.0%
Hayes	24.0%	27.0%	49.0%
Knox	45.0%	10.0%	44.0%
Nance	55.0%	2.0%	43.0%
Boone	53.0%	7.0%	40.0%
Garden	50.0%	9.0%	40.0%
Sheridan	48.0%	14.0%	39.0%
Sioux	59.0%	2.0%	39.0%
Sherman	44.0%	19.0%	37.0%
Antelope	60.0%	5.0%	35.0%

Unserved and Underserved Rural Broadband Locations by Nebraska Counties
Ranked by Unserved Rural Locations
Nebraska Broadband Office, September 2023

County	Underserved Rural Locations	Unserved Rural Locations
Knox	620	2,655
Saunders	600	2,075
Platte	367	2,057
Holt	999	2,023
Custer	1,590	1,935
Cass	519	1,819
Lancaster	1,103	1,807
York	549	1,681
Dodge	330	1,670
Antelope	237	1,616

Mobile connectivity is also an issue in rural areas of the state. Although the BEAD grant and other broadband deployment funding programs are focused on fixed broadband deployment, mobile connectivity is an issue in the state—especially in rural areas. The table below shows the percent of area with mobile coverage according to the FCC broadband map using December 2022 data. The map likely overstates coverage but does show that some areas of the state lack 4G coverage and many areas lack 5G coverage. In order to get better coverage, some rural residents purchase phones and plans from two different providers.

Percent of Area with Mobile Coverage FCC Broadband Map December 2022				
	3G (0.2/0.05) Mbps	**4G (5/1 Mbps)**	**5G-NR (7/1 Mbps)**	**5G-NR (35/3 Mbps)**
Nebraska	69.46	91.45	21.03%	9.28%
United States	12.6%	66.22%	44.31%	24.5%



A field near Arnold, Nebraska. Photo by Anne Byers

Broadband Availability for Agriculture

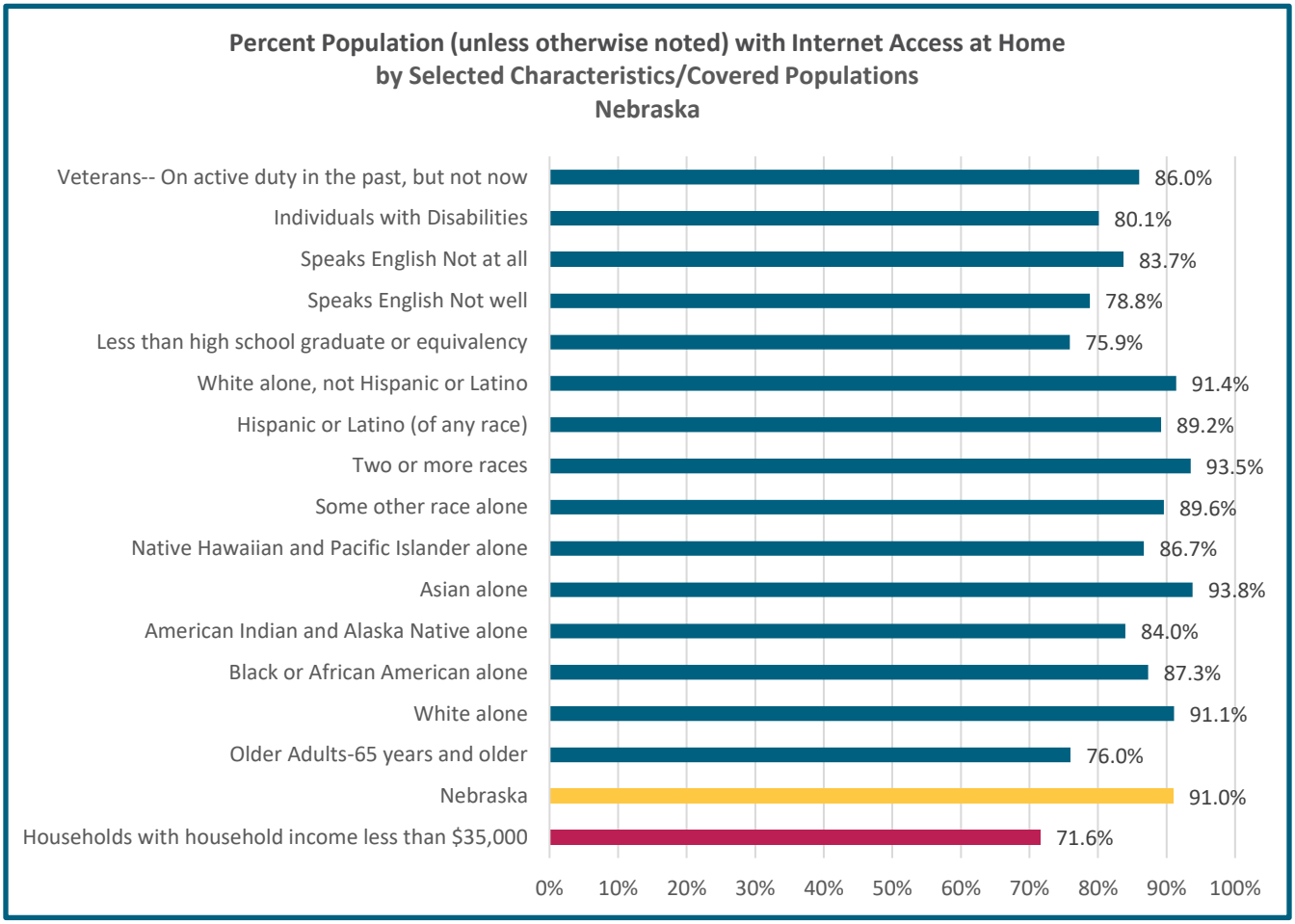
Broadband is important for agriculture. Farmers and ranchers need upload speeds of 50-100+ Mbps to transfer the immense amount of data generated to the cloud. In the future even greater upload speeds may be required.

Different methods of connectivity are required for agriculture, including:

- Low-bandwidth connectivity for devices like sensors or monitors often called Internet of Things (IoT) devices
- High speed, centralized broadband with symmetrical gigabit connectivity for targeted agricultural operational headquarters such as a farm or ranch operations center
- High-speed decentralized coverage over large agricultural areas. The FCC Precision Ag Task Force is recommending wireless symmetrical connectivity of 100 Mbps over farms and ranches. While some connectivity may be available through public networks, private networks may need to be deployed to ensure complete coverage over farms and ranches.

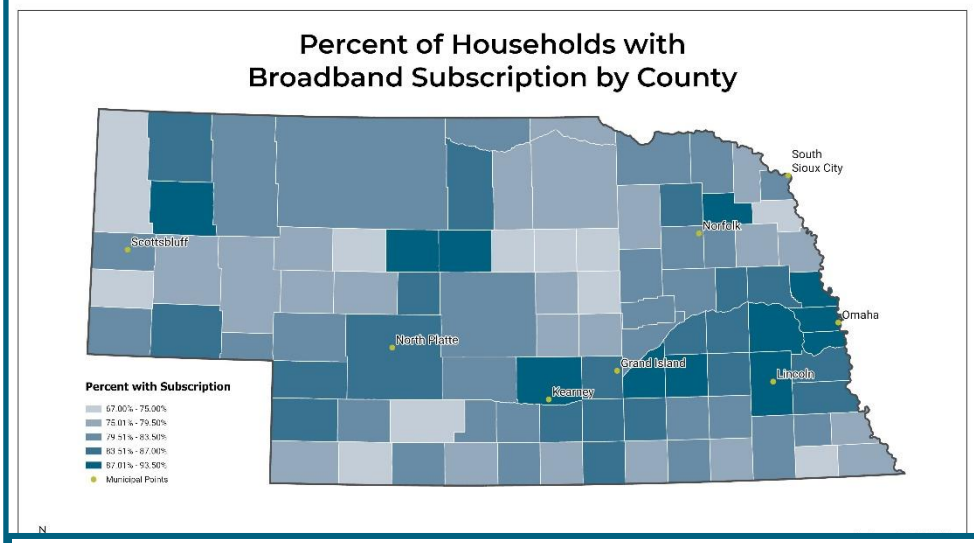
Broadband Adoption

91% of Nebraskans have internet access at home. Covered populations have lower broadband subscription rates. Older adults, those with less than a high school education, those with low incomes, and those who do not speak English well are the demographic groups least likely to have internet access at home.

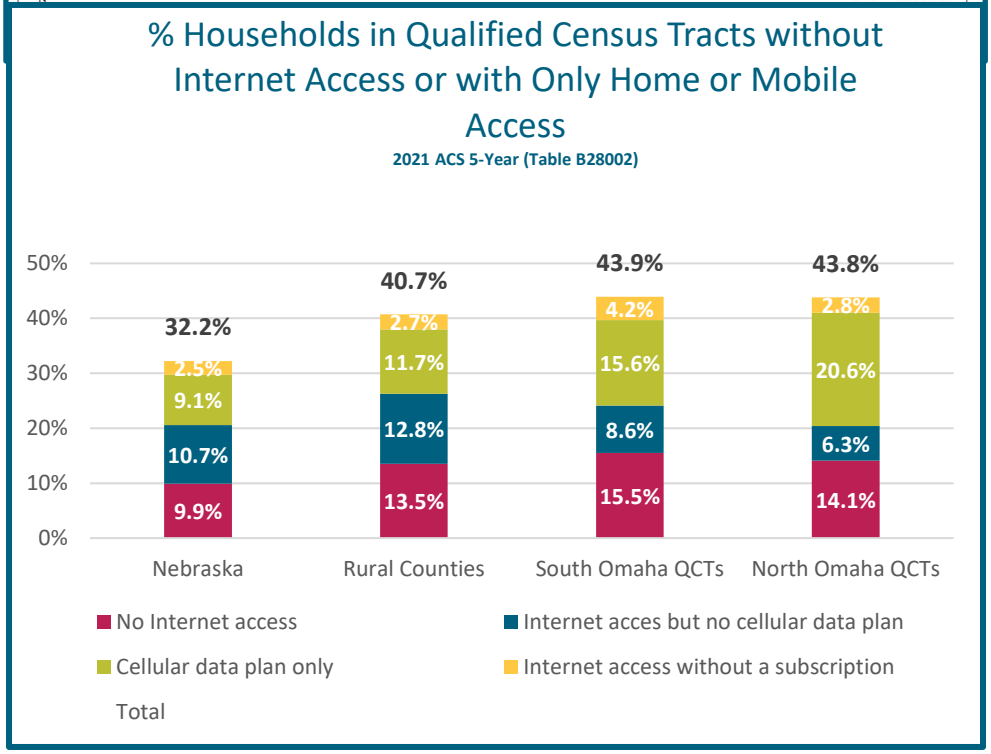


Sources: 2021 ACS 5-year estimates 2021 (Table S 2802); 2020 Micro--ACS 5-year estimates Public Use Microdata; 2021 ACS Five-year estimates Table B28004

Broadband subscription rates vary by county. The map to the right shows the percent of households with a broadband subscription by county.



To be fully connected in today's digital economy and society, most individuals need two kinds of connectivity: mobile and fixed connectivity. Nearly one-third of Nebraskans have no internet connectivity or only one kind of connectivity.



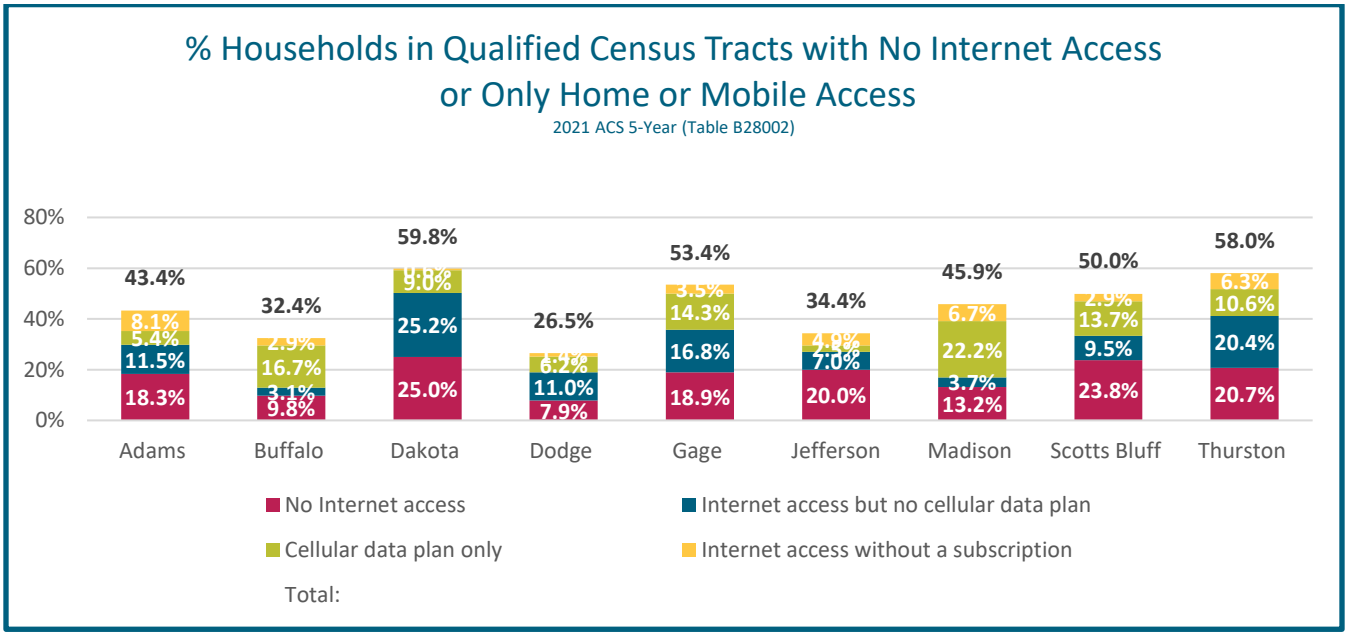
Rural areas and low-income urban areas with high percentages of members of ethnic and racial minorities have lower broadband subscription rates.

While they have very different demographic makeups, residents of rural areas and residents of qualified census tracts (census tracts in which at least 50% of households have an income less than 60% of the Area Median Gros Income) in North and South Omaha express similar needs for broadband access, including:

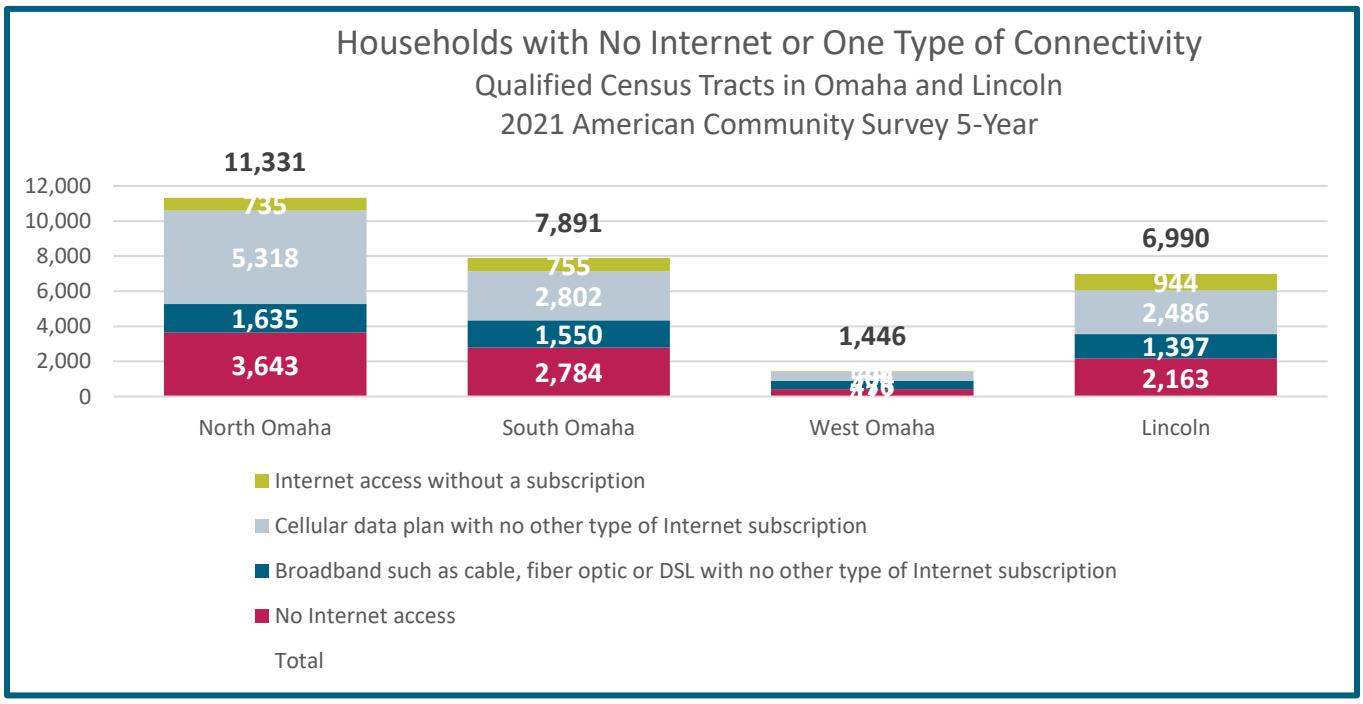
- The ability for businesses to grow in the community
- The need for older adults to access healthcare through telehealth
- The need for broadband for completing homework and accessing online classes
- The desire for their children to have opportunities to stay in their communities

Recognizing that similarities exist between rural areas and low-income urban areas with high percentages of members of ethnic and racial minorities may aid in building statewide support for digital opportunities initiatives.

The qualified census tracts with the lowest rates of broadband access were in South Sioux City in Dakota County, Thurston County which includes the Omaha and Winnebago Reservations, and Beatrice in Gage County.



The qualified census tracts in North and South Omaha and Lincoln have the highest number of households wirth no internet at home or only one type of connectivity.



A discount of $30 per month for low-income households is currently being provided through the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Residents of tribal lands and those in high-cost areas can receive $75 per month in support. Some participating telecommunications providers also offer discounted digital devices. Nearly 89,000 households out of 284,439 eligible households (31%) in Nebraska have enrolled in the program. Nebraska's enrollment rate is higher than six of our neighboring states, but lags the U.S. participation rate of 39%. Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program is expected to be exhausted in April 2024 unless Congress reappropriates funding for the program.

Percent of Eligible Households Enrolled in Affordable Connectivity Program
August 2023

Geography	Percent of Eligible Households Enrolled
Colorado	28%
Iowa	22%
Kansas	28%
Missouri	35%
Nebraska	31%
South Dakota	16%
Wyoming	24%
United States	39%

Source: Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Tracker

The Southeast Nebraska Economic Development District received a grant from the Federal Communications Commission to promote the ACP and increase enrollment numbers in Nebraska statewide. SENDD partnered with the other economic development districts in order to collaborate and effectively reach each part of the state through informed outreach to Nebraska's distinct communities. SENDD's outreach includes building partnerships with community-based organizations that give direct services to qualifying participants – such as nonprofits, school districts, and government agencies – and conducting presentations filled with resources and best ACP outreach practices. Many social service agencies also provide information on the program and assistance in enrolling. Additional outreach efforts, however, could improve Nebraska's enrollment rate.

"It makes it difficult to take classes to upskill and improve my ability to increase my salary. There are not enough programs to provide help with Internet access and the requirements to qualify are very invasive. The Internet is more important than the US Postal service. I feel we need to treat it like that or even at the level of Public Education for all!"

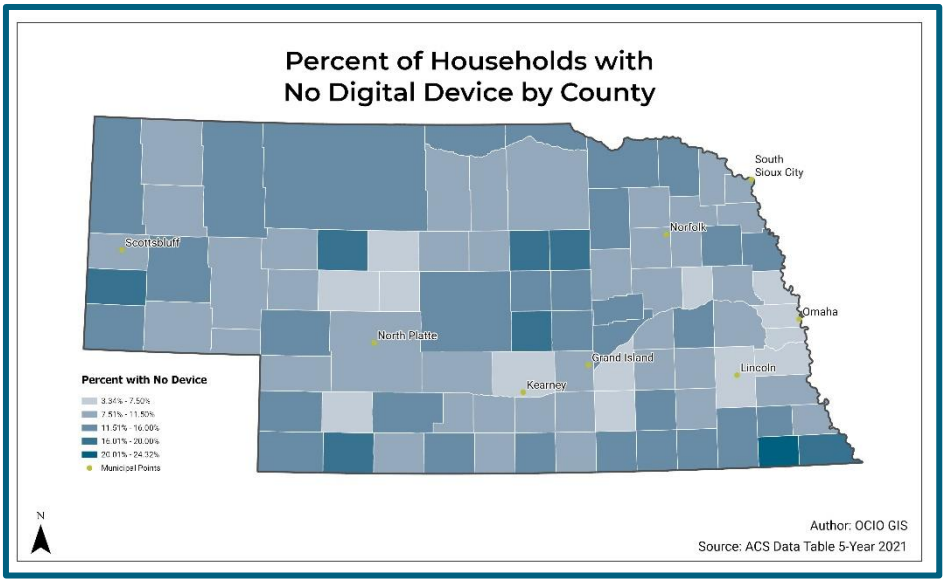
--Nebraska Broadband and Digital Opportunities Outreach Session participant

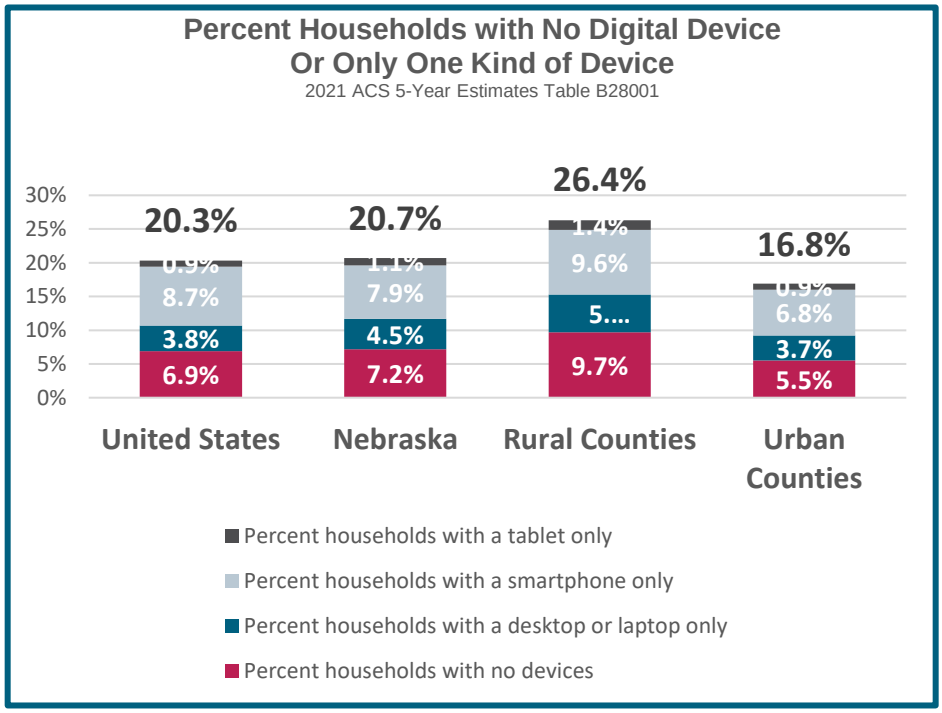
Digital Devices

Approximately 7.2% of Nebraska household have no digital device. As shown in the map to the right, some rural counties have much higher rates of households with no digital device.

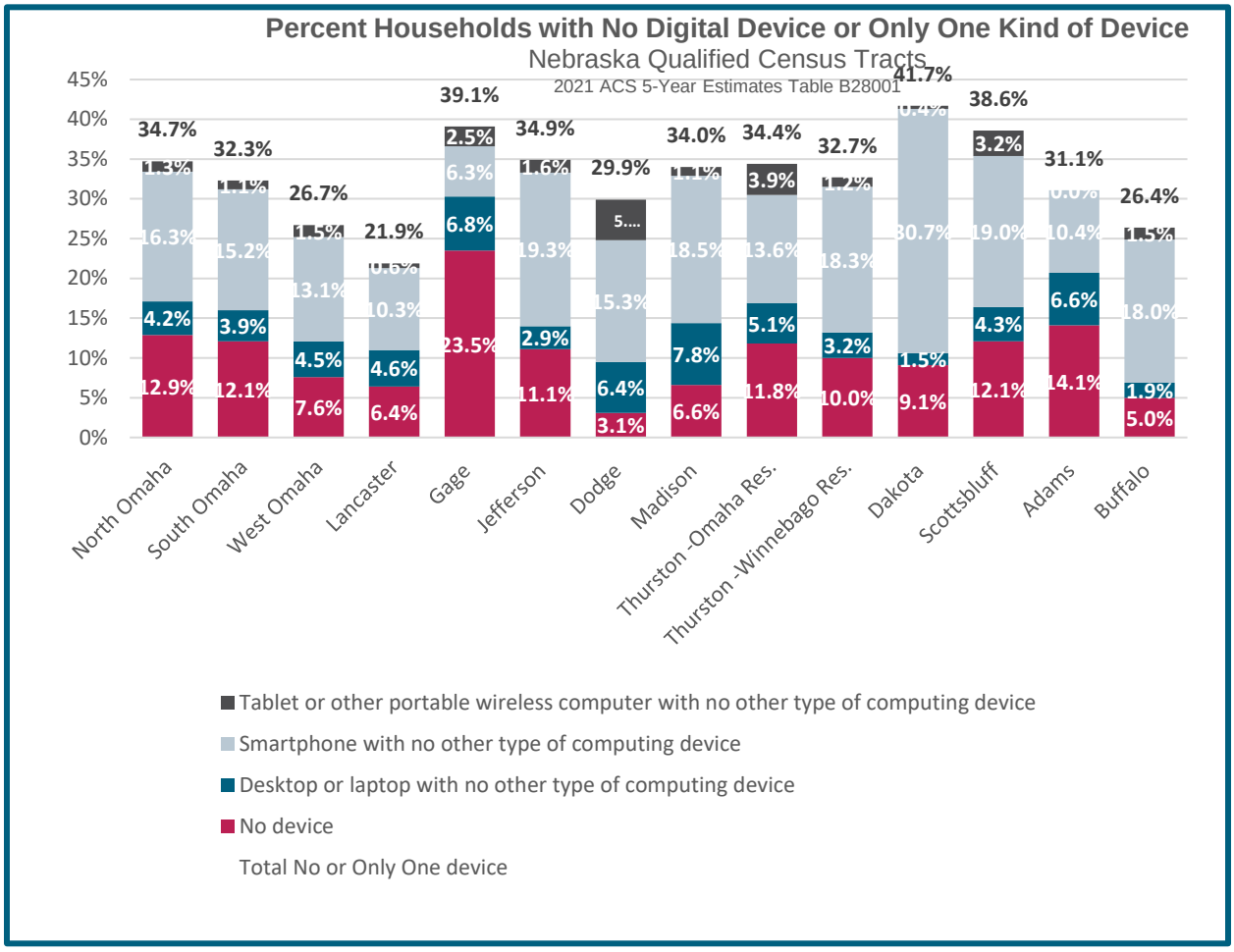
To be fully connected, most individuals need a mobile and large screen device. Approximately 20% of Nebraska households have no digital devices or only one digital device.

Residents of rural areas and qualified census tracts have lower rates of device access. Approximately 26.4% of rural Nebraska residents have either no device or one type of device versus. 16.8% of residents of urban residents.

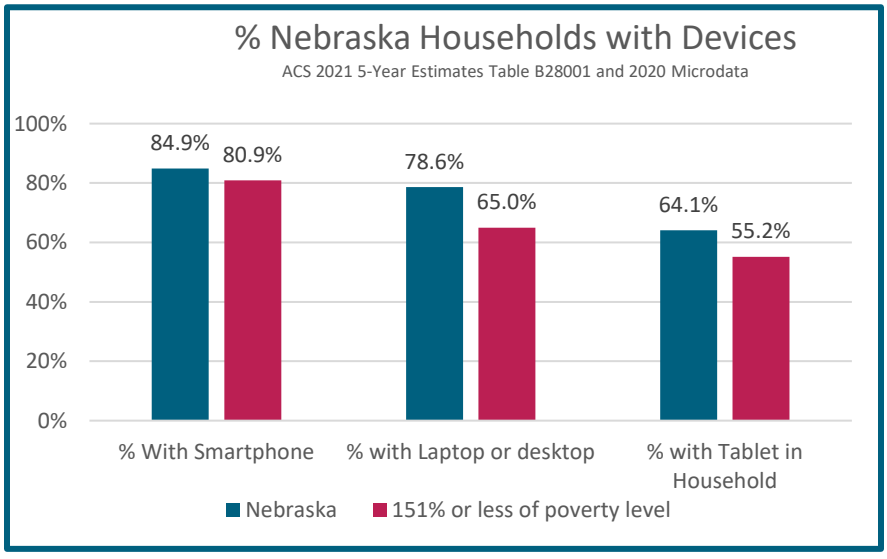


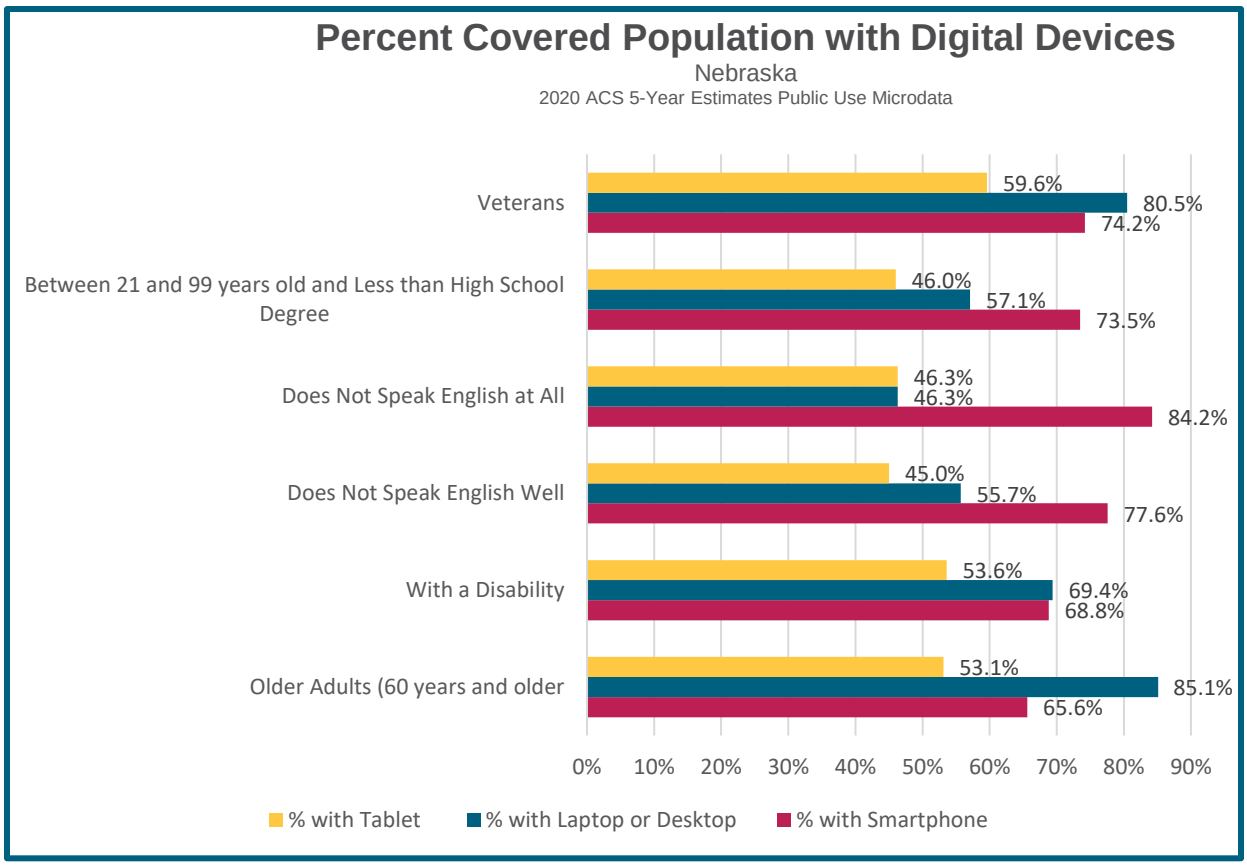


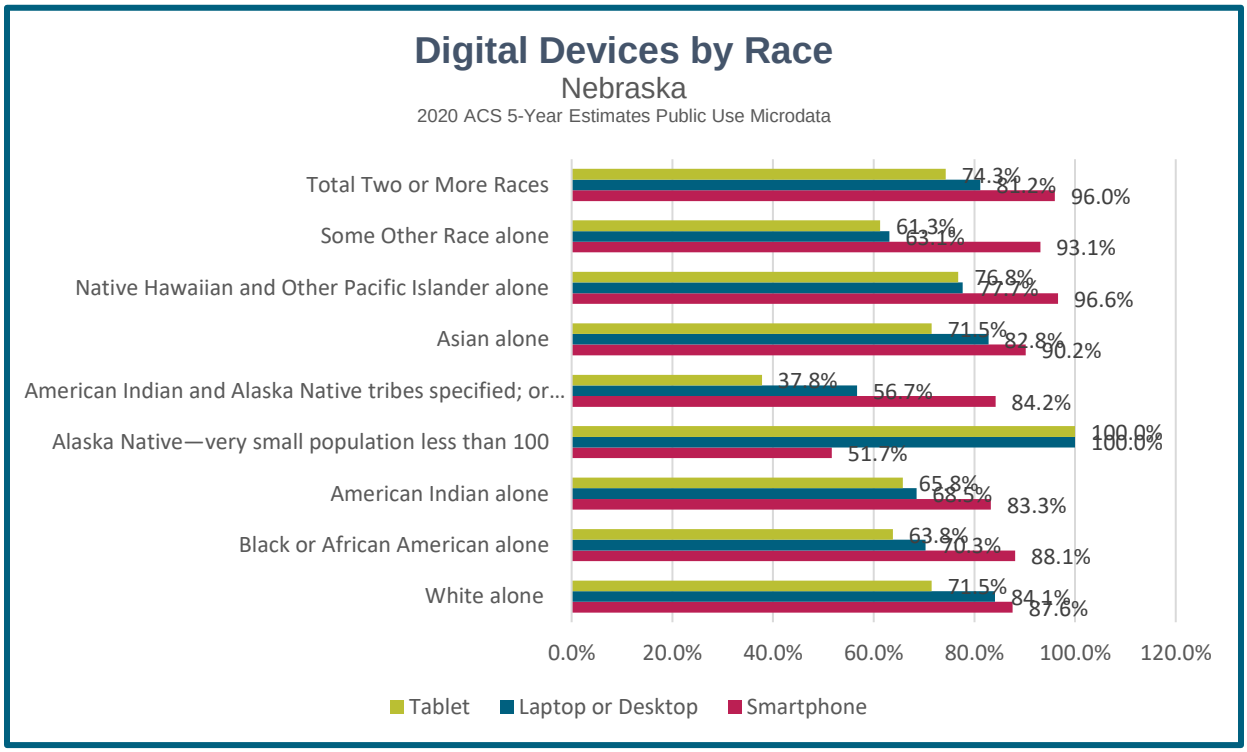
Residents of qualified census tracts in South Sioux City in Dakota County, Beatrice in Gage County, and Scottsbluff in Scotts Bluff County have the lowest rates of device access.



Most Nebraskans as well as most members of covered populations are more likely to have a smartphone than a desktop or laptop computer. Older adults and veterans are more likely to have a desktop or laptop than a smartphone.



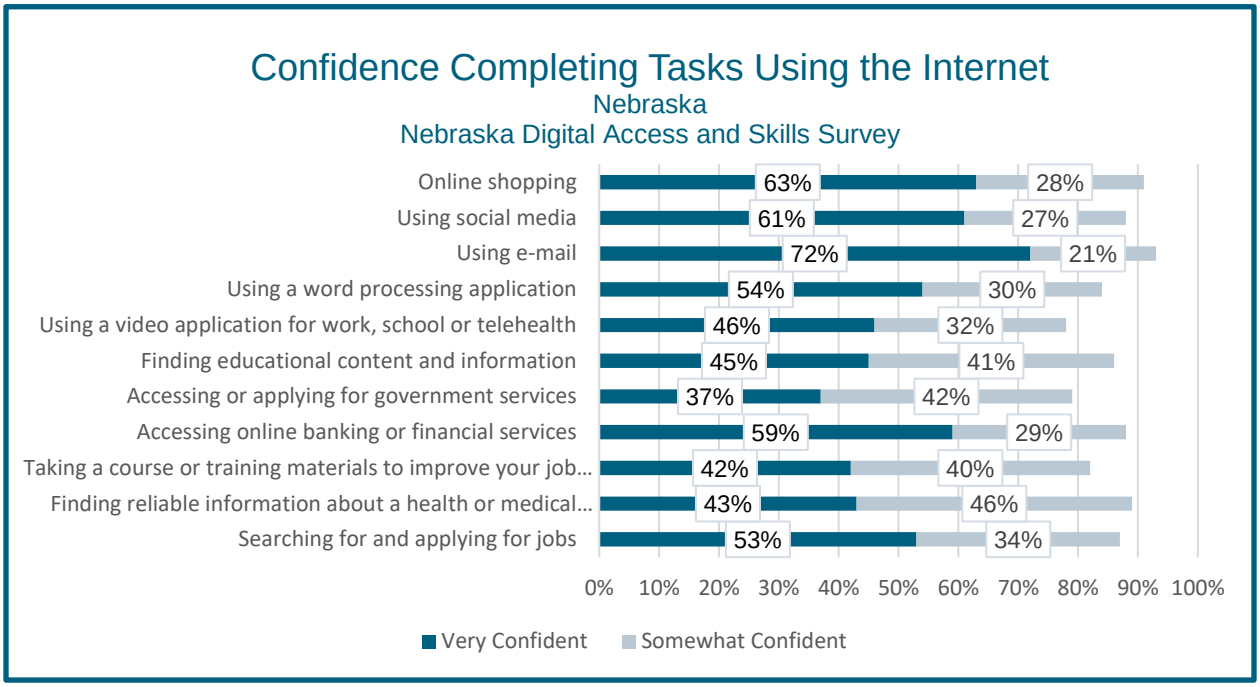

Percent Covered Population with Digital Devices
Nebraska
2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata
Veterans
59.6%
80.5%
74.2%
Between 21 and 99 years old and Less than High School Degree
46.0%
57.1%
73.5%
Does Not Speak English at All
46.3%
46.3%
84.2%
Does Not Speak English Well
45.0%
55.7%
77.6%
With a Disability
53.6%
69.4%
68.8%
Older Adults (60 years and older
53.1%
85.1%
65.6%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
% with Tablet
% with Laptop or Desktop
% with Smartphone


Digital Devices by Race
Nebraska
2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata
Total Two or More Races
74.3%
81.2%
96.0%
Some Other Race alone
61.3%
63.1%
93.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone
76.8%
77.7%
96.6%
Asian alone
71.5%
82.8%
90.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native tribes specified; or...
37.8%
56.7%
84.2%
Alaska Native—very small population less than 100
100.0%
100.0%
51.7%
American Indian alone
65.8%
68.5%
83.3%
Black or African American alone
63.8%
70.3%
88.1%
White alone
71.5%
84.1%
87.6%
0.0%
20.0%
40.0%
60.0%
80.0%
100.0%
120.0%
Tablet
Laptop or Desktop
Smartphone

Digital Skills

Most Nebraskans are very confident or somewhat confident in their ability to complete tasks using the internet. Respondents to the Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey were asked to indicate how confident they were at completing 11 internet tasks. Fifty percent or more respondents were very confident that they could complete six tasks:

- Searching for and applying for jobs
- Accessing online banking or financial services
- Using a word processing application
- Using e-mail
- Using social media
- Online shopping



Members of many covered populations were generally less confident in their ability to complete tasks. Native American respondents were the most confident in their skills with at least 50% of the respondents indicating that they were very confident in their abilities to complete nine tasks.

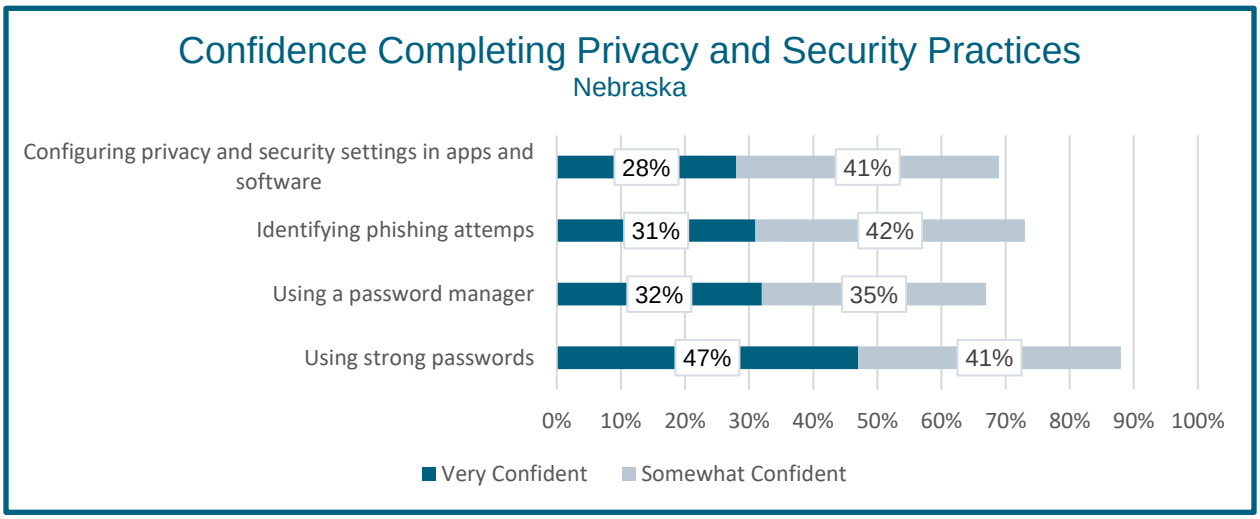
Population	# Tasks 50% or more of the population was very confident they could complete
Nebraska	6
Nonmetropolitan/Rural	6
Income under $25,000	3
65 and older	4
Less than high school degree	2
Veterans	1
Individuals with difficulties	4
Hispanic or Latino	3
Not Hispanic or Latino	6
White only	6
African American Only	4
Asian only	4
Native American Only	9
More than 1 race	4

Privacy and Security

Fewer Nebraskans are very confident in their ability to use privacy and security practices. Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey respondents were asked to indicate how confident they were at using four privacy and security practices:

- Using strong passwords
- Using a password manage
- Identifying phishing attempts
- Configuring privacy and security settings in apps and software

Respondents were most confident in using strong passwords, with 47% feeling very confident.



Most covered populations were less confident in their ability to complete privacy and security practices. Veterans were the least confident in their ability to use strong passwords. Older adults were the least confident in their ability to use a password manager and to configure privacy and security settings. Rural residents were the least confident in their ability to identify phishing attempts.

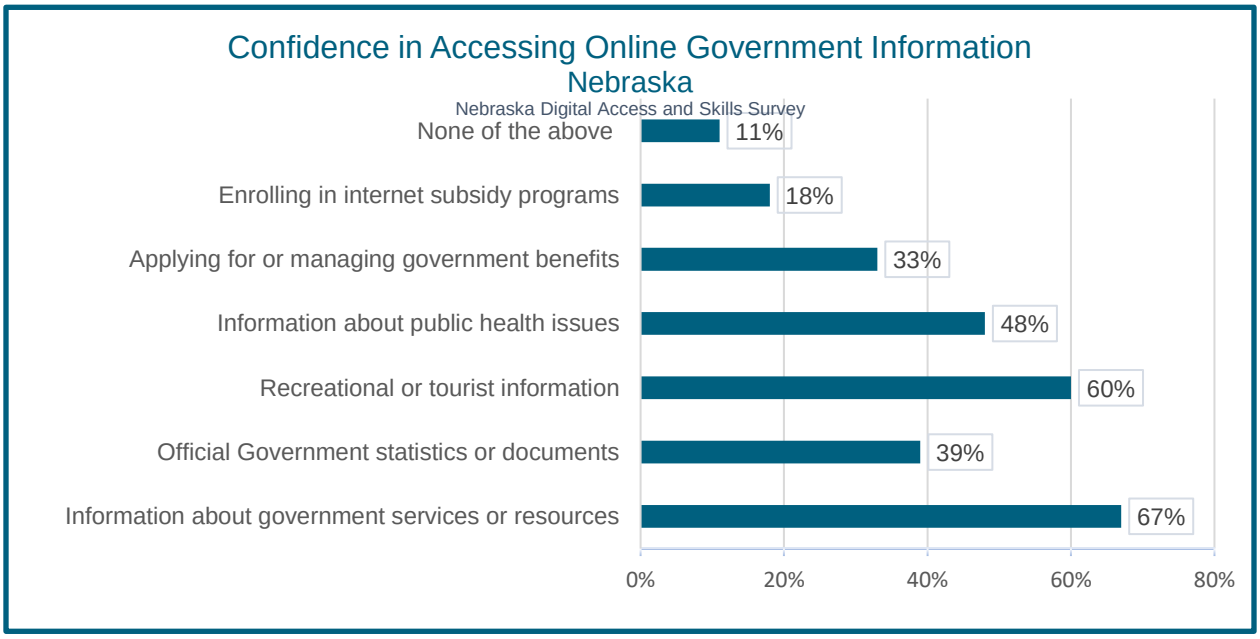
Percent Population Very Confident in the Their Ability to Complete Privacy and Security Practices
Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey

Privacy and Security Practices	Nebraska	Rural	Income under $25,000	65 and older	Less than high school graduate	Veterans	Difficulties Disabilities
Using strong passwords	47%	46%	40%	40%	43%	36%	41%
Using a password manager	32%	34%	28%	18%	35%	31%	30%
Identifying phishing attempts	31%	22%	28%	25%	33%	28%	28%
Configuring privacy and security settings in apps and software	28%	30%	26%	16%	29%	28%	28%

Percent Population Very Confident in the Their Ability to Complete Privacy and Security Practices Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey				
Privacy and Security Practices	**Using strong passwords**	**Using a password manager**	**Identifying phishing attempts**	**Configuring privacy and security settings**
Hispanic or Latino	45%	37%	33%	33%
Not Hispanic or Latino	47%	31%	31%	27%
White only	47%	32%	31%	26%
African American only	43%	37%	41%	41%
Asian only	46%	33%	17%	48%
Native American Only	44%	41%	41%	33%
More than 1 race	34%	38%	23%	29%

Accessibility of Public Online Resources

Approximately two-thirds of Nebraska Digital Access and Skills survey respondents indicated that they were confident in their ability to search for information about government services or resources.



Most covered populations reported less confidence in accessing online government information. Those with less than a high school degree were the least confident.

Confidence in Accessing Online Government Information Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	
Population	**Percent Confident**
Nebraska	67%
Rural	65%
Income under $25,000	49%
65 and older	67%
Less than high school graduate	38%
Veterans	65%
Individuals with Difficulties/Disabilities	60%
Hispanic or Latino	51%
Not Hispanic or Latino	70%
White only	69%
African American only	47%
Asian only	31%
Native American Only	69%
More than 1 race	60%

Smartphone and Computer Software Accessibility

Devices, apps and software programs are improving digital accessibility. Both Android and Apple phones have several accessibility options. Additional accessibility apps are also available, including apps that convert audio to text or text to audio. Video meeting programs such as Zoom are now providing captioning. YouTube videos are also captioned. Commonly used programs such as Word or PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat have tools to test for accessibility and make documents more accessible. Many people may not be aware of these features, however.

Website and PDF Accessibility

Most web pages have accessibility errors. WebAIM annually assesses the top 1 million homepages for accessibility and found that home pages had 50 accessibility errors on average. Government websites had the fewest average number of errors at 28.6. The most common errors were low contrast test (83.6% of home pages), missing alternative text for images (58.2% of pages), empty links (50.1%), missing form input labels (45.9%), empty buttons (27.5%), and missing document language (18.6%).

The accessibility of PDFs may be even more problematic. A survey of over 250 blind and low-vision assistive-technology users in the US found that 67% of the PDFs they encounter were partially or entirely unreadable. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the respondents said this impacted their job or coursework.

In order to assess the accessibility of public online websites, we sampled the websites of school, libraries, municipalities, counties and 21 additional state and social service sites. A total of 149 websites were tested. Six of the libraries and 14 of the municipalities selected did not have websites.

Websites Selected and Tested for Accessibility				
Type of Public Organization	**Total Selected**	**Total Tested**	**# Without Websites**	**% With Websites**
Schools	54	54	0	100%
Libraries	34	28	6	82%
Municipalities	43	29	14	67%
Counties	17	17	0	100%
Additional State and Social Service Sites	21	21	0	100%

Our accessibility testing found that state and social service sites had the highest average number of errors and alerts (61.7), followed by municipalities (54.9), schools (45.6), and libraries (44.5), and counties (41.8). Libraries had the highest average number of accessibility failures for PDFs at 24.3, followed by counties (19.1), state and social services sites (17.9), municipalities (17), and schools (16.7).

Average Number of Websites and PDF Accessibility Errors					
Type of Public Organization	**Website Avg # Errors**	**Website Avg # Contrast Errors**	**Website Avg # Alerts**	**Websites Avg Total Errors and Alerts**	**Avg # of PDF Test Items Failed**
School	8.6	8.5	28.5	45.6	16.7
Libraries	6.9	11.3	26.3	44.5	24.3
Municipalities	9.4	10.4	35.1	54.9	17
Counties	7.5	11.7	22.6	41.8	19.1
Additional State and Social Service Sites	6.5	10	45.2	61.7	17.9
Average of 5 Categories	**7.8**	**10.4**	**31.5**	**49.7**	**19.00**

We also noted if the websites we tested had translations into other languages available. Two-thirds of school websites had translations available, followed by state and social services sites (57.1%). Libraries had the lowest percent of sites with translations available at 17.6%.

Type of Public Organization	**% Websites with Translations Available**
School Websites	66.7%
Libraries	42.9%
Municipalities	31.0%
Counties	17.6%
Additional State and Social Service Sites	57.1%
Average of 5 Categories	**43.1%**

Measurable Objectives

Nebraska				
	Measure	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
	% locations with 100/20 Broadband Available (Served Locations)	86.9% Nebraska Broadband Office Includes locations with enforceable commitments	90%	100%
	% households with internet access at home	90.1% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28002	92%	94%
	% households with one or more digital devices	92.8% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28001	94%	95%
	# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	6 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	7	8
	# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	1	2
	% confident about searching for information about government services or resources	67% Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	69%	71%

Members of the Central Nebraska Economic Development District digital opportunities committee with Congressman Adrian Smith in O'Neill. Congressman Smith spoke after the Broadband and Digital Opportunities listening session.

3.2.1 Covered Population Needs Assessment

Needs and Barriers

Needs	Barriers
Broadband Availability-Fixed	**Lack of Business Case.** Fixed broadband is unavailable in some rural areas of the state due to a lack of business case to deploy broadband. Small, rural carriers are more willing to look at a return on investment over a longer period of time. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas, including areas outside city limits of larger cities and Native Americans living in tribal areas
Broadband Availability-Mobile	**Lack of Business Case.** Mobile broadband is unavailable in some rural areas of the state due to a lack of business case to build out in some rural areas. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and Native Americans living in tribal areas **Limited Grant Funding/Support for Mobile Buildout.** BEAD, Capital Projects, and Nebraska Broadband Bridge funding is focused on fixed broadband deployment. The FCC has established the 5G Fund for Rural America, but it is still in the rule making process. The Nebraska Public Service Commission funds some mobile tower build outs, but the amount of the fund is not large. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and Native Americans living in tribal areas
Broadband Availability for Agriculture	**Limited Grant Funding/Support for Wireless Broadband over Farms and Ranches.** BEAD, Capital Projects, and Nebraska Broadband Bridge funding is focused on fixed broadband deployment. The FCC has established the 5G Fund for Rural America, but it is still in the rule making process. The Nebraska Public Service Commission funds some mobile tower buildouts, but the amount of the fund is not large. Getting coverage over farms and ranches may require building private wireless networks. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and Native Americans living in tribal areas
Broadband Access in Public Places	**Availability of Broadband at Rural Libraries, Senior Centers and Other Facilities.** Not all libraries and senior centers have broadband available**.** • 35% of Nebraska libraries serving communities with populations of less than 2,500 have internet access below 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. • Approximately one-third of multi-purpose senior centers do not provide Wi-Fi for public access. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas **Availability of and Distance to Libraries, Senior Centers and other Facilities.** Not every small community in Nebraska has a library, senior center or community center. One-third of the Central Nebraska Economic Development District's 61 communities do not have a library, community center. Members of covered populations in larger communities may still face barriers to going to libraries, senior centers, and other facilities, due to mobility issues, lack of transportation, or working during the hours these facilities are open. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and all other covered populations

Needs	Barriers
Broadband Affordability	**Mobile and Fixed Broadband is Expensive.** The affordability of broadband service was one of the top barriers identified in outreach sessions. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those with low-incomes are most impacted, but this impacts all covered populations. **Higher Costs in Rural Areas**. Residents of rural areas often pay more for internet service because there are fewer providers and the technologies available such as satellite or fixed wireless tend to be more expensive than cable or fiber broadband. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas **Affordability is relative**. Some rural residents do not see the value of broadband and, therefore, perceive that it is too expensive. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and older adults **Unawareness of ACP and Other Discount Programs**. Many low-income rural residents are not aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program and other programs such as Lifeline. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with low-incomes **Distrust of Internet Providers and Government Programs.** Some individuals may not trust government programs or internet providers. This may limit ACP participation. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with low-incomes, rural residents, members of racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with language barriers **Stigma of Participating in Government Programs.** Some individuals with disabilities and low-incomes may feel that there is stigma associated with participating in government programs. This may limit ACP participation. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with low-incomes, rural residents, older adults
Access to Digital Devices	**Status Quo.** Sociodemographic characteristics of rural residents make them less likely to embrace technology, and computers, in particular. For example, older adults in rural Nebraska may not think that they need a smartphone because their friends don't have smartphones. (Rural Communities and Digital Device Ownership). **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Rural residents, older adults **Affordability of Devices.** Individuals may not be able to afford new devices or to repair older devices. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with low incomes and recently incarcerated individuals but impacts all covered populations **Accessibility of Devices.** Some individuals may need additional assistive technology to utilize digital devices. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with disabilities **Affordability of Assistive Technology.** Assistive technology can make digital devices more accessible for individuals with disabilities. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with disabilities **Need to Raise Awareness of Opportunities of Assistive and Digital Technologies** **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with disabilities

Needs	Barriers
Access to Smart Phones	**Mobile Availability.** Some areas of the state are not well covered by mobile providers. It is hard to justify buying a smart phone and paying for service if you can't get service where you live or work. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Residents of rural areas, but impacts all covered populations
Access to Devices at Public Places	**Availability of and Distance to Libraries, Senior Centers and other Facilities.** Not every small community in Nebraska has a library, senior center or community center. One-third of the Central Nebraska Economic Development District's 61 communities do not have a library, community center. Members of covered populations in larger communities may still face barriers to going to libraries, senior centers, and other facilities, due to mobility issues, lack of transportation, or working during the hours these facilities are open. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and all other covered populations **Availability of Newer Devices at Libraries, Senior Centers and Other Facilities.** • Most libraries have devices, but devices may be older especially in small, rural libraries • Only 30% of multi-purpose senior centers have devices for seniors to use. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas
Access to Retail Device Locations	**Availability of Retail Locations and Distance to Retail Locations.** Rural residents can be an hour or more away from a retail store selling or repairing devices. Members of covered populations in larger communities may still face barriers to going to retail facilities due to mobility issues, lack of transportation, or working during the hours these facilities are open. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and other covered populations
Access to Device Repair Services	**Availability of Device Repair Services.** Rural residents can be an hour or more away from device repair services. Members of covered populations in larger communities may still face barriers to going to device repair services due to mobility issues, lack of transportation, or working during the hours these facilities are open. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and other covered populations **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and other covered populations

Needs	Barriers
Digital Skills	**The Current Digital Skill Level of Covered Populations is a Barrier to Achieving Digital Opportunities** **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Adults over 80 years old may be the subpopulation most challenged with using technology. The populations with the lowest digital skill levels according to the Nebraska Digit Access and Skills population are: • Veterans • Those with less than a high school education • Those with incomes under $25,000 • Hispanic or Latinos • Adults 65 and older • Individuals with difficulties/disabilities • African Americans/Blacks • Those of more than one race **Limited Staff Time and Expertise to Provide Training and Assistance at Libraries, Senior Centers, Community Centers and Other Facilities.** **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Those living in rural areas and other covered population **Individual Barriers and Challenges**. For individuals with disabilities, the use of assistive and digital technologies is unique to the individual. Other covered populations may also face individual barriers and challenges. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with disabilities **Lack of Awareness of Resources.** At outreach sessions, participants were often unfamiliar with available digital skills classes and opportunities. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** All covered populations **Access to Culturally Appropriate Classes and Assistance.** Individuals learn best in an environment in which they are comfortable. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Members of racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with language barriers, individuals with disabilities, recently incarcerated individuals **Individuals and organizations providing services to individuals with disabilities need to better learn to use assistive technology.** For example, staff at medical facilities need to learn how to use digital relay equipment. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with Disabilities **Need to Know How to Use Technology to Access Online Resources.** If individuals lack technology skills, it may be difficult for them to utilize online courses and resources. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Adults 80 years old and over, veterans, those with low-incomes, those with language barriers **Requires More than One Touch.** Technology skill development isn't a one-time event. It requires lifelong learning. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** All covered populations

Needs	Barriers
Knowledge and Use of Privacy and Security Practices	**Few Places to Learn about Privacy and Security Outside Work.** Several participants at outreach sessions commented that they learned their technology skills and privacy and security practices from work. Outside of the workplace, there aren't many places to learn about privacy and security. Individuals with jobs that do not include using digital technologies may not receive security training. Employees working at small businesses are also less likely to receive security training. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Older adults, veterans, rural residents and other covered populations, recently incarcerated individuals **Requires More than One Touch.** Learning privacy and security practices isn't a one-time event. It requires lifelong learning. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Older adults, veterans, those with low incomes, those with language barriers **Lack of Mobile Devices and Consistent Phone Number.** The use of two-factor authentication is becoming more prevalent. Individuals who do not have a consistent mobile phone number and device may have a difficult time using two-factor authentication. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Low-income individuals, recently incarcerated individuals, Veterans, older adults
Accessibility of Online Resources	**Lack of Awareness.** Some rural residents may not be aware of online resources: **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Low-income individuals **Difficult Navigation/Processes.** Some online resources are not easy to navigate, especially for those with disabilities or language barriers. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Low-income individuals **Most Websites and PDFs have accessibility errors**. **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with disabilities **Some government websites do not have translations available.** **Covered Populations Most Impacted:** Individuals with language barriers

Rural residents

Rural residents are Nebraska's largest covered population, making up 36.2% of Nebraska's population.

Key Barriers and Needs

Key barriers and needs include:

- Fixed broadband availability
- Mobile broadband availability
- Wireless broadband availability for agriculture
- Broadband affordability
- Affordability of devices
- Access to device repair services
- Availability of and distance to facilities which offer internet access, device access, and training and support
- Need to improve or keep up on digital skills
- Limited capacity at some rural libraries, senior centers, community centers and other facilities due to inadequate broadband, devices or staff time to provide assistance

Measurable Objectives

Rural Residents

Percent of Nebraska Population: 36.2%

Measure	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
% households with internet access at home	86.5% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28002	88.5%	92%
% households with one or more digital devices	90.3% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28001	92%	95%
# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	6 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	7	8
# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	1	2
% confident about searching for information about government services or resources	65% Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	67%	69%
% Farmers and ranchers using precision ag technologies	55% 2023 USDA Farm and Computer Use Survey	59%	65%

Older adults

Adults 60 years or older are Nebraska's second largest covered population, making up 22.5% of Nebraska's population.

Key Barriers and Needs

Key barriers and needs include:

- Broadband affordability
- Affordability of devices
- Fixed broadband availability
- Mobile broadband availability
- Access to device support services
- Availability of and distance to facilities which offer internet access, device access, and training and support
- Limited capacity at some libraries, senior centers, community centers and other facilities due to inadequate broadband, devices or staff time to provide assistance
- Need to improve or keep up on digital skills
- Lack of training opportunities on privacy and security practices
- Adults 80 years and older may have cognitive, motor, vision or hearing impairments which make it more difficult for them to learn and use digital technologies, including privacy and security practices

Measurable Objectives

Older Adults

Percent of Nebraska Population: 22.5%

Measure	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
% adults 65 and over with an internet subscription	76.0% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table S2802	78%	80%
% adults 65 and older with a laptop or desktop	85.1% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	87%	89%
% adults 65 and older with a smartphone	65.6% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	68%	70%
# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	4 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	5	6
# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	0 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	1	2
% confident about searching for information about government services or resources	67% Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	69%	71%

Members of Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Members of racial or ethnic minorities make up 21.6% of Nebraska's population and are Nebraska's third largest covered population.

Individuals and Percent Population Below Poverty Line By Race and Ethnicity- Nebraska ACS 2022 1 Year Estimate Table S1701		
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	**Individuals Below Poverty Line**	**Percent Below Poverty Line**
White alone	142,821	9.5%
Black or African American alone	25,148	28.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	3,877	20.8%
Asian alone	4,974	10.2%
Some other race alone	12,974	15.4%
Two or more races	25,893	15.1%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	37,749	16.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	133,092	9.1%

Members of racial or ethnic minorities are more likely to be living below the poverty line, with 28.7% of Black or African Americans, 20.8% of American Indians and Alaskan Natives, and 16% of Hispanics living in poverty in Nebraska.

Key Barriers and Needs

Key barriers and needs include:

- Broadband affordability
- Affordability of devices
- Fixed broadband availability
- Mobile broadband availability
- Availability of and distance to facilities which offer internet access, device access, and training and support
- Need to improve or keep up on digital skills
- Lack of culturally appropriate training and support services
- Limited capacity at some libraries, senior centers, community centers and other facilities due to inadequate broadband, devices or staff time to provide assistance

Measurable Objectives

Members of Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Percent of Nebraska Population: 21.6%

	% of households with internet access at home 2021 ACS 5-year Table S2802	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
	White alone	91.1%	93%	95%
	Black or African American alone	87.3%	89%	91%
	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	84.0%	86%	88%
	Asian alone	93.8%	95%	96%
	Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander alone	86.7%	89%	91%
	Some other race alone	89.6%	92%	94%
	Two or more races	93.5%	95%	96%
	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	89.2%	91%	93%
	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	91.4%	93%	95%
	% population with a laptop or desktop 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	**Baseline**	**2026 Target**	**2029 Target**
	White alone	84.1%	86%	88%
	Black or African American alone	70.3%	72%	74%
	American Indian alone	68.5%	705	72%
	American Indian and Alaska Native tribes specified; or American Indian or Alaska Native, not specified and no other races	56.7%	59%	61%
	Asian alone	82.8%	85%	87%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	77.7%	80%	82%
	Some Other Race alone	63.1%	65%	67%
	Total Two or More Races	81.2%	83%	85%
	% population with a smartphone 2020 ACS 5-Year Microdata	**Baseline**	**2026 Target**	**2029 Target**
	White alone	87.6%	90%	92%
	Black or African American alone	88.1%	90%	92%
	American Indian alone	83.3%	85%	87%
	American Indian and Alaska Native tribes specified; or American Indian or Alaska Native, not specified and no other races	84.2%	86%	88%
	Asian alone	90.2%	92%	94%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	96.6%	97%	97%
	Some Other Race alone	93.1%	94%	95%
	Total Two or More Races	96.0%	97%	97%
	# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 11 skills) Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**Baseline**	**2026 Target**	**2029 Target**

	Not Hispanic or Latino	6	7	8
	White only	6	7	8
	African American Only	4	5	6
	Asian only	4	5	6
	Hispanic or Latino	3	4	5
	Native American Only	9	9	9
	More than 1 race	3	4	5
	**# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (out of 4 skills)** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**Baseline**	**2026 Target**	**2029 Target**
	Hispanic or Latino	0	1	2
	Not Hispanic or Latino	0	1	2
	White only	0	1	2
	African American Only	0	1	2
	Asian only	0	1	2
	Native American Only	0	1	2
	More than 1 race	0	1	2
	**% confident about searching for information about government services or resources** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**Baseline**	**2026 Target**	**2029 Target**
	Hispanic or Latino	51%	53%	55%
	Not Hispanic or Latino	70%	72%%	74%
	White only	69%	71%	73%
	African American Only	47%	49%	51%
	Asian only	31%	33%	35%
	Native American Only	69%	71%	73%
	More than 1 race	60%	62%	64%

Individuals with Low Incomes

Members of households at 150% or less of the federal poverty make up 18.1% of Nebraska's population.

Key Barriers and Needs

Key barriers and needs include:

- Broadband affordability
- Affordability of devices
- Fixed broadband availability
- Mobile broadband availability
- Access to device support services
- Availability of and distance to facilities which offer internet access, device access, and training and support
- Need to improve or keep up on digital skills
- Lack of training and support services
- Limited capacity at some libraries, senior centers, community centers and other facilities due to inadequate broadband, devices or staff time to provide assistance

Measurable Objectives

Members of Low-Income Households

Percent of Nebraska Population: 18.1%

Measure	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
% of households with income less than $35,000 have a broadband subscription	71.6% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28004	74%	76%
% of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program	31% Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Tracker (August 2023)	38%	45%
% of households at 150% or less of poverty level with a laptop or desktop	65% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	67%	69%
% of households at 150% or less of poverty level with a smartphone	80.9% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	83%	85%
# of digital skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 are very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	5 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	6	7
# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of respondents with household income under $25,000 (are very confident they can complete out of 4 skills)	0 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	1	2
% confident about searching for information about government services or resources	49% Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	51%	53%

Individuals with Language Barriers

Individuals with language barriers make up 14.5% of Nebraskan and include those with low literacy levels and English language learners.

Key Barriers and Needs

Key barriers and needs include:

- Broadband affordability
- Affordability of devices
- Fixed broadband availability
- Mobile broadband availability
- Access to device support services
- Availability of and distance to facilities which offer internet access, device access, and training and support
- Need to improve or keep up on digital skills
- Lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate training and support services
- Limited capacity at some libraries, senior centers, community centers and other facilities due to inadequate broadband, devices or staff time to provide assistance

Measurable Objectives

Individuals with Language Barriers
Percent of Nebraska Population: 14.5%%

Measure	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
% of adults with less than a high school degree with a broadband subscription at home	75.9% 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table S2802	78%	80%
% who speak English not well with a broadband internet subscription at home	78.8% 2020 ACS Microdata	81%	83%
% who speak English not at all with a broadband internet subscription at home	83.7% 2020 ACS Microdata	86%	88%
% of adults with less than a high school degree with a desktop or laptop computer in household	57.1% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	59%	61%
% who speaks English not well with a desktop or laptop computer in household	55.7% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	58%	60%
% who speak English not at all with a desktop or laptop computer in household	46.3% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	48%	50%
% of adults with less than a high school degree with a smartphone in household	73.5% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	75%	77%
% who speak English not well with a smartphone in household	77.6% 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	80%	82%

	% who speak English not at all with a smartphone in household	**84.2%** 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	**86%**	**88%**
	# of digital skills 50% or more of populations (those with less than a high school degree) is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	**2** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**3**	**4**
	# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population (those with less than a high school degree) is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	**0** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**1**	**2**
	%population (those with less than a high school degree) are confident about searching for information about government services or resources	**38%** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**40%**	**42%**

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities make up 12.6% of Nebraska's population or an estimated 226,316 individuals. Mobility disabilities are the most prevalent (5.3%), followed by cognitive disabilities (4.2%), hearing disabilities (3.8%), independent living disabilities (3.5%), vision disabilities (2.0%), and self-care disabilities (1.8%) (2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates from ADA-PARC).Individuals may have more than one disability and vary in the severity of their disabilities. Although members of all covered populations have differences, those with disabilities have a greater range of abilities and needs.

White Nebraskans have a higher prevalence of disabilities with 10.2% having a disability. Over 85% of those with disabilities in Nebraska are White. As adults age, they are more likely to have a disability. Nearly one-third (32.4%) of Nebraskans 65 and older have a disability. Nebraskans with disabilities are more likely to live below the poverty line (22.9% versus. 8.8%). They also have lower median incomes ($26,147 versus. $38,539). (2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates from ADA-PARC)

In addition to the 12.6% of Nebraskans with a disability, there are likely many other Nebraskans who may benefit from accessibility accommodations. Over 50% of Nebraskans reported having difficulties seeing, hearing walking, remembering or concentrating, taking care of themselves, and communicating in the Nebraska Digital Access and Skills survey.

Key Barriers and Needs

Key barriers and needs include:

- Broadband affordability
- Affordability of devices
- Fixed broadband availability
- Mobile broadband availability
- Individual barriers and challenges-- The use of assistive and digital technologies is unique to the individual.
- Need to raise awareness of opportunities of assistive and digital technologies.
- Individuals and organizations providing services to individuals with disabilities need to better learn to use assistive technology.
- Access to device support services
- Many websites and PDFs have accessibility errors.

Measurable Objectives

Individuals with Disabilities Percent of Nebraska Population: 12.6%				
	Measure	**Baseline**	**2026 Target**	**2029 Target**
	% of individuals with a disability with internet access at home	**80.1%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table S2802	**82%**	**84%**
	% of individuals with a disability with a desktop or laptop in household	**69.4%** 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	**71%**	**73%**
	% of individuals with a disability with a smartphone in household	**68.8%** 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	**71%**	**73%**
	# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)	**4** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**5**	**6**
	# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of the population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)	**0** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**1**	**2**
	% confident about searching for information about government services or resources	**60%** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**62%**	**64%**

Veterans

Veterans make up 5.8% of Nebraska's population.Twenty-six percent of Nebraska veterans are age 75 and over versus 9.3% of Nebraska's population. Nebraska veterans are less likely to be living in poverty (6.3% versus 10.5% of Nebraskans) and nearly twice as likely to be disabled (29.6% versus 15.% of Nebraskans).

Key Barriers and Needs

Key barriers and needs include:

- Broadband affordability
- Affordability of devices
- Fixed broadband availability
- Mobile broadband availability
- Access to device support services
- Availability of and distance to facilities which offer internet access, device access, and training and support
- Limited capacity at some libraries, senior centers, community centers and other facilities due to inadequate broadband, devices or staff time to provide assistance
- Need to improve or keep up on digital skills
- Lack of training opportunities on privacy and security practices
- Adults 80 years and older may have cognitive, motor, vision or hearing impairments which make it more difficult for them to learn and use digital technologies including privacy and security practices.
- Veterans with disabilities may have individual barriers and challenges. The use of assistive and digital technologies is unique to the individual.

Measurable Objectives

Veterans Percent of Nebraska Population: 5.8%%				
	Measure	**Baseline**	**2026 Target**	**2029 Target**
	**% of veterans with an internet access at home**	**76.0%** 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Table B28002	**78%**	**80%**
	**% of veterans with desktop or laptop in household**	**80.5%** 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	**83%**	**85%**
	**% of veterans with a smartphone in household**	**59.6%** 2020 ACS 5-year estimates micro data	**62%**	**64%**
	**# of digital skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 11 skills)**	**1** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**2**	**3**
	**# of digital privacy and security skills 50% or more of population is very confident they can complete (out of 4 skills)**	**0** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**1**	**2**
	**% confident about searching for information about government services or resources**	**65%** Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey	**67%**	**69%**

Incarcerated Individuals

Incarcerated individuals make up 0.5% of Nebraska' population with an average daily population of 5,516 people in Nebraska Department of Correctional Services facilities with an additional 41 housed in contracted county jails in FY2022.

Those currently incarcerated have limited access to the internet because of security concerns. Inmates do have access to a tablet while they are incarcerated.

The Nebraska Department of Corrections is starting to give more access to employment websites and housing websites in Lincoln Community Corrections Centers with staff to oversee individuals.

The Department of Correctional Services has awarded Vocational and Life Skills grants to organizations that work with incarcerated individuals to improve their jobs skills and to help them reenter society. Inmates have access to the internet at those organizations. Several of these organizations purchase prepaid phone for inmates to have and use upon their release. Several of the Vocational and Life Skills programs offer training and assistance in using smartphones and computers.

Measurable Objectives

Incarcerated Individuals
Percent of Nebraska Population: 0.5 %%

Measure	Baseline	2026 Target	2029 Target
 TBD			
 TBD			
 TBD			
 TBD			
 TBD			

3.2.2 Broadband Adoption Needs Assessment

Sections 3.2. and 3.2.1 discussed barriers to broadband adoption faced by the state and covered populations. The primary barriers include:

- Broadband availability in rural areas of the state including just outside city limits of larger communities
- Affordability of broadband subscriptions
- Affordability of devices
- Need for better digital skills and technical assistance
- Need to improve or expand the capacity of libraries, senior centers, community centers and other organizations to provide broadband access, access to device, and training and assistance
- Need for increased knowledge and use of privacy and security practices

Telehealth and precision agriculture are two applications which utilize broadband technologies and are in relatively early stages of adoption. The increased use of these technologies could benefit many Nebraskans.

Telehealth

The use of telehealth exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the use of telehealth remains above pre-pandemic levels, its use has decreased since the height of the pandemic.

The 2021 NTIA Internet Use found that 49.2% of Nebraskans access health records online and 45.8% research medical conditions online. Approximately 40% of Nebraskans communicate with a doctor using the internet.

Use of Health-Related Internet Activities by Nebraskans
2021 NTIA Internet Use Survey/CPS Computer and Internet Use Supplement

Health-Related Internet Activity	%
Use electronic health monitoring	5.7%
Communicate with a doctor using the Internet	40.1%
Access health records online	49.2%
Research health information online	45.8%

The use of telehealth technologies could improve access to care in areas of the state which face shortages of health care professionals. The increased use of telehealth technologies such as remote patient monitoring could also improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

Barriers include:

- Patients who do not have broadband access in their homes due to availability, affordability or other reasons
- Patients who lack digital devices or the digital skills necessary to use telehealth technologies
- Staffing at medical clinics and hospitals to manage remote monitoring or other telehealth applications
- Cost of telehealth technologies

Precision Agriculture

Agriculture is a significant part of Nebraska's economy. The market value of crops and livestock produced in Nebraska in 2017 was $21,983,430,000 with 8.4% of Nebraska farms and ranchers producing over $1 million in crops and livestock. Nebraska ranks 4th in the total market value of agricultural products sold, 3rd in the total market value of grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas, and 3rd in the total market value of livestock, poultry and products. (USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture)

Fully adopting next generation precision agriculture technologies in the United States would result in potential annual gross benefits of up to $13 billion for row crops and $20.6 billion for livestock and dairy

with over a third of these benefits dependent on broadband**.** (USDA A Case for Rural Broadband)

Benefits of precision agriculture extend beyond farms and ranches. Precision agriculture and connectivity to the last acre is essential for water quality, better resource management of water, food safety, alleviating labor shortages, reducing the carbon footprint, and reducing food loss at the farm level. Improving connectivity for farms and ranches could also improve connectivity for other services in rural areas, including telehealth and emergency response.

Nebraska ranks second in the use of precision ag technologies. In 2023, 55% of Nebraska farmers and ranchers reported using precision ag technologies, up from 51% in 2021(USDA Technology Use).

Internet use and smart phone usage by Nebraska farmers and ranchers is increasing.

- 85% of Nebraska farmers and ranchers own or use a smart phone up from 80% in 2021.
- 90% of Nebraska farms have internet access, up from 85% in 2021.
- 77% of Nebraska farmers own or use a desktop or laptop computer up from 74% in 2021. (USDA Technology Use)

Barriers include:

- The availability of fixed broadband to farm and ranch headquarters and the availability of wireless broadband over farms and ranches
- The digital skills of some farmers and ranchers—especially older farmers and ranchers
- The cost of devices and equipment

Additionally, legal and technical issues—including data ownership and portability, right to repair, and technical standards and interoperability—may impede the full adoption of next generation precision agriculture technologies. Industry efforts to address these issues would likely accelerate the adoption of precision agriculture technologies.

As farmers and ranchers are increasing their reliance upon next generation precision farming applications, the risk of cyberattacks is also increasing**.** Food processors are also at risk as the 2021 ransomware attack on meatpacker JBS demonstrated. Industry-wide efforts to increase the security of next generation precision farming technologies and the industrial control systems used in food production will likely be needed to improve the cybersecurity of agriculture and the food industry. Small farms and ranches may be especially vulnerable because they do not employ full-time IT professionals and may be less likely to follow cybersecurity best practices.

3.2.3 Broadband Affordability Needs Assessment

Affordability of monthly broadband costs is a major barrier to increased broadband adoption in Nebraska. Just over one-half of the respondents to the Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey pay between $40 and $80 per month for their internet service, excluding the costs of any other services in their bundle. Thirteen percent pay $100 or more. Many respondents (41%) report that it is very or somewhat difficult to fit their monthly internet bill into their household's budget.

Need to Increase Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Enrollment. The Affordable Connectivity Program is a key component of Nebraska's strategy for addressing broadband affordability. Nebraska's enrollment rate of 31% is below the U.S. rate of 39% as of August 2023. Barriers to increasing ACP enrollment include:

- Lack of awareness of the program
- Distrust of internet providers and government programs
- Difficulty or perceived difficulty of enrolling
- Perceived stigma of participating in assistance programs

Building social capital and working with trusted community partners can help address these barriers.

Need for Continued Funding of ACP. Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program is expected to be exhausted in April 2024 unless Congress reappropriates funding for the program.

Need for Greater Broadband Deployment. Broadband deployment funded through BEAD and other programs will bring additional internet options to many areas that may be more affordable than satellite or unlicensed fixed wireless internet services. Additionally, several fiber providers are overbuilding in many Nebraska communities including the Omaha area. The additional competition may result in lower rates in some communities.

Need to Improve the Capacity of Libraries, Senior Centers, and Other Organizations. These organizations are key community partners in providing internet and computer access to students and the general public as well as assistance with technology. However, not all of these facilities currently offer high-speed broadband connectivity to the public:

- 35% of Nebraska libraries do not have fiber connectivity.
- Approximately one-third of Nebraska senior centers do not provide Wi-Fi for public use.

Limited staff time, inadequate broadband service, outdated networking, and lack of access to technical support are barriers that limit the ability of small libraries, senior centers and community centers to participate in digital inclusion activities.

Amy Sapp from the Panhandle Area Development District, Taylor Provost from the West Central Nebraska Development District, Amber Ross from the Central Nebraska Economic Development District, and Anne Byers from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission/Office of the CIO participate in a panel discussion on regional digital opportunities plans.

4 Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy

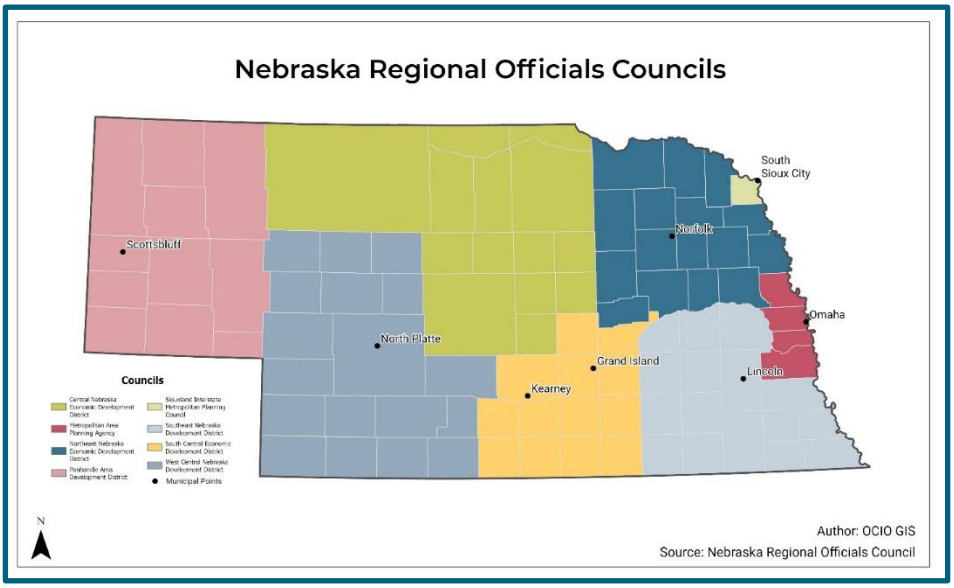
Sixty-five representatives of regional digital opportunities committees and key stakeholders attended the State Digital Opportunities Workshop on August 8, 2023 in Kearney.

Nebraska's coordination and outreach strategy includes the following components:

- The development of regional plans by the state's economic development districts
- 14 webinars featuring 27 speakers
- 26 outreach sessions across Nebraska engaging 309 participants
- 4 Tribal consultations
- State Planning Workshop with 65 representatives of regional digital opportunities committees and key stakeholders
- 4 focus groups of 60 members of covered populations conducted by the UNO Center for Public Affairs Research and the Department of Gerontology
- The Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey of over 1,500 Nebraskans conducted by the University of Nebraska
- Meetings with key stakeholders
- Coordination with BEAD Program
- 30-day comment period on the draft digital opportunities plan, including at least three public comment sessions

Development of Regional Plans

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission/Office of the CIO contracted with the state's economic development districts to develop regional digital opportunities plans. A map of the economic development districts is shown to the right.



Economic development districts recruited representatives of covered populations and key stakeholders to participate in regional committees. The development of regional planning committees helped build a better understanding of digital equity and opportunities among regional stakeholders and community leaders. By building capacity and forging relationships with stakeholders within regions, regional and local entities will be better prepared to implement projects which enable access and use of technology by covered populations. Collectively, the regional digital opportunities committees collaborated with 463 organizations.

Organizations with which Regional Digital Opportunities Committees Collaborated	
Civil Rights Organizations	3
Community Anchor Institutions	74
County or Municipal Governments	117
Economic Development Organization	12
Health or Telehealth Organizations	5
Economic Development Organizations	31
Health or Telehealth Organization	10
Hispanic-Serving Institution	1
Indian Tribe, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian	2
Industry Representative or Association	48
Institutions of Higher Education	9
Local Education Agency	20
Nonprofit Organizations	25

Organizations that Represent Covered	74
Other	27
Predominantly Black Institutions	1
Public Housing Authority	3
Workforce Development Organization	1
Total	**463**

Shana Knutson from the Nebraska Public Service Commission speaks to attendees at the Broadband and Digital Opportunities Outreach Session in Sidney.

Webinars

Fourteen webinars were held featuring 27 speakers.

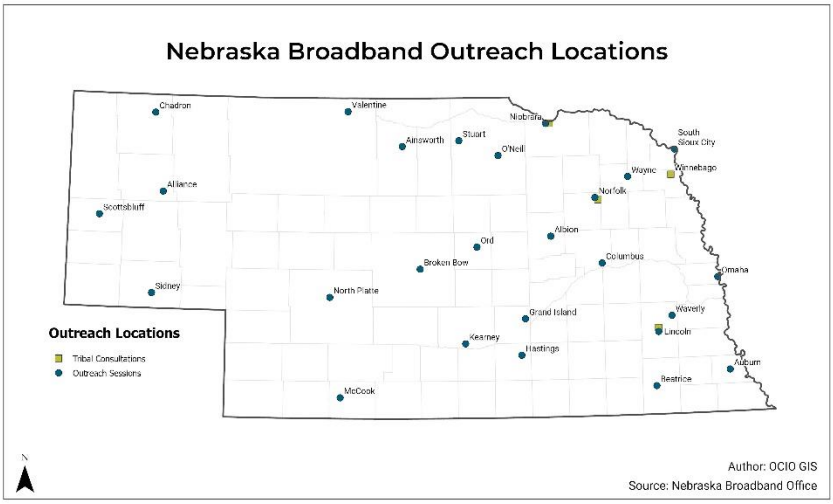
Digital Opportunities Webinars	
Libraries as Digital Equity Partners Wednesday, January 18 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Holly Woldt, Nebraska Library Commission • Sam Shaw, Nebraska Library Commission • Denise Harders, Central Plains Library System • Amanda Sweet, Nebraska Library Commission
Digital Equity Needs of Older Adults & Resources Wednesday, January 25 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Jina Ragland, AARP Nebraska • Cynthia Brammeier, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services State Unit on Aging • Carla Frase, Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging
Digital Equity Benchmark Data and Precision Ag Wednesday, Feb. 1 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Don Linquist, Linquist Technologies • Anne Byers, Nebraska Information Technology Commission/OCIO
Access to Digital Devices Wednesday, Feb. 15 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Brian Whitacre, Oklahoma State University • Beverly Lahlum Taylor, Digital Express, Metropolitan Community College
Broadband Availability, Funding & Mapping Wednesday, Feb. 22 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Cullen Robbins, Nebraska Public Service Commission
Makerspaces and Digital Equity Organizations Wednesday, March 8 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Michael Sauers, Do Space • David Martin, Nebraska Innovation Studio • Kristine Flyinghawk, Center for Rural Affairs
STEM and Technology Workforce Development Wednesday, March. 15 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Shonna Dorsey, Nebraska Tech Collaborative • Alan Wang, Prairie STEM • Kandace Miller, AIM Institute
Affordable Connectivity Program Wednesday, March. 22 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Anthony Butler, FCC • Jenny Miller, Education SuperHighway
Digital Opportunities Webinars	
Online Privacy and Security Thursday, June 22 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speaker:** • Ryan Sothan, Nebraska Attorney General's Office
Individuals with Disabilities—Common Vision Conditions Wednesday, July 12 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speaker:** • Molly Wuebker, OTD, OTR/L, Professional Affiliate AIA – Iowa,Iowa ADA Liaison | Great Plains ADA Center
State Disability Organizations and Resources Thursday, July 13 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speakers:** • Bradley A. Meurrens, Disability Rights Nebraska • Michael J. Elsken, Disability Rights Nebraska

	• Arlene Garcia Gunderson, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing • Carlos Servan, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired • Tobias Orr, Assistive Technology Partnership
Individuals with Disabilities—Digital Accessibility Practices for Hearing Wednesday, July 19 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speaker:** Molly Wuebker, OTD, OTR/L, Professional Affiliate AIA - Iowa Iowa ADA Liaison | Great Plains ADA Center
Individuals with Disabilities—Digital Accessibility Practices for Motor Wednesday, July 20 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speaker:** Molly Wuebker, OTD, OTR/L, Professional Affiliate AIA - Iowa Iowa ADA Liaison | Great Plains ADA Center
Individuals with Disabilities—General Digital Accessibility Thursday, July 27 11:00 a.m. CT	**Speaker:** Molly Wuebker, OTD, OTR/L, Professional Affiliate AIA - Iowa Iowa ADA Liaison | Great Plains ADA Center

Patrick Redmond, Deputy Broadband Director, Nebraska Broadband Office gives an update on the BEAD program to participants at the South Sioux City outreach session on May 31, 2024. Photo by Anne Byers.

Outreach Sessions and Tribal Consultations

In cooperation with the BEAD Program, 26 outreach sessions were held across Nebraska, engaging 309 participants. A map of the outreach sessions and four tribal consultations is shown to the right.



Broadband and Digital Equity Outreach Sessions and Number of Attendees		
Location	**Date**	**Number of Attendees**
Grand Island, Nebraska Extension Hall County	April 19	17
Niobrara, Niobrara Village Fire Hall	April 26	12
Norfolk, Norfolk Public Library	April 26	9
Valentine, Mid Plains Community College	May 1	9
Ainsworth, the Connection	May 2	12
Stuart, Stuart Auditorium	May 2	11
O'Neill, Evergreen Assisted Living	May 3	28
Columbus, Central Community College	May 3	4
Sidney, Cheyenne County Community Center	May 8	7
Scottsbluff, Guadalupe Center	May 9	13
Chadron, Chadron State College	May 9	13
Alliance, Knight Museum	May 10	6
Ord, Ord Learning Center	May 11	15
Albion, Cornerstone Bank	May 15	13
Auburn, Auburn Council Chambers	May 16	19
Wayne, Community Activity Center	May 17	13
Hastings, Hastings Public Library	May 24	12
Beatrice, Southeast Community College	May 30	10
Waverly, Waverly Community Foundation Community Center	May 31	9
Kearney, Kearney Public Library	June 8	7
North Platte, Harvest Christian Fellowship	June 13	5
McCook, Public Safety Center	June 14	5
Broken Bow, Broken Bow Public Library	June 21	8
South Sioux City, Marriott Riverfront	June 29	12
Session Lincoln, NDOT Auditorium	July 11	17
Omaha, NDOT State Operations Center	July 12	23
Total Attendees		**309**

In addition, four Tribal Consultations were held. The dates and locations of the consultations are shown below.

March 24	1:00	Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Ponca Tribal Transit Facility, Norfolk
March 31	10:00	Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, Tribal Council Chambers, Winnebago
April 11	1:00	Santee Sioux Nation, Tribal Council Headquarters and Museum, Niobrara
April 21`	10:00	Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Atrium 7th floor, Lincoln

State Planning Workshop

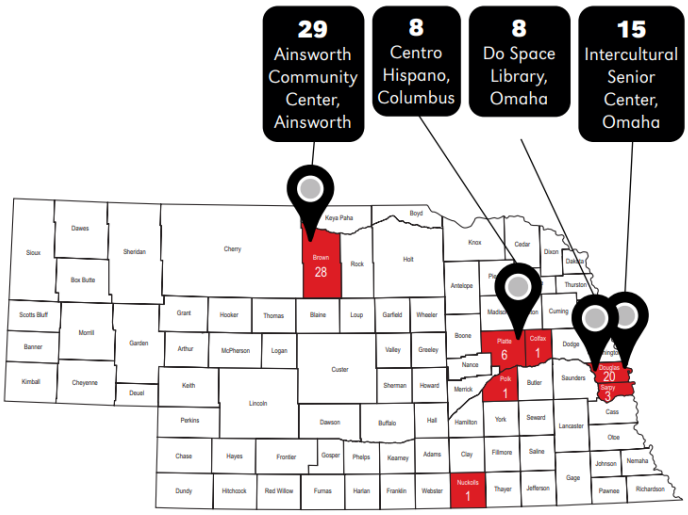
Sixty-five representatives of regional digital opportunities committees and key stakeholders attended the State Digital Opportunities Workshop on August 8, 2023 in Kearney. The Nebraska Broadband Director, Patrick Haggerty, welcomed participants and gave an update on BEAD and the Broadband Office. A panel of representatives from digital planning committees shared information from regional plans. Small group discussions focused on addressing broadband subscription and affordability, digital skills, digital devices, privacy and security and accessibility of online resources. A second round of small group discussions focused on the needs of covered populations.

Vicki Quaites-Ferris shares information at the State Digital Opportunities Planning Workshop. Photo by Clint Mangan.

Focus Groups

The UNO Center for Public Affairs Research and the Department of Gerontology conducted four focus groups of covered populations. A total of 60 individuals participated in the focus groups which were held at the Ainsworth Community Center in Ainsworth, Centro Hispano in Columbus, Do Space in Omaha, and the Intercultural Senior Center in Omaha. The map to the right shows the locations and number of participants.

Number of Participants at each Focus Group Location and Counties of Residence



Digital Access and Skills Survey

University of Nebraska-Lincoln surveyed over 1,500 Nebraskans about their digital access and skills, providing valuable benchmark data for the state.

Library Outreach and Engagement

The Nebraska Library Commission has engaged libraries throughout the planning process. Data from the Public Library Survey was used to provide information for the state asset map. A supplemental survey of libraries on their digital opportunities programming and needs provided additional information and helped Library Commission staff to develop strategies to better meet the needs of libraries. Staff traveled to regional library system meetings to give updates on the grant and to meet with library directors. Staff have also reached out to all libraries without fiber connections to encourage them to utilize the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program.

Maria Downer, director of the Butler Memorial Library in Cambridge, shows a project made in the library's makerspace. Photo by Anne Byers.

Organizations with which the Nebraska Digital Equity Team Collaborated

The Nebraska Digital Equity planning team collaborated with over 700 organizations. The following table lists the number of organizations by type. A complete list is included in the appendix.

Organizations with which Nebraska Digital Equity Team Collaborated	
Civil Rights Organizations	4
Community Anchor Institutions	335
County or Municipal Governments	116
Economic Development Organization	27
Foundation	1
Health or Telehealth Organization	16
Hispanic-Serving Institution	1
Indian Tribe, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian Organization	6
Industry Representative or Association	45
Institutions of Higher Education	15
Local Education Agency	20
Nonprofit Organizations	33
Organizations that Represent Covered Populations	61
Other	52
Predominantly Black Institutions	1
Public Housing Authority	4
Workforce Development Organization	1
Total	**738**

Coordination and Outreach Strategy for Public Comment and Ongoing Engagement

The Nebraska Broadband Office is assisting in organizing public comment sessions. Six in-person and virtual public comment sessions have been scheduled for the general public and other groups. Additional sessions will be scheduled upon request.

General Public-Virtual
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
10:00 AM CT to 11:00 AM CT

General Public-Virtual
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
2:00 PM CT to 3:00 PM CT

Nebraska Information Technology Commission Community Council
Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023
8:30 AM CT-10:00 AM CT

Nebraska Information Technology Commission eHealth Council
Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023
9:30 AM CT-11:00 AM CT

General Public-In Person
Tuesday, December 12, 2023

11:00 AM CT- noon CT
Nebraska Department of Transportation, 1500 Building, 139A Auditorium
1500 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, NE

NROC/Economic Development Districts-Virtual
Thursday, December 14
11:00 AM CT-noon CT

In order to facilitate the public comment process the State of Nebraska has developed an online comment form. Information on the plan, public comment form, and comment sessions will be sent out in a press release and via e-mail to participants in the State Digital Opportunities Planning Workshop, the state's economic development districts, and other stakeholders.

Outreach and Coordination During Implementation

Formation of a Digital Opportunities Advisory Group. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission/Office of the CIO will work with the Nebraska Broadband Office to form a Digital Opportunities Advisory Council including workforce agencies, and institutions of higher learning as well as other stakeholders. The advisory group will convene working groups as necessary to address specific digital access challenges.

Continued Engagement with Current Partners and Stakeholders. The Digital Opportunities team will continue to engage with current partners and stakeholders through e-mail updates, webinars, and updates on the Nebraska Broadband website.

Establish Programs and Subgrant Opportunities. Creating programs and subgrant opportunities will contribute to the development of new partnerships and resources.

5 Implementation

5.1 Implementation Strategy and Key Activities

5.1.1. Implementation Strategy & Proposed Activities

Plan Stakeholder Coordination and Outreach

Key Activities

- Establish a Digital Opportunities Advisory Group
- Convene the Nebraska Digital Opportunities Advisory Group a minimum of twice annually
- Establish and convene working groups as determined by the Digital Opportunities Advisory Group
- Coordinate State Digital Access Capacity Grant and programs funded through BEAD
- Continue to support learning opportunities about digital opportunities through webinars
- Collaborate with key stakeholders to create and implement a marketing campaign

Apply for State Digital Access Capacity Grant Funding and Meet Program Requirements

Key Activities

- Develop and submit an application to NTIA
- Setup the grant
- Conduct grant administration activities
- Prepare and submit required reports

Create and Award Subgrants

Key Activities

- Develop policies and procedures for administering state digital opportunities grant program
- Develop guidelines for the state digital opportunities grant program
- Open grant application period
- Evaluate applications
- Award grants
- Monitor and evaluate subawards

Support, Create or Expand Statewide Programs or Initiatives

Key Activities

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to build partnerships and raise awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program

- Support efforts of the Nebraska Library Commission to improve library capacity
    - Increase the number of libraries with fiber connections and network infrastructure upgrades
    - Increase the number of libraries applying for E-Rate
    - Encourage and support libraries in utilizing the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program
- Support efforts to improve internet access in Nebraska senior centers
- Review Nebraska statutes and polices to identify barriers to state entities donating digital devices to refurbishment programs and make recommendations for addressing these barriers
- Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which refurbish and repair digital devices and/or distribute new devices to members of covered populations
- Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce
- Support efforts by Nebraska hospitals, health care providers, associations and other stakeholders to increase the use of telehealth in Nebraska
- Support efforts by Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska farmers and ranchers and other stakeholders to increase the use of precision agriculture in Nebraska
- Assist local governments in implementing cyber governance and planning, increasing assessment and evaluation capabilities, prioritizing identified cyber risks, and helping to address cyber workforce changes through the Nebraska State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)
- Support the development or expansion of privacy and security training programs for Nebraskans
- Increase awareness of accessibility issues with state agencies and local governments including accessibility of PDFs

Conduct Periodic Research to Measure Progress

Key Activities

- Conduct two additional digital skills and access surveys in 2026 and 2029
- Access U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data to measure progress of baseline measures using ACS data
- Utilize data from the Nebraska Broadband Office and the BEAD program to measure progress in improving broadband availability
- Conduct two additional assessments of the accessibility of state and local government websites and PDFs in 2026 and 2029

5.2 Implementation Timeline

Implementation Activity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Plan Stakeholder Coordination and Outreach						
Establish a Digital Opportunities Advisory Group	X					
Convene the Nebraska Digital Opportunities Advisory Group a minimum of twice annually	X	X	X	X	X	X
Establish and convene working groups as determined by the Digital Opportunities Advisory Group	X	X	X	X	X	X
Coordinate State Digital Access Capacity Grant and programs funded through BEAD	X	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to support learning opportunities about digital opportunities through webinars	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collaborate with key stakeholders to create and implement a marketing campaign	X	X	X	X	X	X
Apply for State Digital Access Capacity Grant Funding and Meet Program Requirements						
Developing and submitting an application to NTIA	X					
Setting up the grant	X					
Conducting grant administration activities	X	X	X	X	X	X
Preparing and submitting required reports	X	X	X	X	X	X
Create and Award Subgrants						
Develop policies and procedures for administering state digital opportunities grant program	X					
Develop guidelines for the state digital opportunities grant program	X					
Open grant application period	X	X	X	X	X	
Evaluate applications	X	X	X	X	X	
Award grants	X	X	X	X	X	
Monitor and evaluate subawards	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support, Create or Expand Statewide Programs or Initiatives						
Collaborate with key stakeholders to build partnerships and raise awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support efforts of the Nebraska Library Commission to improve library capacity.	X	X	X	X	X	X

Implementation Activity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Increase the number of libraries with fiber connections and network infrastructure upgrades	X	X	X	X	X	X
Increase the number of libraries applying for E-Rate	X	X	X	X	X	X
Encourage and support libraries in utilizing the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support efforts to improve internet access in Nebraska senior centers	X	X	X	X	X	X
Review Nebraska statutes and polices to identify barriers to state entities donating digital devices to refurbishment programs and make recommendations for addressing these barriers	X	X				
Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which refurbish and repair digital devices and/or distribute new devices to members of covered populations	X	X	X	X	X	X
Encourage and support the development or expansion of programs which provide digital skills training and support to covered populations and support the development of a skilled workforce	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support efforts by Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska farmers and ranchers and other stakeholders to increase the use of precision agriculture in Nebraska	X	X	X	X	X	X
Assist local governments in implementing cyber governance and planning, increasing assessment and evaluation capabilities, prioritizing identified cyber risks, and helping to address cyber workforce changes through the Nebraska State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)	X	X	X	X		
Support the development or expansion of privacy and security training programs for Nebraskans	X	X	X	X	X	X
Increase awareness of accessibility issues with state agencies and local governments including accessibility of PDFs	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct Periodic Research to Measure Progress						
Conduct two additional digital skills and access surveys in 2026 and 2029			X			x
Access U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data to measure progress of baseline measures using ACS data	X	X	X	X	X	X
Utilize data from the Nebraska Broadband Office and the BEAD program to measure progress in improving broadband availability	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct two additional assessments of the accessibility of state and local government websites and PDFs			X			X

6 Conclusions

This plan presents how Nebraska will achieve its vision of enabling digital opportunities in the state:

> *Nebraska will grow its economy and improve the lives of Nebraskans by ensuring that Nebraskans have access to affordable, quality broadband, appropriate devices and the skills to use technologies at home, in school, on the farm or ranch, in businesses, in health care, and in government.*

Nebraska's greatest asset is its people. The planning process brought together many people and organizations. Through the planning process, stakeholders learned more about issues related to digital access and skills, formed or strengthened relationships and built capacity to engage in implementing regional plans and the state plan. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission/Office of the CIO and the Nebraska Broadband Office would like to thank everyone and who participated in the planning process.

The completion of this plan will enable the State of Nebraska to apply for funding from the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program to implement the plan and set up a state grant program.

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7 Appendices

Appendix 1 Links to Regional Plans, Asset Inventories, Survey Report and Focus Group Report

Appendix 2 List of Organizations with which the Digital Opportunities Team Collaborated

Appendix 3 Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey Report

Appendix 4 Focus Group Report

Appendix 1
Links to Regional Plans, Asset Inventories, Survey Report and Focus Group Report

Regional Digital Equity Plans and Asset Inventories

- Central Nebraska Economic Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District and Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Panhandle Area Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- South Central Economic Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Southeast Nebraska Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- West Central Nebraska Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)

Regional Digital Equity Plans

- Central Nebraska Economic Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District and Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Panhandle Area Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- South Central Economic Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- Southeast Nebraska Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)
- West Central Nebraska Development District Digital Equity Plan (PDF)

Asset Inventories

- Central Nebraska Economic Development District Asset Inventory (Excel)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Agency Asset Inventory (Excel)
- Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District and Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council Asset Inventory (Excel)
- Panhandle Area Development District Asset Inventory (Excel)
- South Central Nebraska Development District Asset Inventory (Excel)
- South Central Nebraska Development District Asset Inventory-ISPs (Excel)
- Southeast Nebraska Development District Asset Inventory (Excel)
- West Central Nebraska Development District Asset Inventory (Excel)

Survey and Focus Groups

- Nebraska Digital Access and Skills Survey Report
- Focus Group Report: Understanding the Digital Equity Needs of Covered Populations in Nebraska

Organizations with which Nebraska Digital Equity Team Collaborated	
Civic Nebraska	Civil Rights Organization
Disability Rights Nebraska	Civil Rights Organization
Empowerment Network	Civil Rights Organization
Nebraska Advisory Commision to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights	Civil Rights Organization
Agnes Robinson Waterloo Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ainsworth Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ainsworth Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Albion Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Alice M Farr Library	Community Anchor Institution
Alliance Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ansley Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Arapahoe Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Arcadia Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Arlington Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Arthur County Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ashland Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Atkinson Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Atkinson Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Auburn Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Auld Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Auld-Doudna Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Avoca Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Axtell Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bancroft Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Baright Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bartley Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bayard Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Beatrice Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Beaver City Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Beaver Crossing Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bellevue Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bennington Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Big Springs Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Blair Public Library & Technology Center	Community Anchor Institution
Bloomfield Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Blue Hill Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging	Community Anchor Institution
Bob and Wauneta Burkley Library	Community Anchor Institution
Boyd County Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution

Brenizer Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bridgeport Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Broadwater Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Broken Bow Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Brumbaugh Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bruning Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Bruun Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Butler Memorial Library, Cambridge	Community Anchor Institution
Byron Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Campbell Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Carter Lake Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Cedar Rapids Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Central City Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Central Community College	Community Anchor Institution
Central Plains Regional Library System	Community Anchor Institution
Ceresco Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Chadron Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Chappell Memorial Library & Art Gallery	Community Anchor Institution
Charles Drew Health Center	Community Anchor Institution
Clarks Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Clarkson Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Clay Center Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Clearwater Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Columbus Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Comstock Senior Center "The Den"	Community Anchor Institution
Comstock Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Cordelia B Preston Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Council Bluffs Community School District	Community Anchor Institution
Cravath Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Crawford Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Creighton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Crete Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Crete Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Culbertson Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Dakota City Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Dalton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Davenport Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Davies Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Daykin Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Dorchester Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Dundy County Library	Community Anchor Institution

Dvoracek Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Dwight Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Eastern Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Elgin Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Elm Creek Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Elmwood Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Elwood Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Emerson Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Eustis Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ewing Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Exeter Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Fairbury Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Fairfield Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Fairmont Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Faith Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Falls City Library & Arts Center	Community Anchor Institution
Farnam Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Finch Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Fort Calhoun Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Franklin Library	Community Anchor Institution
Franklin Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Fullerton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gardner Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Garfield County Library	Community Anchor Institution
Geneva Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Genoa Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gering Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gibbon Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gilbert Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gordon City Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gothenburg Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Grand Island Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Grant County Library	Community Anchor Institution
Greeley Village Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Greenwood Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gresham Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Gretna Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hartington Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Harvard Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hastings Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hastings Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hayes Center Public Library	Community Anchor Institution

Heartland United Way	Community Anchor Institution
Hebron Secrest Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hemingford Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hickman Reading Centre	Community Anchor Institution
Hildreth Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hoesch Memorial Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Holdrege Area Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hooker County Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hooper Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
House Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Howells Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Hruska Memorial Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Humphrey Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Indianola Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Jackson Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Jennifer Reinke Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Jensen Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
John A Stahl Library	Community Anchor Institution
John G Smith Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
John Rogers Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Johnson Community Center & Library	Community Anchor Institution
Karlen Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Kathleen Lute Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Kearney Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Keene Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Keith County Chamber of Commerce	Community Anchor Institution
Keya Paha County Library	Community Anchor Institution
Kilgore Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Kimball Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Klye Burt Memorial Library, Curtis	Community Anchor Institution
La Vista Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Laurel Community Learning Center	Community Anchor Institution
Leigh Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lewellen Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lexington Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Battle Creek Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Carroll Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Imperial Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Lincoln Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Pierce Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Randolph Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Scottsbluff Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lied Tekamah Public Library	Community Anchor Institution

Lied Winside Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lincoln City Libraries	Community Anchor Institution
Litchfield Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Little Priest Tribal College &	Community Anchor Institution
Logan County Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lois Johnson Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Louisville Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Loup City Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lyman Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lynch Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Lyons Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Madison Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Maltman Memorial Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Maxine White-Sutherland Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
McCook Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Mead Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Meadow Grove Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Mid-Plains Community College	Community Anchor Institution
Millard Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Milligan Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Minatare Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Mitchell Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Morrill Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Morton-James Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Nancy Fawcett Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Naper Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Nehawka Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Nehawka Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Neligh Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Nelson Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Newman Grove Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Nigel Sprouse Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Niobrara Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Norfolk Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
North Bend Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
North Loup Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
North Platte Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Northeast Community College	Community Anchor Institution
Oakland Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Oconto Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Odell Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha Public Library	Community Anchor Institution

Omaha Public Schools	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-AV Sorensen Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Benson Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Bess Johnson Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Charles B. Washington Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Florence Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Geneology Room	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Library Administrative Building	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Millard Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Milton Abrahams Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Saddleback Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-South Omaha Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-W. Clarke Swanson Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
Omaha-Willa Cather Branch Library	Community Anchor Institution
O'Neill Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Orchard Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ord Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Osceola Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Oshkosh Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Osmond Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Overton Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Oxford Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Palisade Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Palmer Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Palmyra Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Papillion Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Pawnee City Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Paxton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Petersburg Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Pilger Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Plainview Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Plattsmouth Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Plattsmouth Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Plymouth Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Polk Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ponca Carnegie Library	Community Anchor Institution
Potter Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Prairie Pioneer Center	Community Anchor Institution
Primrose Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ravenna Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Raymond A Whitwer Tilden Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Rising City Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Rock County Public Library	Community Anchor Institution

Rock County Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Rushville Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Sargent Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Schuyler Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Scotia Public Library & Heritage Center	Community Anchor Institution
Scribner Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Senior Center-Callaway	Community Anchor Institution
Senior Classics of Valley County "Ord Senior Center"	Community Anchor Institution
Seven Valleys Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Seward Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Shelby Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Shelton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Sherman County Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Shubert Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Sidney Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Silver Creek Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Sioux County Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO)	Community Anchor Institution
Snyder Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
South Sioux City Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Southeast Nebraska Collaborative	Community Anchor Institution
Spalding Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Spalding Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Spencer Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Springbank Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Springfield Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
St Edward Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
St Paul Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Stanton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Stella Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Sterling Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Stratton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Stromsburg Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Struckman-Baatz Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Stuart Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Sunshine Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Superior Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Sutton Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Syracuse Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Table Rock Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Taylor Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Tecumseh Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Thomas County Library	Community Anchor Institution

Three Rivers Library System	Community Anchor Institution
Trenton Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Tucker Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Ulysses Township Library	Community Anchor Institution
Unadilla Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Valentine Area Community Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Valentine Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Valley Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Valparaiso Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Verdigre Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Village of Brady Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Village of Verdon Library	Community Anchor Institution
Virgil Biegert Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wahoo Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Walthill Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wauneta Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Waverly Community Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wayne Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Webermeier Memorial Library	Community Anchor Institution
Weeping Water Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wheeler Central Public Schools	Community Anchor Institution
Wilcox Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wilson Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wilsonville Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wisner Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Wymore Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
Young at Heart Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Yutan Public Library	Community Anchor Institution
South Central Agency on Aging	Community Anchor Institution
Papillion Landing Digital Library	Community Anchor Institution
Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging	Community Anchor Institution
Arlington multi-purpose senior center	Community Anchor Institution
Bellevue Senior Community Center	Community Anchor Institution
Bennington Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Camelot Friendship Center	Community Anchor Institution
Corrigan Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Eagle Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Florence Senior Center Omaha	Community Anchor Institution
La Vista Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Millard Community Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Refugee Empowerment Center	Community Anchor Institution
Northeast Nebraska Senior Citizens Center, Inc.	Community Anchor Institution

Golden Age Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Key Paha County Activity Center - Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Oconto Senior Center	Community Anchor Institution
Blaine County	County or Municipal Government
Blaine County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Boyd County	County or Municipal Government
Boyd County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Brown County	County or Municipal Government
Brown County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Cherry County	County or Municipal Government
Cherry County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
City of Ainsworth	County or Municipal Government
City of Atkinson	County or Municipal Government
City of Bassett	County or Municipal Government
City of Bayard	County or Municipal Government
City of Bridgeport	County or Municipal Government
City of Broken Bow	County or Municipal Government
City of Burwell	County or Municipal Government
City of Council Bluffs	County or Municipal Government
City of Cozad	County or Municipal Government
City of Dakota City	County or Municipal Government
City of Franklin	County or Municipal Government
City of Grand Island - Regional Planning	County or Municipal Government
City of Grant	County or Municipal Government
City of Imperial	County or Municipal Government
City of Kimball	County or Municipal Government
City of Long Pine	County or Municipal Government
City of Loup City	County or Municipal Government
City of Minatare	County or Municipal Government
City of O'Neill	County or Municipal Government
City of Omaha Planning Department	County or Municipal Government
City of Ord	County or Municipal Government
City of Sargent	County or Municipal Government
City of Sidney	County or Municipal Government
City of South Sioux City	County or Municipal Government
City of Sutton	County or Municipal Government
City of Valentine	County or Municipal Government
Custer County	County or Municipal Government
Custer County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Dakota County, NE	County or Municipal Government
Gage County	County or Municipal Government

Garfield County	County or Municipal Government
Garfield County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Greeley County	County or Municipal Government
Greeley County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Harlan County Board of Supervisors	County or Municipal Government
Holt County	County or Municipal Government
Holt County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Keya Paha County	County or Municipal Government
Keya Paya County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
League of Nebraska Municipalities	County or Municipal Government
Lincoln Co	County or Municipal Government
Loup County	County or Municipal Government
Loup County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Nebraska Association of County Officials	County or Municipal Government
Phelps Co.	County or Municipal Government
Rock County	County or Municipal Government
Rock County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Sherman County	County or Municipal Government
Sherman County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Valley County	County or Municipal Government
Valley County Sheriff's Department	County or Municipal Government
Village Ashton	County or Municipal Government
Village of Anoka	County or Municipal Government
Village of Anselmo	County or Municipal Government
Village of Ansley	County or Municipal Government
Village of Arcadia	County or Municipal Government
Village of Arnold	County or Municipal Government
Village of Bartlett	County or Municipal Government
Village of Berwyn	County or Municipal Government
Village of Brewster	County or Municipal Government
Village of Bristow	County or Municipal Government
Village of Burton	County or Municipal Government
Village of Butte	County or Municipal Government
Village of Callaway	County or Municipal Government
Village of Chambers	County or Municipal Government
Village of Cody	County or Municipal Government
Village of Comstock	County or Municipal Government
Village of Crookston	County or Municipal Government
Village of Dunning	County or Municipal Government
Village of Elyria	County or Municipal Government
Village of Emerson	County or Municipal Government
Village of Emmet	County or Municipal Government

Village of Ericson	County or Municipal Government
Village of Ewing	County or Municipal Government
Village of Greeley (Center)	County or Municipal Government
Village of Gross	County or Municipal Government
Village of Halsey	County or Municipal Government
Village of Hazard	County or Municipal Government
Village of Homer	County or Municipal Government
Village of Hubbard	County or Municipal Government
Village of Inman	County or Municipal Government
Village of Jackson	County or Municipal Government
Village of Johnstown	County or Municipal Government
Village of Kilgore	County or Municipal Government
Village of Litchfield	County or Municipal Government
Village of Lynch	County or Municipal Government
Village of Mason City	County or Municipal Government
Village of Merna	County or Municipal Government
Village of Merriman	County or Municipal Government
Village of Monowi	County or Municipal Government
Village of Morrill	County or Municipal Government
Village of Naper	County or Municipal Government
Village of Nenzel	County or Municipal Government
Village of Newport	County or Municipal Government
Village of North Loup	County or Municipal Government
Village of Oconto	County or Municipal Government
Village of Page	County or Municipal Government
Village of Rockville	County or Municipal Government
Village of Scotia	County or Municipal Government
Village of Spalding	County or Municipal Government
Village of Spencer	County or Municipal Government
Village of Springview	County or Municipal Government
Village of Stuart	County or Municipal Government
Village of Table Rock	County or Municipal Government
Village of Taylor	County or Municipal Government
Village of Wolbach	County or Municipal Government
Village of Wood Lake	County or Municipal Government
Wheeler County	County or Municipal Government
Adams Bank and Trust	Economic Development
AIM Institute	Economic Development
Auburn Development Council	Economic Development
Burwell Economic Development	Economic Development
Cairo Economic Development	Economic Development
Canopy South	Economic Development

Central Nebraska Economic Development (CNEDD)	Economic Development
HDR Engineering	Economic Development
Iowa's West Coast Initiative (IWCI)	Economic Development
Keith County Area Development	Economic Development
Lamp Rynearson	Economic Development
Nebraska Department of Economic Development	Economic Development
North 24th Street BID	Economic Development
Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD)	Economic Development
Omaha Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA)	Economic Development
Omaha Public Power District	Economic Development
Ord Economic Development	Economic Development
Panhandle Area Development District (PADD)	Economic Development
Siouxland Chamber of Commerce	Economic Development
Siouxland Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)	Economic Development
Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO)	Economic Development
South Central Economic Development District (SCEDD)	Economic Development
South Sioux City Chamber of Commerce	Economic Development
Southeast Economic Nebraska Development District (SENDD)	Economic Development
St Paul Economic Development	Economic Development
Twin Cities Development	Economic Development
West Central Nebraska Development District, Inc. (WCNDD)	Economic Development
Native Futures Foundation	Foundation
Banner Health	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
BryanHealth	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
Faith Regional Health Services	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
Four Corners Regional Health Department	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
McCook Community Hospital	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
Merrick Medical Center	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
North Platte Hospital	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
One World Community Health Center	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
Panhandle Public Health District	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
Region V Services	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
Rural Health Advisory Commission	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
United Healthcare of Nebraska	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
University of Kansas Medical Center	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
University of Nebraska-Omaha - Human Rights & Relations	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
UNMC Medical Center for Public Health Disparities	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)

Veteran Administration Facility	Health or Telehealth Organization (Direct Service and Policy focus)
Latino Center of the Midlands	Hispanic-serving Institution
Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coaltion	Indian Tribe, Alaska Native Entity, or Native Hawaiian Organization
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	Indian Tribe, Alaska Native Entity, or Native Hawaiian Organization
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska	Indian Tribe, Alaska Native Entity, or Native Hawaiian Organization
Santee Sioux Nation	Indian Tribe, Alaska Native Entity, or Native Hawaiian Organization
Urban Indian Health Coalition	Indian Tribe, Alaska Native Entity, or Native Hawaiian Organization
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska Tribal Consultation	Indian Tribe, Alaska Native Entity, or Native Hawaiian Organization
Allo Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
AT&T Mobility	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Aureon Network Service	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
BLink Bluffs Council Bluffs WiFi	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Cellco Partnership DBA Verizon W	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
CenturyLink Communications (Lumen Technologies)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Charter Communications (Spectrum)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Cogent Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Comcast Cable	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Cox Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Eagle Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Ethos Connected	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
FiberNet Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Future Wireless Technologies of Nebraska, Inc. (NextLink Internet)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Google Fiber-Omaha	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Great Plains Communication	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Hughes Network Systems	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Huntel Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Mainstay	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Mediacom Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Nebraska Rural Broadband Alliance	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Nebraska Telecommunications Association	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
NebraskaLink (OPTK Networks)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Nedelco	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Network Nebraska	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Nextlink	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Nextlink Internet	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Pinpoint Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Precision IT	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)

Quantum Fiber (Lumen Technologies)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
QudraNet Enterprises	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Rembolt Lawfirm	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Spectrum (Charter)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Spiral Solutions & Technologies	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
StarLink	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Suddenlink Communications (Altice)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Telecommunications Access Iowa	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
T-Mobile USA, Inc. (also Sprint)	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Unite Private Networks	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Unviersal Broadband Consulting	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
US Cellular Grand Island	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Verison Communications	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Woods Aitken Law Firm	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Xcelerate Networks	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Zito Media	Industry Representative or Association (501c6)
Central Community College - Hastings	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Digital Express Metropolitan Community College	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Metropolitan Community College Digital Express	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Mid Plains Community College - Imperial	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Mid Plains Community College - Ogallala	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Nebraska Iinnovation Studio	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Northeast Community College	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Oklahoma State University	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Southeast Community College	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
University of Nebraska at Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
University of Nebraska Gerontology	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
University of Nebraska -Lincoln	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
University of Nebraska-Omaha - Cutlural, Ethnicity & Social Justice	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Wayne State College	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
York University	Institutions of Higher Education (if not listed above)
Crete Public Schools	Local Education Agency
Educational Service Unit 17	Local Education Agency
Emerson-Hubbard Community School District	Local Education Agency
ESU 1	Local Education Agency
Esu 11	Local Education Agency
ESU 2	Local Education Agency
ESU 9	Local Education Agency
Grand Island Public Schools	Local Education Agency
Homer Community School District	Local Education Agency

iJAG (IA)	Local Education Agency
Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Local Education Agency
Iowa School for the Deaf	Local Education Agency
JAG (NE)	Local Education Agency
Lincoln High School Community Learning Centers	Local Education Agency
Made New MakerSpace	Local Education Agency
Ponca Public Schools	Local Education Agency
Prairie Stem	Local Education Agency
South Sioux City Community School District	Local Education Agency
Western Nebraska Community College	Local Education Agency
Wheeler Central Public Schools	Local Education Agency
AIM Institute	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Boys & Girls Club	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Brown County Agriculture Society	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Catholic Charities	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Center for People in Need	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Center for Rural Affairs	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Central Plains Library Systems	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
DoSpace	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Education Super Highway	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Generation Diamond	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Girls Inc.	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Highlander Accelerator	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Holt County TeamMates Coordinator	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Hope Center for Kids	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
ichoosepurple	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Intercultural Senior Center	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
KROC Center (Salvation Army-Omaha)	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Lutheran Family Services - North Omaha	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Mentor Nebraska	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Metropolitan Area Planning Agencey (MAPA)	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Nebraska Tech Collaborative	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
NorthStar Foundation	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Prairie STEM	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Simple Foundation	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
SmartGen Society	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Southeast Library System	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Step Up Youth Entrepreneurial Program	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Tech Boomers	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Teen Tech Center	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
Three Rivers Library System	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)

Western Library System	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
YMCA-Metrol Omaha	Nonprofit Organization (501c3)
AARP Nebraska	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Great Plains ADA Center	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
AARP Omaha	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
AARP-Iowa State Office - Des Moines	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
AARP-Nebraska State Office - Omaha	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Assistive Technology Partnership	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Boyd County Veteran	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Chase Co Highschool	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Civic Nebraska	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Colglazier Farms	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Department of Health and Human Services	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Disability Rights Nebraska	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Eastern Nebraska Office of Aging	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Goodwill Omaha	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Growing Community Connections	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Growing Community Connections	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Hearing Loss Association of America	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Hilltop Estates	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
HUD/LOACP	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Immanuel Courtyard	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Immigrant Legal Center	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Intercultural Senior Center	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Keith County Veterans Office	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
LeaDIVERSITY	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
League of Human Dignity Office - Kearney	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
League of Human Dignity Office - Norfolk	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Madsion County Veteran Services	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Nebraska Vocational Rehab	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
North Platte Hospital	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
North Platte Opportunity Center	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Northeast Nebraska AAA & ADRC	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Nutrien Ag Solutions	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Omaha Refugee Task Force	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Open Door Mission	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Outlook Nebraska	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
PAKS	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Ralston Senior Center	Organization that Represents Covered Populations

ReConnect, Inc.	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Region 2	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Regional Dept. of Health & Human Services Office - Ainworth	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Restoring Dignity (Ukrainians)	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
RISE (Prison Re-entry)	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Rural Broadband Task Force	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Scouler	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Seven Oaks at Notre Dame Housing	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Siouxland Regional Transit System (SRTS)	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
South Central Nebraska AAA & ADRC	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Southern Sudan Community Action	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
State of Iowa Department for the Blind	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Syngenta	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Together, Inc.	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Trails West CASA	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
United Way of the Midlands	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
University of Nebraska Extension in Dakota County	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Urban League of Nebraska	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Veteran Services Officers	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Weitbrecht	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
West Central Ne Area Agency on Aging	Organization that Represents Covered Populations
Niobrara Valley Vineyards	Other
Ridder Herefords	Other
Nebraska Public Service Commission (BEAD)	Other
Nebraska Library Commission	Other
National Telecommunications and Information Adminisration	Other
Nebraska Department of Transportation	Other
Nebraska Rural Electric Association	Other
Nebraska Farm Bureau	Other
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Service State Unit On Aging	Other
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	Other
Nebraska State Unit on Aging	Other
Linquist Technologies	Other
Nebraska Attorney General's Office	Other
Nebraska Information Technology Commission	Other
Nebraska Board of Parole	Other
Nebraska Department of Correctional Services	Other
Nebraska Legislature	Other
Nebraska Department of Agriculture	Other
Hunnicutt Farms	Other
Emspace + Lovgren	Other

Google Fiber - KC	Other
iFixOmaha, LLC	Other
Iowa Utilities Board - Relay Iowa	Other
Iowa Utilities Board - Telecommunications Access Iowa	Other
JAB Wireless (dba Rise Broadband)	Other
Nebraska Broadband Office	Other
NTIA-Nebraska	Other
Office of Public Guardian	Other
Offut Airforce Base (Veteran/Military)	Other
ORBT - Metro	Other
State of Nebraska - State DE Rep	Other
Western Iowa Network	Other
Western Iowa Network Affordable Connectivity Program & Lifeline Programs	Other
Windstream Communications LLC (Kinestic Fiber) -Omaha	Other
ZSCALER Inc.	Other
4AgTEch	Other
South Central Public Power District	Other
The Scoular Company	Other
Southeast Nebraska Community Action	Other
Blue Valley Community Action	Other
Kimball County Transit Service	Other
Niobrara Valley Vineyards	Other
Ridder Herefords	Other
Nebraska State GIS Board	Other
Keya Paha Rancher	Other
Precision Ag Technician/Tech support	Other
Holt County Farmer	Other
Loup County Rancher	Other
Banker	Other
Agriculture Technician	Other
Nebraska Library Commission	Other
Governer's Office	Other
Eastern African Development Association of Nebraska	Predominantly Black Institution
Municipal Housing Authority of Council Bluffs Iowa	Public Housing Authority
Omaha Housing Authority	Public Housing Authority
Taylor Housing Committee	Public Housing Authority
Heartland Workforce Solutions	Workforce Development Organization

NEBRASKA DIGITAL ACCESS AND SKILLS SURVEY

A RESEARCH REPORT

REBECCA VOGT

ANNE BYERS

OCTOBER 9, 2023

Executive Summary

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC)/Office of the CIO was awarded a grant from the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for developing a plan to ensure Nebraskans have internet connectivity, devices such as laptops and smartphones, and the skills to meaningful use internet technologies. As part of this planning effort, NITC conducted a digital equity survey to better understand and address the digital needs of Nebraskans. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducted the survey for the Commission. The survey included questions about Nebraskans' current use of technology, their satisfaction with the quality of their home Internet connection, and their confidence in their internet skills. Some of the findings include:

Only three percent of the respondents report not having an internet service subscription at home. Just over one-half (52%) have a cellular data plan for a smartphone or other mobile device like a hotspot. Just under four in ten (38%) subscribe to a cable internet service and just under three in ten (28%) have a fiber optic internet connection.

- ✓ More higher income households have fiber optic service for their home internet. Almost four in ten respondents with the highest incomes have a fiber connection (39%), compared to under two in ten respondents with incomes under $25,000 (17%).

Just over one-half (58%) of the respondents pay between $40 and $80 per month for their internet service, excluding the costs of any other services in their bundle. Twelve percent pay less than $40 per month and 13 percent pay $100 or more.

Many respondents (41%) report that it is either very or somewhat difficult to fit their monthly internet bill into their household's budget.

- ✓ Almost six in ten respondents with the lowest household incomes (58%) report having at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget. In comparison, just under three in ten respondents with the highest household incomes (27%) have at least some difficulty fitting their bill into their budget.
- ✓ Just over one-half (52%) of Hispanic respondents say they have at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget. Similarly, just over one-half (51%) of African American respondents report having at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget. Veterans are more likely than non-veterans to report having at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget.

Most respondents report being at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of their home internet connection for doing the online activities that are important to them. Just under four in ten (39%) are very satisfied and just over four in ten (43%) are somewhat satisfied.

When asked if they have used the internet to search for various public resources and services in the past year, most respondents have searched for information about government services or resources (67%) or recreational or tourist information (60%). Many have also searched for information about public health issues (48%), official government statistics or documents (39%), or applying for or managing government benefits (33%).

Most respondents are very confident they could use email (72%), shop online (63%), use social media (61%), access online banking or financial services (59%), use a word processing application to create a document (54%), and search for and apply for jobs using the Internet (53%).

- ✓ Non-Hispanic respondents are more confident than Hispanic respondents in accessing online banking or financial services, using email, using social media, and online shopping. Just over six in ten non-Hispanic respondents (63%) are very confident in accessing online banking, compared to just over one-third (35%) of Hispanic respondents.

Most respondents are very or somewhat concerned about internet privacy and security. Just over four in ten (41%) are very concerned and just under one-half (45%) are somewhat concerned.

Most respondents are at least somewhat confident in doing all the security or privacy tasks listed: using strong passwords (88%), keeping their devices updated with the latest software updates (86%), identifying phishing attempts (73%), configuring privacy and security settings in apps and software (69%) and using a password manager (67%).

Many respondents say they've had a cell phone (37%) or laptop computer (28%) fail to function properly for them in the past six months. Almost four in ten (38%) say they haven't had any technology devices fail in the past six months. Many fixed the problem themselves (46%) or contacted user support for help (32%).

- ✓ Respondents with lower household incomes had higher rates of failure for cell phones as compared to respondents with higher household incomes. Almost one-half (48%) of respondents with incomes under $25,000 have had a cell phone fail to function in the past six months.

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Introduction

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC)/Office of the CIO was awarded a grant from the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for developing a plan to ensure Nebraskans have internet connectivity, devices such as laptops and smartphones, and the skills to meaningful use internet technologies. As part of this planning effort, NITC conducted a digital equity survey to better understand and address the digital needs of Nebraskans. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducted the survey for the Commission. The survey included questions about Nebraskans' current use of technology, their satisfaction with the quality of their home Internet connection, and their confidence in their internet skills. This report details 1,524 responses to the survey.

Survey Methodology

Nebraskans were surveyed about their current use of technology, their satisfaction with the quality of their home internet connection, and their confidence in their internet skills through an online survey conducted in September 2023 by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Agricultural Economics. A state digital equity survey template served as the basis for the survey instrument with the addition of questions regarding privacy and security.

The online survey was marketed using two recruitment methods - Qualtrics Panels and with the assistance of partner organizations across the state. Qualtrics collected 1,092 responses from Nebraskans using their panel service. They were requested to provide an oversample of minority respondents. The remaining 432 completes were from the marketing done by partner organizations. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. A total of 44 Spanish surveys were completed.

Appendix Table 1 shows demographic data from this study and similar data based on the entire population of Nebraska (using the latest available data from the 2017 - 2021 American Community Survey or the 2020 U.S. Census). As can be seen from the table, there are some marked differences between some of the demographic variables in our sample compared to the Census data. In addition, since a random sampling frame was not used, we suggest the reader use caution in generalizing our data to all Nebraskans. However, given the large number of respondents we feel the data provide useful insights into opinions of Nebraskans on the various issues presented in this report.

The data presented throughout this paper are weighted to correct for the oversampling of minority respondents as well as to adjust the sample to match the age and gender distribution in Nebraska (using U.S. Census data). The margin of error for the results based on the entire sample is plus or minus three percentage points.

In addition to the statewide results, data for various covered populations determined by NTIA will be analyzed. These include rural residents, older adults, members of ethnic

or racial minorities, members of low-income households, and veterans.

Respondent Profile

The average age of respondents is 48 years. Seventy-eight percent live within the city limits of a town or village. Ninety-six percent have attained at least a high school diploma.

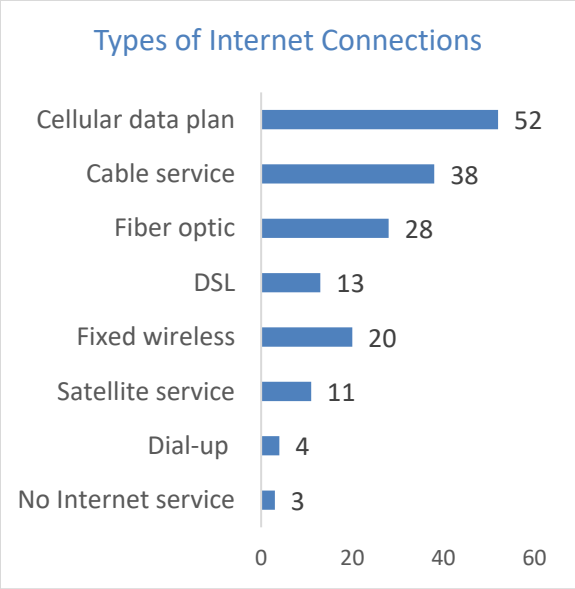
Forty-four percent of the respondents report their total household income from all sources, before taxes, as below $50,000. Thirty-six percent report incomes over $75,000. Fourteen percent are of Hispanic ethnicity.

Just under one-half (48%) report living in a metropolitan county. Forty percent live in or near a community with a population of 20,000 or more. Ten percent report being a veteran.

Nebraskans' Technology Use

Internet Access at Home

Only three percent of the respondents report not having an internet service subscription at home. Just over one-half (52%) have a cellular data plan for a smartphone or other mobile device like a hotspot. Just under four in ten (38%) subscribe to a cable internet service and just under three in ten (28%) have a fiber optic internet connection. Various subgroups of the population use different



technologies to subscribe to internet service at their home.

Metropolitan or Nonmetropolitan

For respondents living in metropolitan counties, just over one-half (52%) have a cellular data plan and just under one-half (48%) use a cable service. Just over two in ten (23%) have a fiber optic connection.

Just over one-half of respondents living in nonmetropolitan counties (53%) have a cellular data plan and approximately one-third (32%) have a fiber optic service. Just under three in ten (29%) use a cable service and just over two in ten (22%) use a fixed wireless service.

Household Income

More higher income households have fiber optic service for their home internet. Almost four in ten respondents with the highest incomes have a fiber connection (39%), compared to under two in ten

respondents with incomes under $25,000 (17%).

Age

Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to have a cellular data plan. Approximately two-thirds of persons aged 19 to 39 have a cellular data plan, compared to approximately one-third of persons aged 65 and older. More younger respondents report using a fixed wireless service.

Ethnicity

More Hispanic respondents use a cellular data plan than do non-Hispanic respondents. They also have higher rates of using DSL, fixed wireless service, and satellite service.

Race

More minority respondents use a cellular data plan than white respondents. Just over three-quarters of Native American respondents have a cellular data plan. Asian respondents have the highest rates of having a fiber optic connection. Just over one-half (56%) of Asian respondents have fiber optic service. More Asian respondents also use DSL and satellite service.

Veterans

More veterans than non-veterans use either a fixed wireless service or satellite service. More veterans also use a dial-up service as compared to non-veterans.

Bundled Internet Service

Equal proportions of respondents have their home internet service bundled with other services such as telephone or television as those who do not. One-half (50%) have their home internet service bundled and one-half (50%) do not.

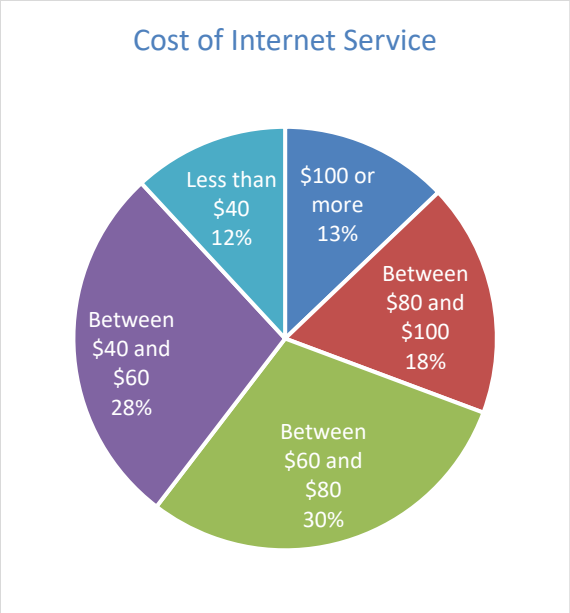
Respondents in nonmetropolitan counties are more likely than respondents in metropolitan counties to have their home internet service bundled with other services. Just over one-half (54%) of respondents living in nonmetropolitan counties have a bundled service, compared to less than one-half (45%) of respondents living in metropolitan counties.

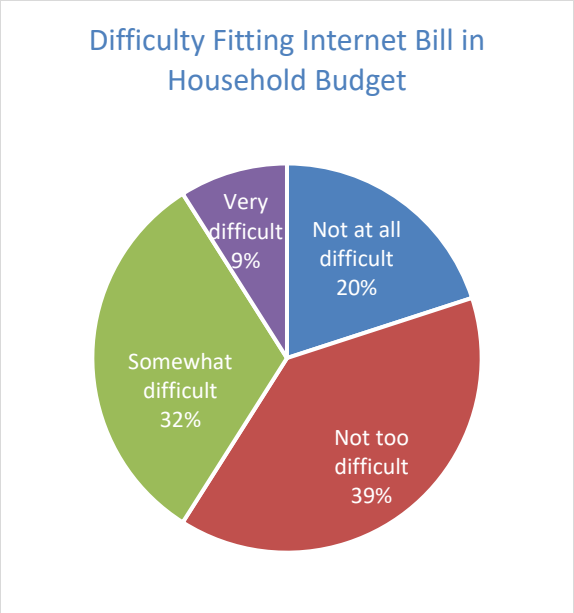
Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to have a bundled Internet service. Other groups most likely to have a bundled internet service include Hispanic respondents, Native American respondents, African American respondents, respondents of more than one race, and veterans.

Cost of Internet Service

Just over one-half (58%) of the respondents pay between $40 and $80 per month for their internet service, excluding the costs of any other services in their bundle. Twelve percent pay less than $40 per month and 13 percent pay $100 or more.

Respondents living in metropolitan counties report paying less for their internet service as compared to respondents living in nonmetropolitan counties. Fourteen





percent of respondents in metropolitan counties pay less than $40 per month, compared to nine percent of the respondents living in nonmetropolitan counties. Respondents with lower household incomes and older respondents are the other groups most likely to pay less for their home internet service.

Many respondents (41%) report that it is either very or somewhat difficult to fit their monthly internet bill into their household's budget.

Respondents in nonmetropolitan counties are more likely than respondents in metropolitan counties to report having at least some difficulty fitting their monthly internet bill into their household budget. Just under one-half (45%) of respondents living in nonmetropolitan counties said they have at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill in their budget, compared to just under four in ten respondents living in metropolitan counties (39%).

Almost six in ten respondents with the lowest household incomes (58%) report having at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget. In comparison, just under three in ten respondents with the highest household incomes (27%) have at least some difficulty fitting their bill into their budget.

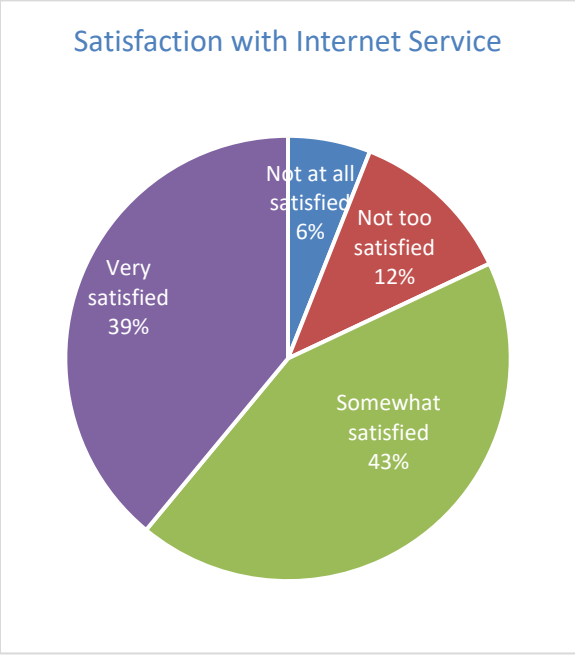
Just over one-half (52%) of Hispanic respondents say they have at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget. Similarly, just over one-half (51%) of African American respondents report having at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget. Veterans are more likely than non-veterans to report having at least some difficulty fitting their internet bill into their budget.

When respondents were asked at what monthly price they would consider a home

broadband subscription too expensive to consider, the average price given was $100. Respondents with lower household incomes had an average price of $91. When comparing age groups, respondents aged 50 to 64 had the lowest average price of $92. Non-Hispanic respondents had a lower average price than did Hispanic respondents ($98 compared to $114).

Satisfaction with Internet Service

Most respondents report being at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of their home internet connection for doing the online activities that are important to them. Just under four in ten (39%) are very satisfied and just over four in ten (43%) are somewhat satisfied.



Respondents living in metropolitan counties are more satisfied than respondents living in nonmetropolitan counties. Almost nine in ten (85%) of metropolitan respondents are at least somewhat satisfied with their internet service, compared to 79 percent of nonmetropolitan respondents.

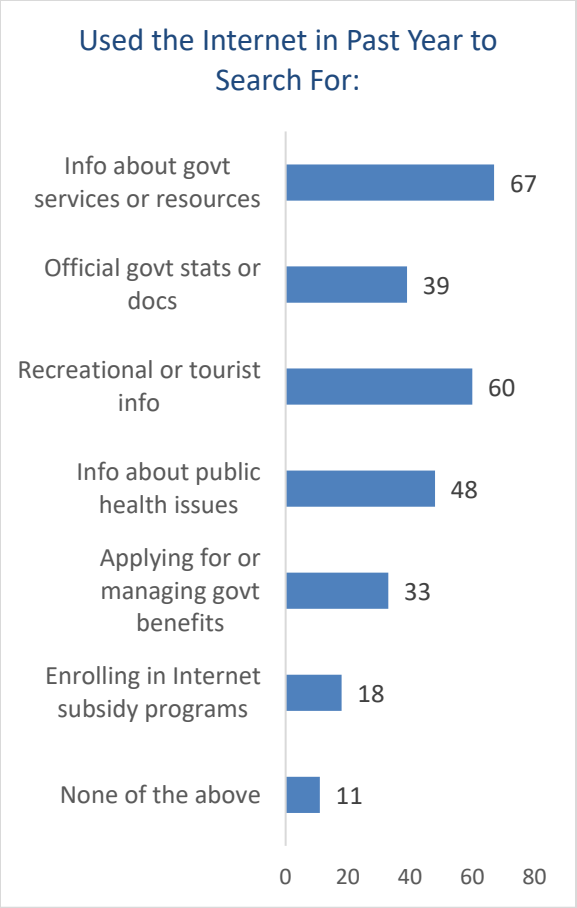
Other groups most likely to be satisfied with their internet service include younger respondents and Hispanic respondents.

Accessibility of Public Resources and Services

When asked if they have used the internet to search for various public resources and services in the past year, most respondents have searched for information about government services or resources (67%) or recreational or tourist information (60%). Many have also searched for information about public health issues (48%), official government statistics or documents (39%), or applying for or managing government benefits (33%).

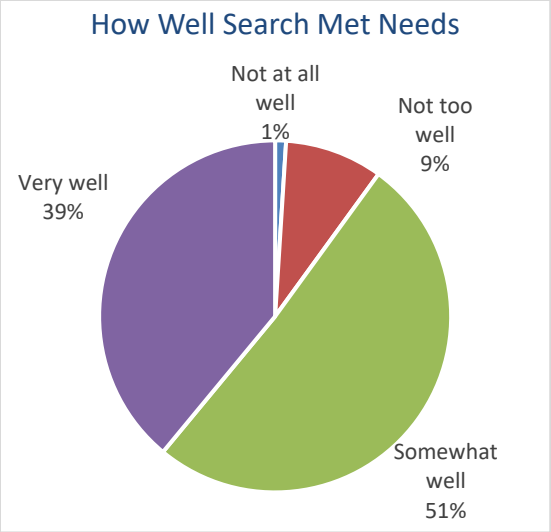
Respondents with higher household incomes are more likely than respondents with lower incomes to have searched for information about government services or resources, official government statistics or documents, recreational or tourist information, and information about public health issues. Respondents with lower household incomes are more likely to have searched for applying for or managing government benefits and enrolling in internet subsidy programs.

Non-Hispanic respondents are more likely than Hispanic respondents to have



searched for information about government services or resources as well as recreational or tourist information. Hispanic respondents are more likely to have searched for enrolling in internet subsidy programs.

Most of the respondents said their internet search for government information met their needs at least somewhat well. Just under four in ten (39%) said their search met their needs very well and just over one-half (51%) said it met their needs somewhat well.



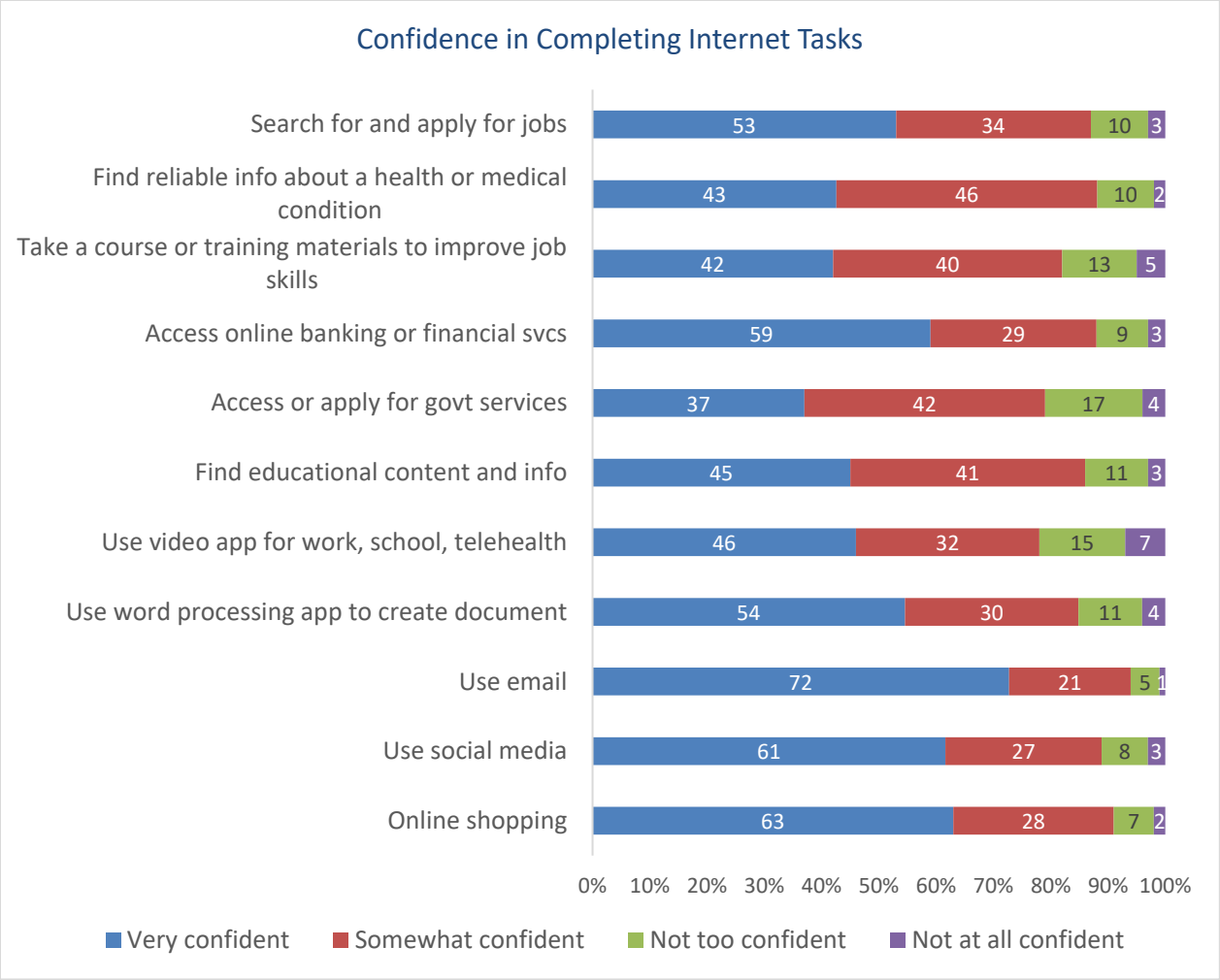
Digital Literacy

Confidence in Completing Internet Tasks

Most respondents are very confident they could use email (72%), shop online (63%), use social media (61%), access online banking or financial services (59%), use a word processing application to create a document (54%), and search for and apply for jobs using the Internet (53%).

Metropolitan respondents are more confident than the nonmetropolitan respondents in accessing online banking or financial services, using video applications, using email, using social media, and online shopping.

Respondents with higher household incomes are more confident than respondents with lower household incomes



in doing all the internet tasks listed. As an example, just over seven in ten respondents with the highest household incomes are very confident in using a word processing application to create a document, compared to four in ten respondents with the lowest household incomes.

When comparing responses by age groups, respondents aged 30 to 49 are the most confident in searching for and applying for jobs. Respondents aged 30 to 64 are the most confident in finding reliable information about a health or medical condition, taking a course or training materials to improve their job skills, accessing or applying for government services, finding educational content and information, using social media, and online shopping.

Respondents aged 40 to 64 are the age group most confident in accessing online banking or financial services and using email. Respondents aged 40 to 49 are the group most confident in using a video application and using a word processing application to create a document.

Non-Hispanic respondents are more confident than Hispanic respondents in

accessing online banking or financial services, using email, using social media, and online shopping. Just over six in ten non-Hispanic respondents (63%) are very confident in accessing online banking, compared to just over one-third (35%) of Hispanic respondents.

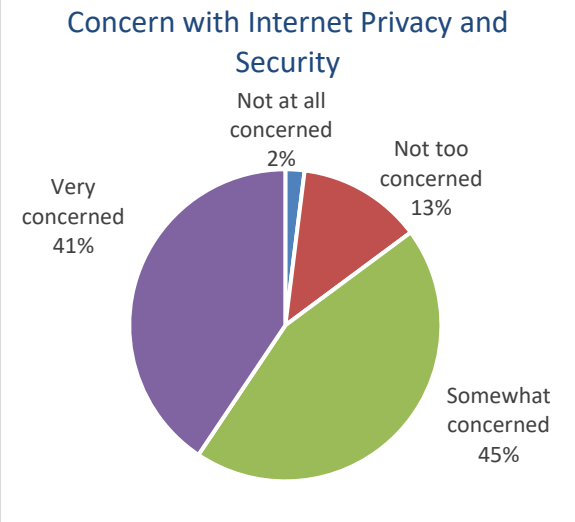
Native American respondents are the racial group most confident in searching and applying for jobs. White respondents are the group most confident in accessing online banking or financial services. Asian and Native American respondents are the racial group most confident in using email.

Nonveterans are more confident than veterans in completing all the tasks listed. As an example, over six in ten nonveterans (63%) are very confident in accessing online banking or financial services, compared to approximately one-third of veterans (34%).

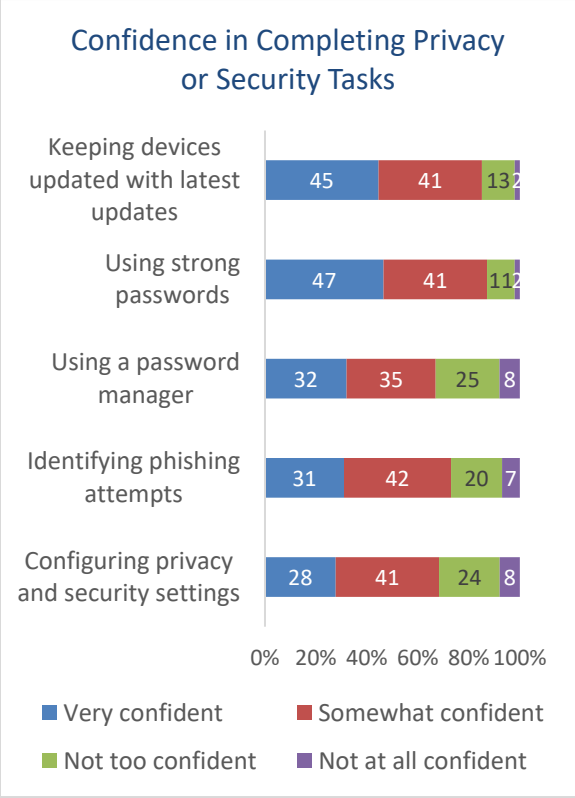
Concern about Internet Privacy and Security

Most respondents are very or somewhat concerned about internet privacy and security. Just over four in ten (41%) are very concerned and just under one-half (45%) are somewhat concerned.

Most respondents are at least somewhat confident in doing all the security or privacy tasks listed: using strong passwords (88%), keeping their devices updated with the latest software updates (86%), identifying phishing attempts (73%), configuring privacy and security settings in apps and



software (69%) and using a password manager (67%).



In general, respondents with higher household incomes are more confident than respondents with lower household incomes in completing most of the privacy

or security tasks listed.

When comparing responses by age groups, respondents in their 30's are the group most confident in their ability to keep their devices updated with the latest software updates, using a password manager, and configuring privacy and security settings in apps and software. Respondents aged 19 to 49 are the groups most confident in identifying phishing attempts.

Non-Hispanic respondents are more confident than Hispanic respondents in using strong passwords.

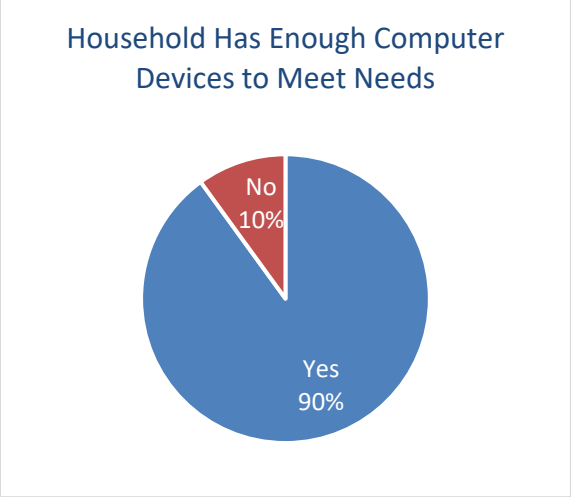
Respondents of more than one race are *less* confident than other racial groups in using strong passwords. White respondents are the racial group *least* confident in configuring privacy and security settings in apps and software.

Nonveterans are more confident than veterans in using strong passwords and identifying phishing attempts.

Adequacy of Household Computer Devices

Most respondents (90%) say their household has enough computer devices available to meet the needs of those living in their home.

Respondents with higher household incomes are more likely than respondents with lower household incomes to say their household has enough computer devices to meet the needs of those living in their

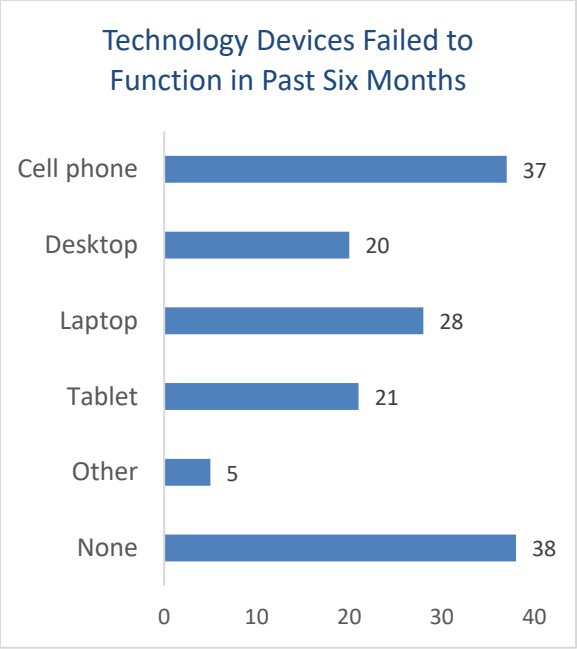


home. Over nine in ten respondents with household incomes of $100,000 or more (95%) say they have enough computer devices, compared to just over eight in ten respondents with incomes under $25,000 (81%).

Respondents of more than one race are *less* likely than respondents of other races to say they have enough computer devices. Just over three-quarters (77%) of respondents of more than one race say they have enough devices, compared to 93 percent of Asian respondents.

Many respondents say they've had a cell phone (37%) or laptop computer (28%) fail to function properly for them in the past six months. Almost four in ten (38%) say they haven't had any technology devices fail in the past six months.

Respondents in nonmetropolitan counties report higher rates of having a cell phone fail to function for them in the past six months. Just over four in ten (43%) of nonmetropolitan respondents have had a



cell phone fail, compared to three in ten respondents in metropolitan counties (30%). They also are more likely to have had desktops, laptops, and tablets fail during the past six months.

Respondents with lower household incomes had higher rates of failure for cell phones as compared to respondents with higher household incomes. Almost one-half (48%) of respondents with incomes under $25,000 have had a cell phone fail to function in the past six months. Respondents with higher incomes are more likely than respondents with lower incomes to have a laptop fail.

Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to have had a cell phone, desktop, laptop, or tablet fail during the past six months. Just over one-half (52%) of the oldest respondents say they have not had a technology device fail to function for them during the past six months.

Hispanic respondents are more likely than non-Hispanic respondents to have had a cell phone, desktop, laptop, or tablet fail in the past six months. Almost one-half (49%) of Hispanic respondents have had a cell phone fail during the past six months, compared to just over one-third (35%) of non-Hispanic respondents.

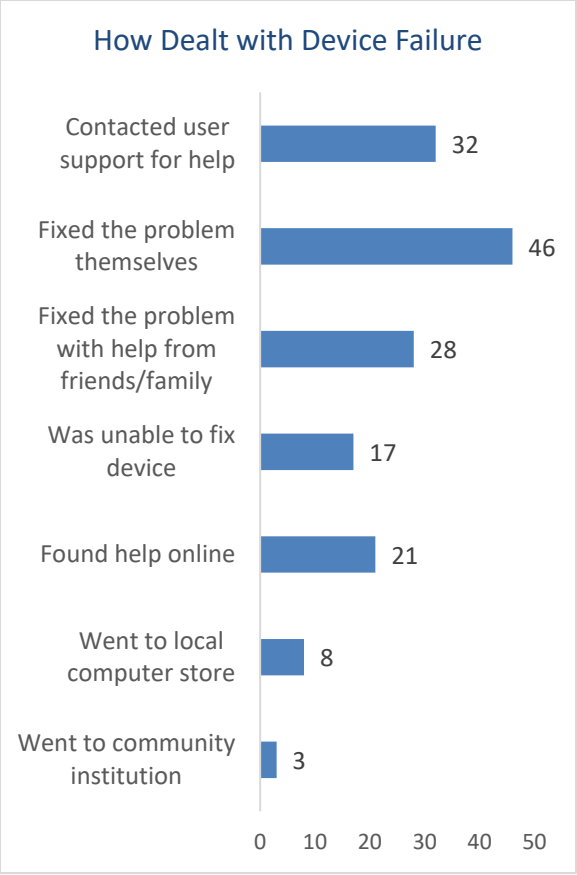
Respondents of minority races report higher rates of failure for most technology devices. One-half (50%) of African American respondents have had a cell phone fail during the past six months. One-half (50%) of Asian respondents have had a desktop fail. Almost one-half (48%) of both Asian respondents and respondents of more than one race have had a laptop fail.

Veterans have had more technology devices fail for them as compared to nonveterans. Almost one-half (49%) of veterans have had a cell phone fail, compared to 36 percent of nonveterans. Just over one-third of veterans have had either a desktop or laptop fail to function during the past six months.

If respondents had devices fail, they were asked how they deal with the problem. Many fixed the problem themselves (46%) or contacted user support for help (32%).

Respondents with higher household incomes are more likely than respondents with lower incomes to have fixed the problem themselves or found help online.

Respondents aged 40 to 49 are the age group most likely to have fixed the problem



themselves. Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to have found help online.

Non-Hispanic respondents are more likely than Hispanic respondents to have fixed the problem themselves. Hispanic respondents are more likely to have found help online or went to a local computer store.

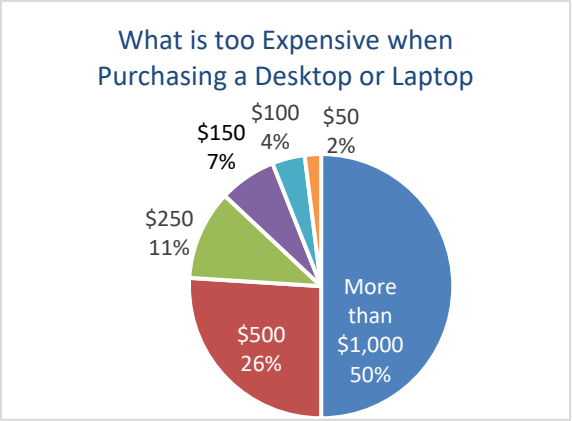
Both Native American respondents and respondents of more than one race were more likely to say they were unable to fix one or more of their devices. Asian respondents were most likely to have fixed the problem with the help of family or friends.

Veteran respondents are more likely than nonveterans to have contacted user support for help, while nonveterans are more likely to have fixed the problem themselves.

Finally, respondents were asked at what cost they would consider a desktop or laptop computer too expensive. One-half (50%) of respondents say more than $1,000 would be considered too expensive. Just over one-quarter (26%) say $500 would be too expensive.

Respondents with lower household incomes are more likely than respondents with higher incomes to report prices under $500 as being too expensive. Just over two-thirds (68%) of respondents with the highest household incomes appear willing to pay up to $1,000 for a desktop or laptop, compared to just over one-quarter (27%) of respondents with the lowest incomes.

The other groups most likely to report prices lower than $1,000 as being too expensive include younger respondents, Hispanic respondents, African American respondents, Native American respondents, respondents of more than one race, and veterans.



Appendix Table 1. *Demographic Profile of Respondents[1] Compared to 2017 – 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Average for Nebraska**

	Respondents	***2017 - 2021 ACS***
Age: [2]		
20 - 39	37%	37%
40 - 64	41%	41%
65 and over	22%	22%
Gender: [3]		
Female	50%	50%
Male	50%	50%
Education: [4]		
Less than high school graduate	4%	8%
High school diploma (or equiv.)	16%	26%
Some college or associate degree	36%	35%
Bachelors degree	44%	32%
Household Income: [5]		
Less than $25,000	18%	16%
$25,000 - $49,999	26%	21%
$50,000 - $74,999	20%	19%
$75,000 - $99,999	16%	14%
$100,000 or more	20%	30%
Ethnicity: [6]		
Hispanic or Latino	14%	12%

[1] Data from the survey have been weighted by age, gender, and race.

[2] 2017-2021 American Community Survey universe is population 20 years of age and over.

[3] 2017-2021 American Community Survey universe is population 20 years of age and over.

[4] 2017-2021 American Community Survey universe is population 18 years of age and over.

[5] 2017-2021 American Community Survey universe is all households.

[6] 2017-2021 American Community Survey universe is entire population.

*Comparison numbers are estimates taken from the American Community Survey five-year sample and may reflect significant margins of error for areas with relatively small populations.

Appendix Table 2. *Home Internet Service by Covered Populations*

	Do you or any member of your household subscribe to internet service in your home using any of the following technologies?							
	Cellular data plan	*Cable service*	*Fiber optic service*	*DSL*	*Fixed wireless*	*Satellite service*	*Dial-up*	*No Internet*
				Percentages				
Total	52	38	28	13	20	11	4	3
Metro/Nonmetro County				(n = 1395)				
Metropolitan County	52	48	23	12	18	6	3	3
Nonmetropolitan County	53	29	32	15	22	14	5	3
Income Level				(n = 1392)				
Under $25,000	53	34	17	11	17	6	3	7
$25,000 - $49,999	44	42	22	11	21	9	4	2
$50,000 - $74,999	55	41	29	8	20	10	4	3
$75,000 - $99,999	54	38	36	20	20	15	6	1
$100,000 and over	57	36	39	19	20	11	4	2
Age				(n = 1409)				
19 – 29	65	37	27	16	26	13	8	4
30 – 39	66	38	37	17	25	14	8	3
40 – 49	58	44	29	12	18	6	1	2
50 – 64	45	32	28	15	19	11	1	2
65 and older	34	41	20	9	14	8	4	3
Ethnicity				(n = 1400)				
Hispanic or Latino	64	43	27	24	34	18	12	5
Not Hispanic or Latino	50	37	28	12	18	9	3	2
Race				(n = 1407)				
White only	51	37	28	13	19	10	4	3
African American only	64	45	20	11	25	11	6	9
Asian only	55	33	56	34	17	22	10	0
Native American only	77	34	13	3	36	12	4	0
More than one race	61	54	15	19	33	9	5	2
Education Level				(n = 1408)				
Less than HS graduate	49	26	20	9	21	8	4	11
High school graduate	51	37	22	11	20	10	3	6
Some college	54	41	24	9	20	12	4	2
Bachelors or higher	52	37	34	18	21	10	5	1
Veteran				(n = 1394)				
Veteran	52	38	27	17	27	18	11	6
Nonveteran	53	38	28	13	19	10	3	3
Disabilities/Difficulties				(n = 1409)				
None selected	52	34	30	13	17	10	2	2
At least one selected	53	41	26	14	23	11	6	3

Appendix Table 3. *Bundled Home Internet Service by Covered Populations*

	Thinking about your home internet service, is the service bundled with other services such as telephone or television?		
	Yes	*No*	*Significance*
	Percentages		
Total	50	50	
Metro/Nonmetro County	(n = 1366)		
Metropolitan County	45	55	$\chi^2 = 12.81$*
Nonmetropolitan County	54	46	(.000)
Income Level	(n = 1361)		
Under $25,000	47	53	
$25,000 - $49,999	54	46	
$50,000 - $74,999	48	53	
$75,000 - $99,999	56	44	$\chi^2 = 8.48$
$100,000 and over	46	54	(.076)
Age	(n = 1380)		
19 - 29	60	40	
30 - 39	50	50	
40 - 49	43	57	$\chi^2 = 23.96$*
50 - 64	43	58	(.000)
65 and older	54	46	
Ethnicity	(n = 1370)		
Hispanic or Latino	77	23	$\chi^2 = 63.70$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	45	55	(.000)
Race	(n = 1376)		
White only	48	52	
African American only	67	33	
Asian only	43	58	$\chi^2 = 16.12$*
Native American only	69	31	(.003)
More than one race	64	36	
Education Level	(n = 1378)		
Less than HS graduate	59	41	
High school graduate	48	52	
Some college	51	49	$\chi^2 = 2.91$
Bachelors or higher	49	51	(.406)
Veteran	(n = 1366)		
Veteran	69	31	$\chi^2 = 21.46$*
Nonveteran	48	52	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties	(n = 1380)		
None selected	41	59	$\chi^2 = 41.25$*
At least one selected	58	42	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 4. *Amount Paid for Internet Service Monthly by Covered Populations*

	Excluding the costs of any other services in your bundle, to the nearest dollar, how much do you pay on a monthly basis for internet service?					
	Less than $40	*Between $40 and $60*	*Between $60 and $80*	*Between $80 and $100*	*$100 or more*	*Significance*
			Percentages			
Total	12	28	30	18	13	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1388)			
Metropolitan County	14	27	27	17	14	$\chi^2 = 13.81$*
Nonmetropolitan County	9	28	33	18	12	(.010)
Income Level			(n = 1385)			
Under $25,000	27	37	19	9	9	
$25,000 - $49,999	15	32	29	13	11	
$50,000 - $74,999	9	23	31	21	16	
$75,000 - $99,999	5	18	39	23	14	$\chi^2 = 154.89$*
$100,000 and over	3	25	32	24	16	(.000)
Age			(n = 1401)			
19 – 29	9	34	38	13	7	
30 – 39	8	29	28	20	14	
40 – 49	10	25	25	25	15	$\chi^2 = 45.39$*
50 – 64	13	26	30	17	15	(.000)
65 and older	16	24	29	16	15	
Ethnicity			(n = 1395)			
Hispanic or Latino	11	31	35	16	8	$\chi^2 = 7.92$
Not Hispanic or Latino	12	27	29	18	14	(.095)
Race			(n = 1400)			
White only	12	27	30	19	14	
African American only	7	36	29	13	15	
Asian only	18	35	40	5	3	$\chi^2 = 20.53$
Native American only	22	33	19	15	11	(.197)
More than one race	11	31	33	14	11	
Education Level			(n = 1404)			
Less than HS graduate	19	30	23	16	12	
High school graduate	23	34	20	13	11	
Some college	13	31	28	14	16	$\chi^2 = 90.54$*
Bachelors or higher	6	23	36	23	12	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1387)			
Veteran	17	18	34	19	12	$\chi^2 = 9.27$
Nonveteran	11	28	30	18	13	(.055)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1403)			
None selected	8	27	31	21	13	$\chi^2 = 24.27$*
At least one selected	15	28	29	14	14	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 5. *Difficulty Fitting Internet Bill in Household Budget by Covered Populations*

	How difficult, if at all, is it for you to fit your monthly internet bill into your household's budget?				
	Very difficult	*Somewhat difficult*	*Not too difficult*	*Not at all difficult*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	9	32	39	20	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1392)		
Metropolitan County	8	31	38	23	$\chi^2 = 10.89$*
Nonmetropolitan County	9	34	40	16	(.012)
Income Level			(n = 1391)		
Under $25,000	18	40	30	12	
$25,000 - $49,999	11	36	35	17	
$50,000 - $74,999	5	30	40	25	
$75,000 - $99,999	5	33	47	15	$\chi^2 = 95.24$*
$100,000 and over	5	22	46	28	(.000)
Age			(n = 1410)		
19 – 29	11	35	40	15	
30 – 39	12	28	41	20	
40 – 49	8	38	39	15	$\chi^2 = 38.55$*
50 – 64	11	29	42	19	(.000)
65 and older	4	34	34	28	
Ethnicity			(n = 1399)		
Hispanic or Latino	13	39	34	15	$\chi^2 = 11.39$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	8	31	40	21	(.010)
Race			(n = 1407)		
White only	8	32	39	20	
African American only	21	30	30	19	
Asian only	5	43	43	10	$\chi^2 = 23.19$*
Native American only	7	22	48	22	(.026)
More than one race	14	31	44	11	
Education Level			(n = 1407)		
Less than HS graduate	34	23	32	11	
High school graduate	10	38	37	15	$\chi^2 = 61.96$*
Some college	8	34	35	23	(.000)
Bachelors or higher	7	30	44	20	
Veteran			(n = 1393)		
Veteran	13	36	25	25	$\chi^2 = 13.18$*
Nonveteran	8	32	40	19	(.004)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1409)		
None selected	5	27	44	24	$\chi^2 = 43.49$*
At least one selected	12	37	35	16	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 6. *Satisfaction with the Quality of Home Internet Connection by Covered Populations*

	How satisfied, if at all, are you with the quality of your home internet connection for doing the online activities that are important to you, such as taking classes, doing your job, or using video or streaming applications?				
	Very satisfied	*Somewhat satisfied*	*Not too satisfied*	*Not at all satisfied*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	39	43	12	6	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1395)		
Metropolitan County	41	44	11	4	$\chi^2 = 9.51$*
Nonmetropolitan County	37	42	13	8	(.023)
Income Level			(n = 1390)		
Under $25,000	39	39	15	7	
$25,000 - $49,999	40	43	12	6	
$50,000 - $74,999	41	45	12	3	
$75,000 - $99,999	36	47	9	9	$\chi^2 = 14.63$
$100,000 and over	41	42	12	6	(.263)
Age			(n = 1410)		
19 – 29	40	50	9	1	
30 – 39	46	39	10	5	
40 – 49	33	49	13	5	$\chi^2 = 39.78$*
50 – 64	38	39	14	8	(.000)
65 and older	39	39	13	10	
Ethnicity			(n = 1401)		
Hispanic or Latino	45	46	8	2	$\chi^2 = 13.12$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	38	42	13	7	(.004)
Race			(n = 1408)		
White only	39	42	13	7	
African American only	43	46	7	4	
Asian only	46	44	10	0	$\chi^2 = 13.17$
Native American only	54	39	7	0	(.357)
More than one race	33	56	8	3	
Education Level			(n = 1409)		
Less than HS graduate	44	39	9	9	
High school graduate	40	43	13	4	
Some college	41	42	12	5	$\chi^2 = 6.60$
Bachelors or higher	37	43	12	7	(.679)
Veteran			(n = 1394)		
Veteran	43	32	10	7	$\chi^2 = 9.09$*
Nonveteran	39	44	11	6	(.028)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1411)		
None selected	39	42	12	8	$\chi^2 = 5.36$
At least one selected	39	44	13	5	(.147)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 7. *Searches Using Internet Service by Covered Populations*

	In the past year, have you used the internet to search for:						
	Information about government services or resources	*Official government statistics or documents*	*Recreational or tourist information*	*Information about public health issues*	*Applying for or managing government benefits*	*Enrolling in Internet subsidy programs*	*None of the above*
				Percentages			
Total	67	39	60	48	33	18	11
Metro/Nonmetro County				(n = 1395)			
Metropolitan County	70	37	57	45	35	18	10
Nonmetropolitan County	65	40	63	51	31	17	11
Income Level				(n = 1394)			
Under $25,000	49	24	29	34	40	23	20
$25,000 - $49,999	60	29	55	40	37	22	12
$50,000 - $74,999	71	37	65	53	32	17	8
$75,000 - $99,999	73	47	69	55	27	13	9
$100,000 and over	80	57	81	58	27	12	5
Age				(n = 1411)			
19 – 29	53	34	43	42	36	21	9
30 – 39	65	38	53	52	41	29	8
40 – 49	71	43	69	55	34	21	7
50 – 64	75	42	70	49	27	12	12
65 and older	67	35	63	43	29	9	15
Ethnicity				(n = 1402)			
Hispanic or Latino	51	34	42	47	38	31	8
Not Hispanic or Latino	70	39	64	48	32	16	11
Race				(n = 1409)			
White only	69	39	64	48	31	16	11
African American only	47	37	33	38	41	30	10
Asian only	31	34	31	52	38	13	12
Native American only	69	43	27	48	51	39	14
More than one race	60	39	49	50	45	25	9
Education Level				(n = 1410)			
Less than HS graduate	38	32	22	31	30	15	24
High school graduate	55	28	40	38	39	24	17
Some college	62	33	59	46	34	20	12
Bachelors or higher	78	48	72	54	29	14	6
Veteran				(n = 1396)			
Veteran	65	37	47	45	39	19	10
Nonveteran	68	39	62	48	32	17	11
Disabilities/Difficulties				(n = 1411)			
None selected	74	45	72	53	25	11	11
At least one selected	60	33	49	43	40	24	10

Appendix Table 8. *Satisfaction with Internet Searches for Government Information by Covered Populations*

	How well did your internet search for government information meet your needs?				
	Very well	*Somewhat well*	*Not too well*	*Not at all well*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	39	51	9	1	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1240)		
Metropolitan County	41	49	9	2	$\chi^2 = 3.56$
Nonmetropolitan County	36	54	9	1	(.313)
Income Level			(n = 1235)		
Under $25,000	36	48	13	3	
$25,000 - $49,999	38	53	8	2	
$50,000 - $74,999	38	49	12	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	40	55	5	1	$\chi^2 = 21.42$*
$100,000 and over	41	53	5	1	(.045)
Age			(n = 1254)		
19 – 29	38	53	8	1	
30 – 39	47	46	5	2	
40 – 49	35	56	9	1	$\chi^2 = 19.22$
50 – 64	36	50	12	2	(.083)
65 and older	38	53	8	1	
Ethnicity			(n = 1245)		
Hispanic or Latino	47	46	7	1	$\chi^2 = 7.62$
Not Hispanic or Latino	37	52	9	2	(.055)
Race			(n = 1251)		
White only	38	52	8	2	
African American only	48	42	8	2	
Asian only	45	45	11	0	$\chi^2 = 18.13$
Native American only	58	38	4	0	(.112)
More than one race	22	53	22	3	
Education Level			(n = 1253)		
Less than HS graduate	41	43	14	2	
High school graduate	44	44	10	2	
Some college	40	47	10	2	$\chi^2 = 22.28$*
Bachelors or higher	35	58	6	1	(.008)
Veteran			(n = 1240)		
Veteran	45	47	6	2	$\chi^2 = 2.63$
Nonveteran	38	52	9	1	(.452)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1253)		
None selected	40	53	7	1	$\chi^2 = 8.13$*
At least one selected	38	50	10	2	(.043)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9. *Confidence with Completing Internet Tasks by Covered Populations*

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? Searching for and applying for jobs, including creating and submitting a resume				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	53	34	10	3	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1396)		
Metropolitan County	55	34	9	3	$\chi^2 = 3.38$
Nonmetropolitan County	51	35	11	3	(.337)
Income Level			(n = 1396)		
Under $25,000	38	38	17	7	
$25,000 - $49,999	44	41	10	5	
$50,000 - $74,999	57	31	9	2	
$75,000 - $99,999	62	31	7	0	$\chi^2 = 86.94$*
$100,000 and over	66	27	6	1	(.000)
Age			(n = 1413)		
19 – 29	47	42	10	1	
30 – 39	65	26	9	0.4	
40 – 49	65	29	4	2	$\chi^2 = 105.33$*
50 – 64	55	33	9	3	(.000)
65 and older	36	40	16	8	
Ethnicity			(n = 1404)		
Hispanic or Latino	53	34	13	1	$\chi^2 = 7.44$
Not Hispanic or Latino	52	34	10	4	(.059)
Race			(n = 1410)		
White only	53	34	10	4	
African American only	51	41	7	1	
Asian only	45	45	10	0	$\chi^2 = 22.87$*
Native American only	71	25	4	0	(.029)
More than one race	31	42	25	3	
Education Level			(n = 1411)		
Less than HS graduate	41	41	17	2	
High school graduate	47	35	15	3	
Some college	49	38	8	5	$\chi^2 = 33.38$*
Bachelors or higher	58	31	9	2	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1397)		
Veteran	35	41	11	13	$\chi^2 = 56.66$*
Nonveteran	55	33	10	2	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1411)		
None selected	60	32	6	2	$\chi^2 = 42.63$*
At least one selected	46	36	14	4	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? ***Finding reliable information about a health or medical condition***				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	43	46	10	2	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1395)		
Metropolitan County	45	44	10	1	$\chi^2 = 6.14$
Nonmetropolitan County	41	47	9	2	(.105)
Income Level			(n = 1394)		
Under $25,000	26	55	14	5	
$25,000 - $49,999	41	48	10	1	
$50,000 - $74,999	49	44	6	2	
$75,000 - $99,999	44	46	10	0.4	$\chi^2 = 73.78$*
$100,000 and over	56	37	8	0.4	(.000)
Age			(n = 1412)		
19 – 29	38	46	14	2	
30 – 39	50	41	8	2	
40 – 49	49	40	10	1	$\chi^2 = 29.33$*
50 – 64	46	44	9	2	(.004)
65 and older	34	55	8	2	
Ethnicity			(n = 1403)		
Hispanic or Latino	40	43	14	3	$\chi^2 = 5.49$
Not Hispanic or Latino	43	46	9	2	(.139)
Race			(n = 1410)		
White only	44	46	9	2	
African American only	39	42	13	6	
Asian only	38	45	12	5	$\chi^2 = 19.31$
Native American only	46	46	7	0	(.081)
More than one race	31	46	23	0	
Education Level			(n = 1411)		
Less than HS graduate	27	49	20	3	
High school graduate	38	51	10	2	
Some college	41	47	10	2	$\chi^2 = 23.30$*
Bachelors or higher	48	43	8	1	(.006)
Veteran			(n = 1395)		
Veteran	32	51	12	5	$\chi^2 = 16.17$*
Nonveteran	45	45	9	1	(.001)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1412)		
None selected	48	43	7	2	$\chi^2 = 21.30$*
At least one selected	38	48	12	2	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? ***Taking a course or training materials to improve your job skills***				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	42	40	13	5	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1395)		
Metropolitan County	41	41	13	5	$\chi^2 = 0.57$
Nonmetropolitan County	42	39	13	5	(.902)
Income Level			(n = 1394)		
Under $25,000	28	42	20	10	
$25,000 - $49,999	34	44	17	6	
$50,000 - $74,999	38	46	13	4	
$75,000 - $99,999	50	39	8	3	$\chi^2 = 112.27$*
$100,000 and over	62	30	6	3	(.000)
Age			(n = 1408)		
19 – 29	41	44	15	1	
30 – 39	51	40	8	2	
40 – 49	50	40	9	2	$\chi^2 = 138.97$*
50 – 64	48	33	14	4	(.000)
65 and older	22	47	17	14	
Ethnicity			(n = 1401)		
Hispanic or Latino	44	42	13	2	$\chi^2 = 4.46$
Not Hispanic or Latino	41	40	13	6	(.216)
Race			(n = 1407)		
White only	41	41	12	5	
African American only	41	40	14	4	
Asian only	43	38	19	0	$\chi^2 = 14.84$
Native American only	64	25	11	0	(.250)
More than one race	43	31	23	3	
Education Level			(n = 1411)		
Less than HS graduate	37	39	19	5	
High school graduate	28	47	19	6	
Some college	37	43	15	5	$\chi^2 = 48.71$*
Bachelors or higher	51	36	9	5	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1394)		
Veteran	32	30	22	16	$\chi^2 = 54.98$*
Nonveteran	43	42	12	4	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1409)		
None selected	51	38	9	3	$\chi^2 = 52.75$*
At least one selected	34	43	17	7	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? ***Accessing online banking or financial services***				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	59	29	9	3	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1389)		
Metropolitan County	64	28	7	2	$\chi^2 = 14.55$*
Nonmetropolitan County	56	30	12	3	(.002)
Income Level			(n = 1393)		
Under $25,000	42	36	13	9	
$25,000 - $49,999	57	31	11	2	
$50,000 - $74,999	66	27	7	0	
$75,000 - $99,999	57	30	12	1	$\chi^2 = 109.83$*
$100,000 and over	74	21	4	1	(.000)
Age			(n = 1407)		
19 – 29	44	34	18	3	
30 – 39	60	31	7	2	
40 – 49	68	25	6	1	$\chi^2 = 64.74$*
50 – 64	68	24	6	2	(.000)
65 and older	55	31	11	4	
Ethnicity			(n = 1396)		
Hispanic or Latino	35	41	21	4	$\chi^2 = 66.64$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	63	27	8	2	(.000)
Race			(n = 1404)		
White only	61	28	9	2	
African American only	45	31	17	7	
Asian only	44	39	2	15	$\chi^2 = 57.96$*
Native American only	52	35	14	0	(.000)
More than one race	41	35	24	0	
Education Level			(n = 1407)		
Less than HS graduate	32	42	20	5	
High school graduate	53	30	12	5	
Some college	60	29	9	2	$\chi^2 = 37.81$*
Bachelors or higher	64	27	8	2	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1392)		
Veteran	34	36	26	4	$\chi^2 = 67.95$*
Nonveteran	63	28	8	2	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1408)		
None selected	70	24	6	1	$\chi^2 = 67.96$*
At least one selected	50	34	13	4	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? ***Accessing or applying for government services***				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	37	42	17	4	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1387)		
Metropolitan County	39	41	17	4	$\chi^2 = 2.26$
Nonmetropolitan County	36	42	17	5	(.521)
Income Level			(n = 1387)		
Under $25,000	30	42	19	8	
$25,000 - $49,999	31	44	19	6	
$50,000 - $74,999	37	45	17	2	
$75,000 - $99,999	39	42	16	4	$\chi^2 = 43.28$*
$100,000 and over	50	35	13	2	(.000)
Age			(n = 1407)		
19 – 29	34	44	18	4	
30 – 39	43	41	13	2	
40 – 49	44	40	13	3	$\chi^2 = 40.14$*
50 – 64	39	39	19	3	(.000)
65 and older	27	45	20	8	
Ethnicity			(n = 1394)		
Hispanic or Latino	36	43	18	4	$\chi^2 = 0.34$
Not Hispanic or Latino	37	42	17	4	(.952)
Race			(n = 1403)		
White only	37	41	17	4	
African American only	42	42	11	4	
Asian only	29	48	19	5	$\chi^2 = 8.08$
Native American only	39	50	11	0	(.779)
More than one race	29	41	27	3	
Education Level			(n = 1402)		
Less than HS graduate	33	43	19	5	
High school graduate	37	37	22	6	
Some college	33	48	16	3	$\chi^2 = 18.49$*
Bachelors or higher	41	39	16	5	(.030)
Veteran			(n = 1389)		
Veteran	32	30	29	9	$\chi^2 = 31.09$*
Nonveteran	38	43	16	3	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1405)		
None selected	41	42	13	4	$\chi^2 = 18.13$*
At least one selected	33	41	20	5	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? ***Finding educational content and information***				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	45	41	11	3	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1387)		
Metropolitan County	45	42	11	2	$\chi^2 = 3.31$
Nonmetropolitan County	45	41	11	4	(.346)
Income Level			(n = 1384)		
Under $25,000	32	43	18	8	
$25,000 - $49,999	41	40	15	5	
$50,000 - $74,999	44	48	8	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	43	46	9	2	$\chi^2 = 101.38$*
$100,000 and over	63	32	5	0.4	(.000)
Age			(n = 1404)		
19 – 29	42	40	15	3	
30 – 39	49	42	7	2	
40 – 49	50	40	9	1	$\chi^2 = 59.09$*
50 – 64	51	37	10	2	(.000)
65 and older	31	48	13	7	
Ethnicity			(n = 1392)		
Hispanic or Latino	39	46	14	3	$\chi^2 = 4.23$
Not Hispanic or Latino	45	41	11	3	(.238)
Race			(n = 1398)		
White only	45	42	11	3	
African American only	42	36	19	3	
Asian only	48	43	7	2	$\chi^2 = 9.72$
Native American only	52	41	4	4	(.640)
More than one race	38	38	18	6	
Education Level			(n = 1401)		
Less than HS graduate	32	46	19	4	
High school graduate	37	43	17	4	
Some college	42	43	10	5	$\chi^2 = 41.93$*
Bachelors or higher	51	39	8	1	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1386)		
Veteran	29	47	13	12	$\chi^2 = 50.24$*
Nonveteran	47	41	11	2	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1403)		
None selected	54	39	6	2	$\chi^2 = 65.09$*
At least one selected	36	44	16	4	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? Using a video application, such as Zoom, for work, school, or telehealth				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	46	32	15	7	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1388)		
Metropolitan County	47	34	13	6	$\chi^2 = 11.01$*
Nonmetropolitan County	45	29	17	9	(.012)
Income Level			(n = 1388)		
Under $25,000	33	32	20	16	
$25,000 - $49,999	36	36	19	9	
$50,000 - $74,999	50	32	13	5	
$75,000 - $99,999	51	32	14	5	$\chi^2 = 110.74$*
$100,000 and over	65	26	7	2	(.000)
Age			(n = 1403)		
19 – 29	45	34	18	3	
30 – 39	54	30	12	3	
40 – 49	61	27	9	4	$\chi^2 = 118.29$*
50 – 64	49	28	16	7	(.000)
65 and older	27	39	17	17	
Ethnicity			(n = 1396)		
Hispanic or Latino	43	39	14	5	$\chi^2 = 6.65$
Not Hispanic or Latino	46	31	15	8	(.084)
Race			(n = 1402)		
White only	46	32	14	8	
African American only	48	28	21	3	
Asian only	48	24	19	10	$\chi^2 = 11.40$
Native American only	54	31	8	8	(.495)
More than one race	31	46	17	6	
Education Level			(n = 1405)		
Less than HS graduate	39	28	25	9	
High school graduate	38	29	21	11	
Some college	41	33	18	7	$\chi^2 = 51.28$*
Bachelors or higher	53	32	9	6	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1389)		
Veteran	37	27	23	14	$\chi^2 = 18.96$*
Nonveteran	47	32	14	7	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1404)		
None selected	56	29	11	4	$\chi^2 = 54.28$*
At least one selected	38	34	18	10	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? Using a word processing application, such as Google Docs or Microsoft Word, to create a document				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	54	30	11	4	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1383)		
Metropolitan County	54	32	10	4	$\chi^2 = 3.55$
Nonmetropolitan County	55	29	12	5	(.314)
Income Level			(n = 1382)		
Under $25,000	40	29	19	12	
$25,000 - $49,999	46	36	11	8	
$50,000 - $74,999	59	28	12	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	60	32	9	0	$\chi^2 = 131.78$*
$100,000 and over	71	24	5	0.4	(.000)
Age			(n = 1402)		
19 – 29	53	31	14	2	
30 – 39	55	35	7	2	
40 – 49	64	28	6	2	$\chi^2 = 46.66$*
50 – 64	55	29	11	5	(.000)
65 and older	47	30	15	8	
Ethnicity			(n = 1391)		
Hispanic or Latino	50	34	15	2	$\chi^2 = 7.48$
Not Hispanic or Latino	55	30	10	5	(.058)
Race			(n = 1397)		
White only	55	30	11	4	
African American only	40	44	11	4	
Asian only	51	40	9	0	$\chi^2 = 11.88$
Native American only	58	29	8	4	(.456)
More than one race	53	27	15	6	
Education Level			(n = 1399)		
Less than HS graduate	43	34	16	7	
High school graduate	39	34	17	9	
Some college	49	34	11	6	$\chi^2 = 76.98$*
Bachelors or higher	65	26	8	1	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1384)		
Veteran	37	33	20	9	$\chi^2 = 31.46$*
Nonveteran	57	30	10	4	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1398)		
None selected	66	27	6	2	$\chi^2 = 82.51$*
At least one selected	44	34	16	6	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them?				
	Using email				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	72	21	5	1	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1385)		
Metropolitan County	78	18	4	1	$\chi^2 = 22.59$*
Nonmetropolitan County	67	24	7	2	(.000)
Income Level			(n = 1385)		
Under $25,000	61	24	10	5	
$25,000 - $49,999	67	27	6	1	
$50,000 - $74,999	76	19	4	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	71	22	6	1	$\chi^2 = 83.38$*
$100,000 and over	87	12	2	0	(.000)
Age			(n = 1400)		
19 – 29	60	27	10	4	
30 – 39	68	25	4	2	
40 – 49	79	16	5	0.4	$\chi^2 = 52.61$*
50 – 64	79	18	3	0.3	(.000)
65 and older	73	21	5	1	
Ethnicity			(n = 1393)		
Hispanic or Latino	53	32	11	4	$\chi^2 = 48.11$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	75	19	5	1	(.000)
Race			(n = 1399)		
White only	73	21	5	1	
African American only	60	30	7	3	
Asian only	81	12	5	2	$\chi^2 = 34.48$*
Native American only	78	22	0	0	(.000)
More than one race	57	17	17	9	
Education Level			(n = 1401)		
Less than HS graduate	52	30	14	4	
High school graduate	65	25	7	3	
Some college	71	22	5	1	$\chi^2 = 35.34$*
Bachelors or higher	77	19	4	1	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1387)		
Veteran	53	30	13	5	$\chi^2 = 45.48$*
Nonveteran	74	20	4	1	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1402)		
None selected	81	17	2	0.3	$\chi^2 = 63.45$*
At least one selected	64	25	9	2	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them? ***Using social media***				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	61	27	8	3	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1382)		
Metropolitan County	68	22	7	4	$\chi^2 = 21.62$*
Nonmetropolitan County	56	32	9	3	(.000)
Income Level			(n = 1382)		
Under $25,000	56	23	16	5	
$25,000 - $49,999	57	30	8	5	
$50,000 - $74,999	67	25	7	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	57	34	7	2	$\chi^2 = 52.01$*
$100,000 and over	71	23	4	2	(.000)
Age			(n = 1397)		
19 – 29	55	31	12	3	
30 – 39	66	27	5	2	
40 – 49	70	24	5	2	$\chi^2 = 62.48$*
50 – 64	66	26	7	1	(.000)
65 and older	52	30	10	8	
Ethnicity			(n = 1388)		
Hispanic or Latino	48	37	13	3	$\chi^2 = 20.15$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	64	26	7	3	(.000)
Race			(n = 1395)		
White only	62	28	8	3	
African American only	61	17	16	6	
Asian only	54	29	12	5	$\chi^2 = 15.54$
Native American only	64	29	4	4	(.213)
More than one race	54	29	9	9	
Education Level			(n = 1396)		
Less than HS graduate	60	28	11	2	
High school graduate	59	27	11	4	
Some college	61	28	7	3	$\chi^2 = 4.05$
Bachelors or higher	63	27	8	3	(.908)
Veteran			(n = 1383)		
Veteran	39	39	7	15	$\chi^2 = 88.04$*
Nonveteran	64	26	8	2	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1397)		
None selected	70	23	5	2	$\chi^2 = 50.24$*
At least one selected	53	31	11	5	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	If you were asked to complete the following tasks using the internet, how confident would you be that you could successfully complete them?				
	Online shopping				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	63	28	7	2	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1364)		
Metropolitan County	68	25	6	2	$\chi^2 = 13.41$*
Nonmetropolitan County	59	31	8	2	(.004)
Income Level			(n = 1362)		
Under $25,000	52	31	10	7	
$25,000 - $49,999	59	31	8	1	
$50,000 - $74,999	66	26	8	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	63	31	6	0	$\chi^2 = 85.64$*
$100,000 and over	75	23	2	0	(.000)
Age			(n = 1376)		
19 – 29	53	35	10	2	
30 – 39	66	29	4	1	
40 – 49	71	24	3	2	$\chi^2 = 43.45$*
50 – 64	68	26	5	1	(.000)
65 and older	59	28	12	1	
Ethnicity			(n = 1371)		
Hispanic or Latino	44	42	12	2	$\chi^2 = 36.55$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	66	26	6	2	(.000)
Race			(n = 1376)		
White only	64	27	7	2	
African American only	56	31	10	3	
Asian only	61	36	3	0	$\chi^2 = 16.57$
Native American only	59	41	0	0	(.167)
More than one race	45	39	10	7	
Education Level			(n = 1380)		
Less than HS graduate	58	30	7	5	
High school graduate	58	30	8	4	
Some college	64	27	8	2	$\chi^2 = 20.52$*
Bachelors or higher	65	29	6	0.3	(.015)
Veteran			(n = 1368)		
Veteran	46	39	11	4	$\chi^2 = 23.32$*
Nonveteran	65	27	7	1	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1379)		
None selected	74	20	6	0.3	$\chi^2 = 70.52$*
At least one selected	53	36	8	3	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 10. *Concern about Internet Privacy and Security by Covered Populations*

	How concerned are you about internet privacy and security?				
	Very concerned	*Somewhat concerned*	*Not too concerned*	*Not at all concerned*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	41	45	13	2	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1394)		
Metropolitan County	37	47	14	2	$\chi^2 = 8.40$*
Nonmetropolitan County	44	42	12	1	(.038)
Income Level			(n = 1393)		
Under $25,000	40	41	15	4	
$25,000 - $49,999	41	45	12	2	
$50,000 - $74,999	34	52	13	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	45	43	11	2	$\chi^2 = 20.79$
$100,000 and over	44	43	13	0.4	(.054)
Age			(n = 1408)		
19 – 29	38	43	17	2	
30 – 39	40	39	18	4	
40 – 49	39	49	11	1	$\chi^2 = 41.91$*
50 – 64	49	40	10	1	(.000)
65 and older	35	54	10	1	
Ethnicity			(n = 1400)		
Hispanic or Latino	45	36	18	2	$\chi^2 = 9.29$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	40	46	12	2	(.026)
Race			(n = 1407)		
White only	40	46	13	2	
African American only	50	36	10	4	
Asian only	44	35	21	0	$\chi^2 = 20.83$
Native American only	62	19	19	0	(.053)
More than one race	29	51	17	3	
Education Level			(n = 1408)		
Less than HS graduate	42	35	16	7	
High school graduate	34	48	15	3	
Some college	45	42	12	1	$\chi^2 = 26.63$*
Bachelors or higher	39	47	13	1	(.002)
Veteran			(n = 1394)		
Veteran	49	39	12	1	$\chi^2 = 4.63$
Nonveteran	40	45	13	2	(.201)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1410)		
None selected	41	46	12	1	$\chi^2 = 3.08$
At least one selected	41	43	14	2	(.380)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 11. *Confidence with Completing Privacy or Security Tasks by Covered Populations*

	How confident are you in your ability to do the following tasks?				
	Keeping your devices updated with the latest software updates				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	45	41	13	2	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1394)		
Metropolitan County	44	43	12	2	$\chi^2 = 2.50$
Nonmetropolitan County	46	39	13	3	(.475)
Income Level			(n = 1395)		
Under $25,000	33	47	16	5	
$25,000 - $49,999	45	41	12	2	
$50,000 - $74,999	48	39	12	2	
$75,000 - $99,999	46	41	11	2	$\chi^2 = 32.74$*
$100,000 and over	52	38	10	0	(.001)
Age			(n = 1411)		
19 – 29	41	45	13	2	
30 – 39	58	32	9	1	
40 – 49	52	38	9	1	$\chi^2 = 59.89$*
50 – 64	46	40	14	1	(.000)
65 and older	32	47	16	5	
Ethnicity			(n = 1401)		
Hispanic or Latino	43	41	15	1	$\chi^2 = 2.59$
Not Hispanic or Latino	45	40	12	2	(.460)
Race			(n = 1408)		
White only	45	41	12	2	
African American only	38	41	17	4	
Asian only	48	36	17	0	$\chi^2 = 14.02$
Native American only	48	44	7	0	(.299)
More than one race	31	43	26	0	
Education Level			(n = 1411)		
Less than HS graduate	38	43	14	5	
High school graduate	43	40	12	5	
Some college	44	42	12	1	$\chi^2 = 15.07$
Bachelors or higher	46	39	13	2	(.089)
Veteran			(n = 1394)		
Veteran	38	46	10	6	$\chi^2 = 14.26$*
Nonveteran	46	40	13	2	(.003)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1409)		
None selected	49	40	10	1	$\chi^2 = 16.22$*
At least one selected	41	41	15	3	(.001)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 11 continued.

	How confident are you in your ability to do the following tasks?				
	Using strong passwords				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	47	41	11	2	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1388)		
Metropolitan County	48	41	10	2	$\chi^2 = 1.66$
Nonmetropolitan County	46	41	12	2	(.647)
Income Level			(n = 1386)		
Under $25,000	40	39	16	5	
$25,000 - $49,999	43	43	11	3	
$50,000 - $74,999	50	41	8	1	
$75,000 - $99,999	53	35	11	1	$\chi^2 = 39.97$*
$100,000 and over	48	44	8	0	(.000)
Age			(n = 1402)		
19 – 29	44	37	16	3	
30 – 39	48	42	9	1	
40 – 49	52	36	9	2	$\chi^2 = 32.43$*
50 – 64	50	39	11	1	(.001)
65 and older	40	49	8	3	
Ethnicity			(n = 1395)		
Hispanic or Latino	45	37	17	1	$\chi^2 = 11.06$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	47	41	10	2	(.011)
Race			(n = 1400)		
White only	47	41	10	2	
African American only	43	43	11	3	
Asian only	46	38	16	0	$\chi^2 = 25.55$*
Native American only	44	37	19	0	(.012)
More than one race	34	40	14	11	
Education Level			(n = 1404)		
Less than HS graduate	43	29	19	9	
High school graduate	45	39	12	4	
Some college	46	44	10	1	$\chi^2 = 34.83$*
Bachelors or higher	48	40	10	2	(.000)
Veteran			(n = 1389)		
Veteran	36	44	16	4	$\chi^2 = 12.70$*
Nonveteran	48	40	10	2	(.005)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1405)		
None selected	54	39	7	1	$\chi^2 = 38.84$*
At least one selected	41	43	14	3	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 11 continued.

	How confident are you in your ability to do the following tasks?				
	Using a password manager				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	32	35	25	8	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1387)		
Metropolitan County	30	38	25	8	$\chi^2 = 4.89$
Nonmetropolitan County	34	32	25	9	(.180)
Income Level			(n = 1384)		
Under $25,000	28	38	22	12	
$25,000 - $49,999	31	34	26	9	
$50,000 - $74,999	32	36	26	6	
$75,000 - $99,999	34	37	22	8	$\chi^2 = 19.15$
$100,000 and over	38	32	24	5	(.085)
Age			(n = 1405)		
19 – 29	35	34	25	6	
30 – 39	46	36	15	3	
40 – 49	37	38	20	6	$\chi^2 = 89.23$*
50 – 64	30	35	24	11	(.000)
65 and older	18	33	37	13	
Ethnicity			(n = 1394)		
Hispanic or Latino	37	37	23	4	$\chi^2 = 7.77$
Not Hispanic or Latino	31	35	25	9	(.051)
Race			(n = 1400)		
White only	32	35	25	8	
African American only	37	41	16	7	
Asian only	33	33	33	0	$\chi^2 = 12.12$
Native American only	41	37	15	7	(.436)
More than one race	38	29	21	12	
Education Level			(n = 1402)		
Less than HS graduate	35	30	23	12	
High school graduate	31	32	27	11	
Some college	32	38	25	6	$\chi^2 = 10.49$
Bachelors or higher	33	34	24	9	(.312)
Veteran			(n = 1387)		
Veteran	31	38	22	9	$\chi^2 = 0.95$
Nonveteran	32	35	25	8	(.813)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1404)		
None selected	35	33	25	7	$\chi^2 = 7.83$
At least one selected	30	36	24	10	(.050)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 11 continued.

	How confident are you in your ability to do the following tasks?				
	Identifying phishing attempts				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	31	42	20	7	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1390)		
Metropolitan County	30	43	21	7	$\chi^2 = 2.49$
Nonmetropolitan County	32	41	19	8	(.477)
Income Level			(n = 1388)		
Under $25,000	25	37	20	18	
$25,000 - $49,999	28	42	23	7	
$50,000 - $74,999	31	42	21	6	
$75,000 - $99,999	38	41	17	4	$\chi^2 = 80.70$*
$100,000 and over	36	46	17	0.4	(.000)
Age			(n = 1408)		
19 – 29	33	37	23	8	
30 – 39	36	43	16	5	
40 – 49	37	47	12	4	$\chi^2 = 38.43$*
50 – 64	28	43	22	7	(.000)
65 and older	25	40	25	11	
Ethnicity			(n = 1396)		
Hispanic or Latino	33	38	21	8	$\chi^2 = 1.38$
Not Hispanic or Latino	31	43	20	7	(.710)
Race			(n = 1405)		
White only	31	42	20	7	
African American only	41	31	16	13	
Asian only	17	52	19	12	$\chi^2 = 18.63$
Native American only	41	37	22	0	(.098)
More than one race	23	51	23	3	
Education Level			(n = 1408)		
Less than HS graduate	33	40	17	10	
High school graduate	26	39	21	14	
Some college	32	39	22	7	$\chi^2 = 26.93$*
Bachelors or higher	32	45	19	5	(.001)
Veteran			(n = 1392)		
Veteran	28	34	24	14	$\chi^2 = 15.06$*
Nonveteran	31	43	20	6	(.002)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1407)		
None selected	34	46	16	4	$\chi^2 = 36.30$*
At least one selected	28	38	24	10	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 11 continued.

	How confident are you in your ability to do the following tasks?				
	Configuring privacy and security settings in apps and software				
	Very confident	*Somewhat confident*	*Not too confident*	*Not at all confident*	*Significance*
			Percentages		
Total	28	41	24	8	
Metro/Nonmetro County			(n = 1383)		
Metropolitan County	26	41	25	8	$\chi^2 = 3.92$
Nonmetropolitan County	30	42	22	7	(.271)
Income Level			(n = 1380)		
Under $25,000	26	37	26	11	
$25,000 - $49,999	27	38	28	8	
$50,000 - $74,999	26	48	18	8	
$75,000 - $99,999	28	48	19	5	$\chi^2 = 30.07$*
$100,000 and over	32	38	25	5	(.003)
Age			(n = 1399)		
19 – 29	33	46	17	4	
30 – 39	40	41	16	4	
40 – 49	28	44	21	6	$\chi^2 = 89.49$*
50 – 64	25	40	26	9	(.000)
65 and older	16	37	34	13	
Ethnicity			(n = 1388)		
Hispanic or Latino	33	42	22	4	$\chi^2 = 6.47$
Not Hispanic or Latino	27	41	24	8	(.091)
Race			(n = 1396)		
White only	26	42	24	8	
African American only	41	37	19	3	
Asian only	48	33	19	0	$\chi^2 = 21.15$*
Native American only	33	46	17	4	(.048)
More than one race	29	43	20	9	
Education Level			(n = 1397)		
Less than HS graduate	29	43	18	11	
High school graduate	28	36	25	10	
Some college	28	41	25	6	$\chi^2 = 9.10$
Bachelors or higher	27	43	22	8	(.428)
Veteran			(n = 1383)		
Veteran	28	33	26	12	$\chi^2 = 7.50$
Nonveteran	28	42	23	7	(.058)
Disabilities/Difficulties			(n = 1398)		
None selected	28	47	20	6	$\chi^2 = 19.33$*
At least one selected	28	37	27	9	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 12. *Adequacy of Household Computer Devices by Covered Populations*

	Does your household have enough computer devices available to meet the needs of those living in this home?		
	Yes	*No*	*Significance*
	Percentages		
Total	90	10	
Metro/Nonmetro County	(n = 1398)		
Metropolitan County	91	9	$\chi^2 = 0.85$
Nonmetropolitan County	90	10	(.366)
Income Level	(n = 1396)		
Under $25,000	81	19	
$25,000 - $49,999	90	10	
$50,000 - $74,999	92	8	
$75,000 - $99,999	93	7	$\chi^2 = 32.60$*
$100,000 and over	95	5	(.000)
Age	(n = 1412)		
19 - 29	89	11	
30 - 39	90	10	
40 - 49	87	13	$\chi^2 = 9.52$*
50 - 64	90	11	(.049)
65 and older	95	6	
Ethnicity	(n = 1404)		
Hispanic or Latino	88	12	$\chi^2 = 1.18$
Not Hispanic or Latino	91	10	(.305)
Race	(n = 1411)		
White only	91	9	
African American only	87	13	
Asian only	93	7	$\chi^2 = 10.54$*
Native American only	82	18	(.032)
More than one race	77	23	
Education Level	(n = 1413)		
Less than HS graduate	86	14	
High school graduate	83	17	
Some college	90	10	$\chi^2 = 19.16$*
Bachelors or higher	93	7	(.000)
Veteran	(n = 1397)		
Veteran	90	10	$\chi^2 = 0.41$
Nonveteran	91	10	(.879)
Disabilities/Difficulties	(n = 1413)		
None selected	93	7	$\chi^2 = 12.95$*
At least one selected	88	12	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 13. *Failure of Technology Devices by Covered Populations*

	In the past six months, which of the following technology devices have failed to function properly for you?					
	Cell phone	*Desktop computer*	*Laptop computer*	*Tablet (or similar device)*	*Other device*	*None*
				Percentages		
Total	37	20	28	21	5	38
Metro/Nonmetro County				(n = 1387)		
Metropolitan County	30	17	25	19	4	45
Nonmetropolitan County	43	24	31	24	5	32
Income Level				(n = 1386)		
Under $25,000	48	21	19	19	5	31
$25,000 - $49,999	32	19	25	19	2	38
$50,000 - $74,999	29	14	26	19	4	47
$75,000 - $99,999	37	30	37	29	9	31
$100,000 and over	39	19	34	22	6	43
Age				(n = 1404)		
19 – 29	43	34	34	24	2	23
30 – 39	43	23	31	26	3	33
40 – 49	45	16	33	27	6	34
50 – 64	33	14	26	19	7	44
65 and older	25	17	19	15	4	52
Ethnicity				(n = 1394)		
Hispanic or Latino	49	39	37	29	3	16
Not Hispanic or Latino	35	17	27	20	5	42
Race				(n = 1401)		
White only	36	18	27	22	5	40
African American only	50	31	40	24	2	26
Asian only	32	50	48	12	0	24
Native American only	45	21	10	11	4	26
More than one race	40	38	48	25	15	24
Education Level				(n = 1402)		
Less than HS graduate	53	18	25	19	3	28
High school graduate	43	19	17	20	2	40
Some college	31	17	24	19	3	41
Bachelors or higher	39	23	36	24	7	36
Veteran				(n = 1388)		
Veteran	49	34	35	22	2	25
Nonveteran	36	18	27	21	5	40
Disabilities/Difficulties				(n = 1404)		
None selected	34	15	29	19	6	46
At least one selected	39	25	27	24	4	31

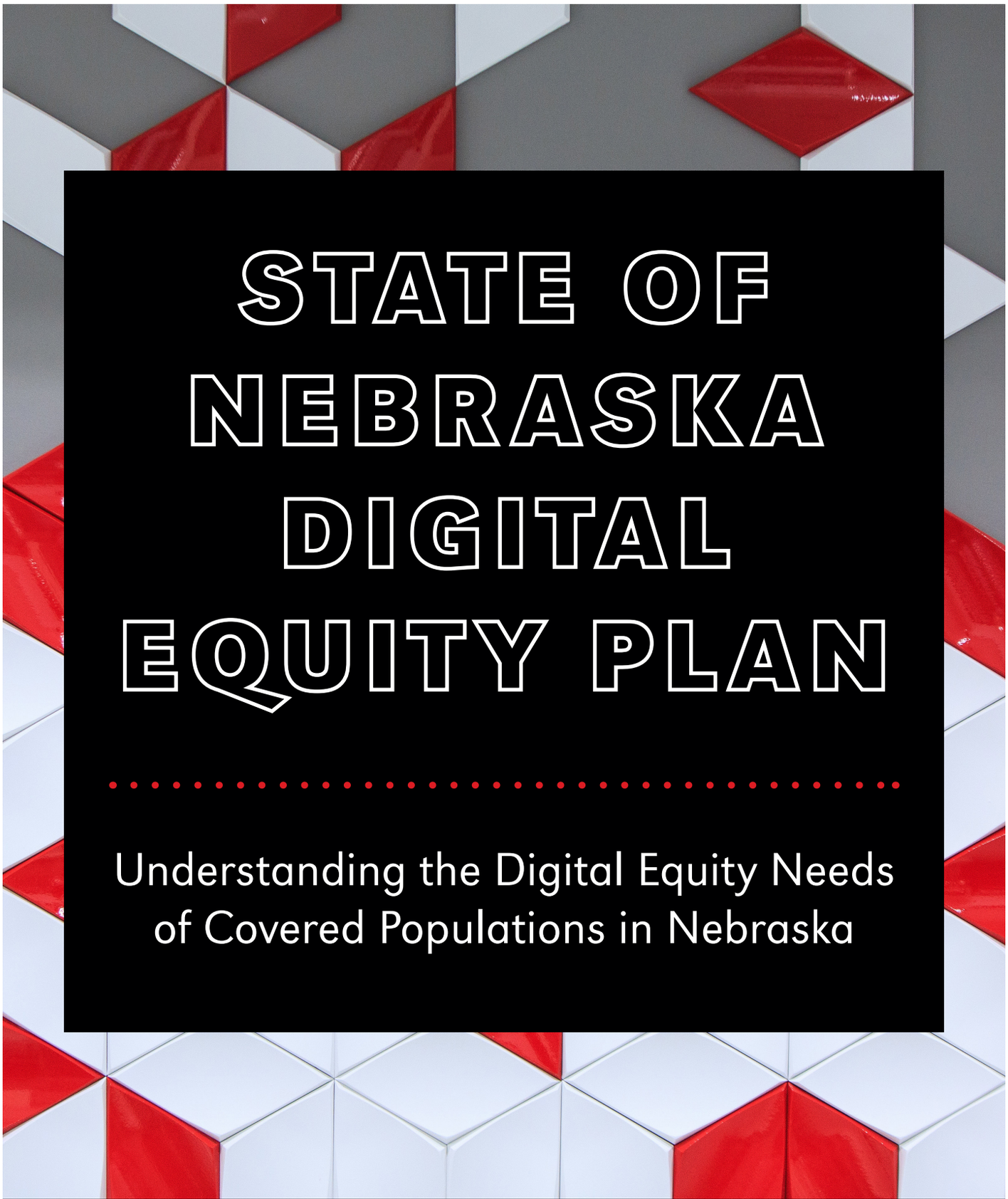
Appendix Table 14. *How Dealt with Device Failure by Covered Populations*

	If any of the devices failed, how did you deal with the problem you encountered?						
	Contacted user support for help	*Fixed the problem myself*	*Fixed the problem with help from friends or family*	*Was unable to fix one or more of these devices*	*Found help online*	*Went to a local computer store*	*Went to community institution, such as a school, library, or church*
				Percentages			
Total	32	46	28	17	21	8	3
Metro/Nonmetro County				(n = 859)			
Metropolitan County	29	48	25	20	20	8	3
Nonmetropolitan County	34	46	30	15	21	7	4
Income Level				(n = 857)			
Under $25,000	24	38	30	16	13	5	7
$25,000 - $49,999	29	42	29	14	16	5	2
$50,000 - $74,999	34	45	23	20	27	14	1
$75,000 - $99,999	41	52	23	21	29	11	4
$100,000 and over	37	56	32	17	24	7	3
Age				(n = 873)			
19 – 29	30	39	32	16	23	12	4
30 – 39	39	49	24	17	28	10	4
40 – 49	31	57	24	19	26	7	2
50 – 64	24	49	29	21	19	5	4
65 and older	40	39	29	10	7	6	3
Ethnicity				(n = 869)			
Hispanic or Latino	38	39	32	18	30	17	6
Not Hispanic or Latino	31	48	27	17	19	6	3
Race				(n = 871)			
White only	33	46	26	17	20	8	4
African American only	36	47	38	17	23	15	2
Asian only	32	54	58	5	27	5	0
Native American only	39	44	18	24	16	3	0
More than one race	14	38	44	29	24	0	4
Education Level				(n = 872)			
Less than HS graduate	29	46	24	13	11	8	3
High school graduate	28	40	31	15	18	4	3
Some college	31	36	28	18	17	8	2
Bachelors or higher	36	56	27	17	26	10	4
Veteran				(n = 858)			
Veteran	46	36	32	18	19	10	10
Nonveteran	30	48	27	17	21	8	3
Disabilities/Difficulties				(n = 873)			
None selected	35	55	27	12	21	6	1
At least one selected	31	40	29	20	21	10	5

Appendix Table 15. *Perceived Cost of Purchasing Computer by Covered Populations*

	In thinking about purchasing a desktop or laptop computer, what would you consider to be too expensive?						
	$50	*$100*	*$150*	*$250*	*$500*	*More than $1,000*	*Significance*
				Percentages			
Total	2	4	7	11	26	50	
Metro/Nonmetro County				(n = 1390)			
Metropolitan County	2	2	7	10	27	53	$\chi^2 = 16.34$*
Nonmetropolitan County	3	5	7	12	25	48	(.006)
Income Level				(n = 1387)			
Under $25,000	9	10	14	16	24	27	
$25,000 - $49,999	1	3	7	11	32	45	
$50,000 - $74,999	0.4	3	6	10	23	59	$\chi^2 = 211.9$*
$75,000 - $99,999	0	3	5	16	28	48	(.000)
$100,000 and over	0	2	5	3	23	68	
Age				(n = 1409)			
19 – 29	5	9	14	14	21	37	
30 – 39	2	5	7	11	26	48	
40 – 49	1	3	10	9	25	51	$\chi^2 = 106.6$*
50 – 64	2	1	5	12	25	55	(.000)
65 and older	1	2	2	8	32	57	
Ethnicity				(n = 1398)			
Hispanic or Latino	7	11	15	13	23	33	$\chi^2 = 89.33$*
Not Hispanic or Latino	1	3	6	11	27	53	(.000)
Race				(n = 1404)			
White only	2	3	6	11	27	52	
African American only	6	19	13	11	19	33	
Asian only	10	10	14	7	10	50	$\chi^2 = 107.1$*
Native American only	0	14	14	7	29	36	(.000)
More than one race	3	6	19	17	19	36	
Education Level				(n = 1407)			
Less than HS graduate	12	16	16	12	22	22	
High school graduate	5	9	9	16	23	38	
Some college	1	2	7	11	30	48	$\chi^2 = 132.1$*
Bachelors or higher	1	2	6	9	24	59	(.000)
Veteran				(n = 1390)			
Veteran	5	12	11	21	16	36	$\chi^2 = 64.40$*
Nonveteran	2	3	6	10	27	52	(.000)
Disabilities/Difficulties				(n = 1406)			
None selected	0.2	1	4	7	25	63	$\chi^2 = 120.0$*
At least one selected	4	6	10	14	27	39	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.



STATE OF NEBRASKA DIGITAL EQUITY PLAN

Understanding the Digital Equity Needs of Covered Populations in Nebraska

CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

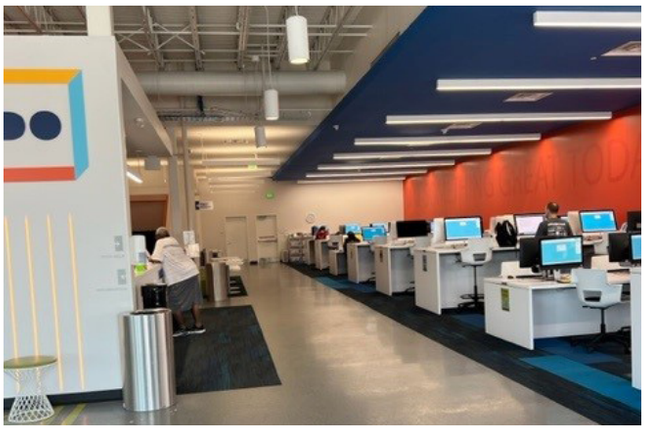
GERONTOLOGY

Ainsworth Cell Tower

Ainsworth Community Senior Center Focus Group

Do Space Focus Group

Intercultural Senior Center Focus Group



Do Space

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INTRODUCTION

According to 2021 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 7% of Nebraska households do not have access to a computer and 6% of Nebraska households have access to a computer but no internet. Although recent efforts suggest there is momentum and government action at both the federal and state levels to address lack of broadband (Hammel, 2023; Newman, 2023), this still leaves a considerable number of Nebraskans without access to reliable broadband in the meantime. Furthermore, broadband access is moot if Nebraskans do not have access or cannot afford technology and the cost of internet in the first place. The purpose of this report is to take a deeper look at specific covered populations in Nebraska who are more likely to be without affordable, reliable technology access and, therefore, are disproportionally impacted by the digital divide. The research team, representing the University of Nebraska at Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research and Department of Gerontology, was approached by the Nebraska Information Technology Commission to conduct focus groups with covered populations. Key findings from focus groups are shared. Findings indicate that access to technology and internet is not only vital for all Nebraskans but is also cost-prohibitive for already marginalized populations. Moving forward, these findings will inform the creation of a state digital equity plan for Nebraska.

BACKGROUND

Since the mid 1990s, concerns about inequities related to the access and usage of computing devices (e.g., computers, tablets, mobile and smartphones) and the internet (Mossberger et al., 2003) have been observed. These inequalities have become generically known as the digital divide, a gap between those who have affordable access and skills to effectively engage online and those who do not (National Digital Inclusion Alliance, NDIA, n/d). In the U.S., the digital divide disproportionally affects people of color, people with disabilities, older adults, those living in low-income households, and those in rural areas (Atske & Perrin, 2021, Perrin & Atske, 2021; Vogels, 2021; NDIA, n/d).

The consequences of digital inequity are vast, including disengagement with the labor market, education systems, healthcare, and lower rates of civic engagement, as just some examples (Norris, 2001; Mossberger et al., 2003; Ochillo 2022). As Ochillo (2022) notes: "Americans who perpetually struggle with the ability to get online continually lag behind their connected counterparts in earning power, lifelong learning, healthcare options, and political clout. Meanwhile, those with reliable high-speed internet access, digital dexterity, and ready access to computing devices will continue to produce some of the most influential digital architects of our

According to the Digital Equity Act of 2021 – established by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration identified eight different "covered populations" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Covered populations have historically experienced lower rates of computer and internet use overall. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission has adopted this term for the current study. The covered populations included in the Digital Equity Act of 2021 include:

- Persons who are 60 years of age or older
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Persons with disabilities
- Members of racial and ethnic minority groups
- Rural residents
- Individuals with a language barrier, including English-language learners or those who have low literacy levels
- Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150 percent of the poverty level

time as they enjoy unmatched opportunities for well-being, longevity, and wealth" (p. vii). More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the digital divide, especially among already marginalized populations (Ochillo, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021).

The stakes are high for all Americans because digital equity manifests in disparate levels of access to education, employment, economic services (e.g., banking, shopping, tax information), healthcare, as well as rich opportunities for social engagement and civic participation. A marked lack of broadband access can also lead to social isolation. One scholar representing the Imagining the Internet Center at Elon University commented, "[Without reliable internet] your ideas don't get heard. You can't contribute. And also, you can't benefit from the resources and opportunities that can only be accessed online" (Pattman, 2021, p. 6). A specialist at the Greenlining Institute—an organization dedicated to helping communities of color build wealth—argues that internet access is an essential service and ought to be treated as such (Quaintance, 2022, p. 1).

Numerous efforts exist to date to close the digital divide; however, any effort to do so will have to address the "three-legged stool" of digital inclusion: availability, access, and adoption (Siefer and Callahan, 2020; Hegle & Wilding, 2019).

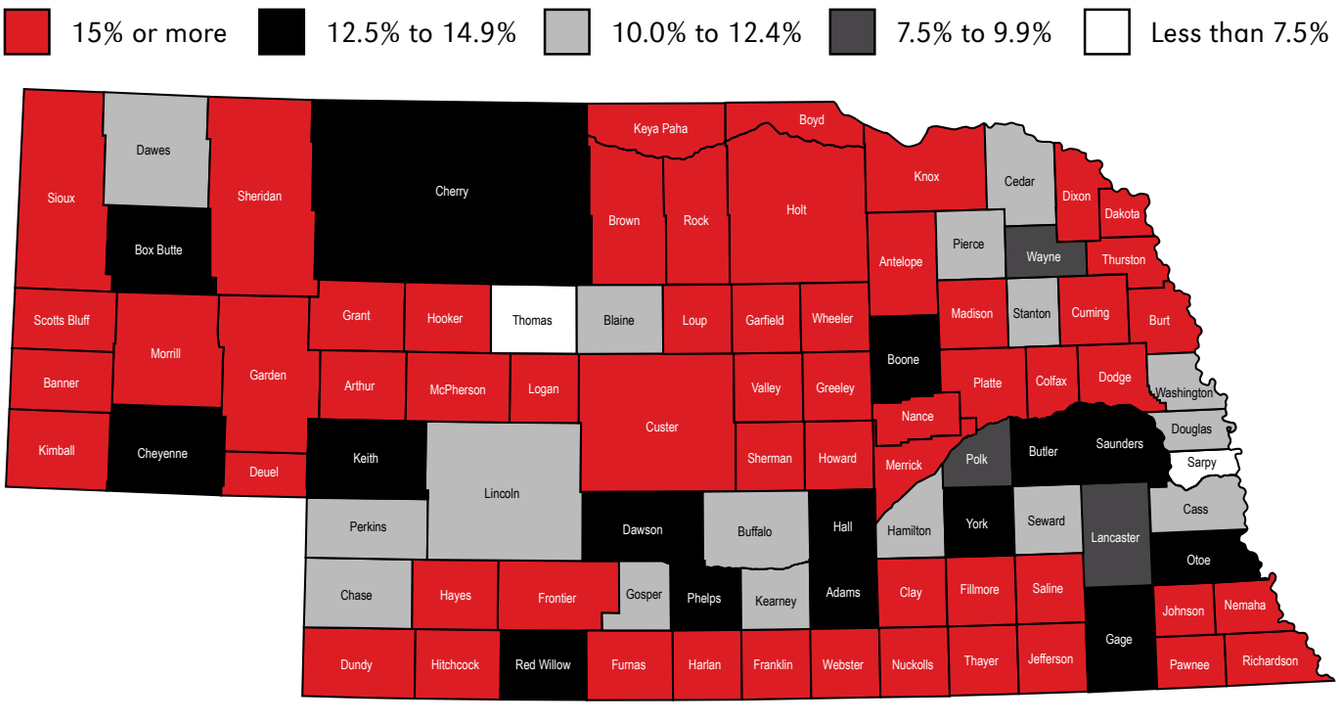
How does infrastructure enable broadband construction, activation, and maintenance?

How widespread is the coverage? How many residents have access to coverage? Do the characteristics of residents (such as age or income) adversely affect their ability to use services? How does access impact affordability and speed?

Are residents equipped to have services set up and usable at home and/or on a mobile device? Do residents know how to use each service on each device when needed and how to resume service after an interruption? To what extent do residents possess digital literacy skills?

All three issues exist in Nebraska to date. Based on prior reports, specific digital equity issues facing Nebraskans include the cost of monthly service for both computers and smart phones, user knowledge of available services and programs, and existing or planned infrastructure for increasing broadband access (Central Nebraska Economic Development District, 2023; Rural Broadband Task Force, 2021; Hegle & Wilding, 2019). Hardware, software, and quality internet service must all come together in confluence for individuals and communities to fulfill their digital needs. Quality in service is comprised of speed, both *upstream* (for sending or uploading content) and *downstream* (for receiving or downloading content). A recent example of these needs is discussed in a 2023 report from the Central Nebraska Economic Development District that includes a regional inventory of assets to address barriers of internet access, digital skills and tech support, access to devices, and user applications and services. As such, bridging these digital gaps for covered populations is of high importance to communities in Nebraska.

Population lacking computer or internet



Source: National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Digital Equity Act Population Viewer.

The map above depicts the percent of the population that is lacking a computer or internet by Nebraska counties. The interactive map tool was developed by the NTIA and the U.S. Census to highlight demographic and broadband availability by state. Various layers can be included when mapping, such as covered populations, population lacking fixed internet, population lacking computer or internet, population not using the internet, and population not using a device. Additional information is provided about the eight covered populations identified in the Digital Equity Act.

Additionally, there are market tensions in the delivery of internet access that makes ensuring access more difficult, especially for covered populations. For example, rural residents have a range of access issues. A rural resident of North Carolina portrayed the situation as such: "[Internet service providers] want to put more money into fiber optics and making it faster and faster and faster instead of building more towers and running more lines. They cater to what they already have" (Pattman, 2021, p. 5). There is also the "last mile problem" affecting many rural residents who live near population centers with broadband, but not near enough to have quality service inside their homes.

While many efforts to address the digital divide exist to date, few have benefitted all residents of an area. Other research demonstrates that populations of color have not been benefiting from programs to expand coverage. For example, Siefer and Callahan (2020) found, "most Americans who have a chance of benefitting from federal spending on rural broadband deployment subsidies are non-Hispanic white" (p. 1).

Another underrepresented group is students. In 2020, data published by the Pew Research Center indicated that nearly 60% of eighth graders rely on internet access daily or "almost every day" in order to complete their

homework (Auxier & Anderson, 2020, p. 2). Studies note that often students and families without convenient library access may resort to driving to a parking lot with a hot spot or frequenting commercial establishments, such as coffee shops, that offer free Wi-Fi. Hibbler-Britt (2020) notes, "With low internet access, students are reduced to using neighbors' service, going to the library, or sitting outside of the local Wal-Mart or other businesses that offer free internet access" (p. 35). Personal hotspots are an option but typically result in high costs. Moreover, lack of quality broadband meaningfully inhibits children's educational potential and all family members' social connections.

Age is also of interest to researchers studying digital equity: older Americans are often ill-equipped to handle routine tasks such as completing electronic forms and applications, accessing services, or finding critical information if they do not have adequate digital access (Nash, 2019). Individuals without home broadband may find that their local public library is a viable option for meeting some of their internet needs, provided that a library is available and within a reasonable transportation radius.

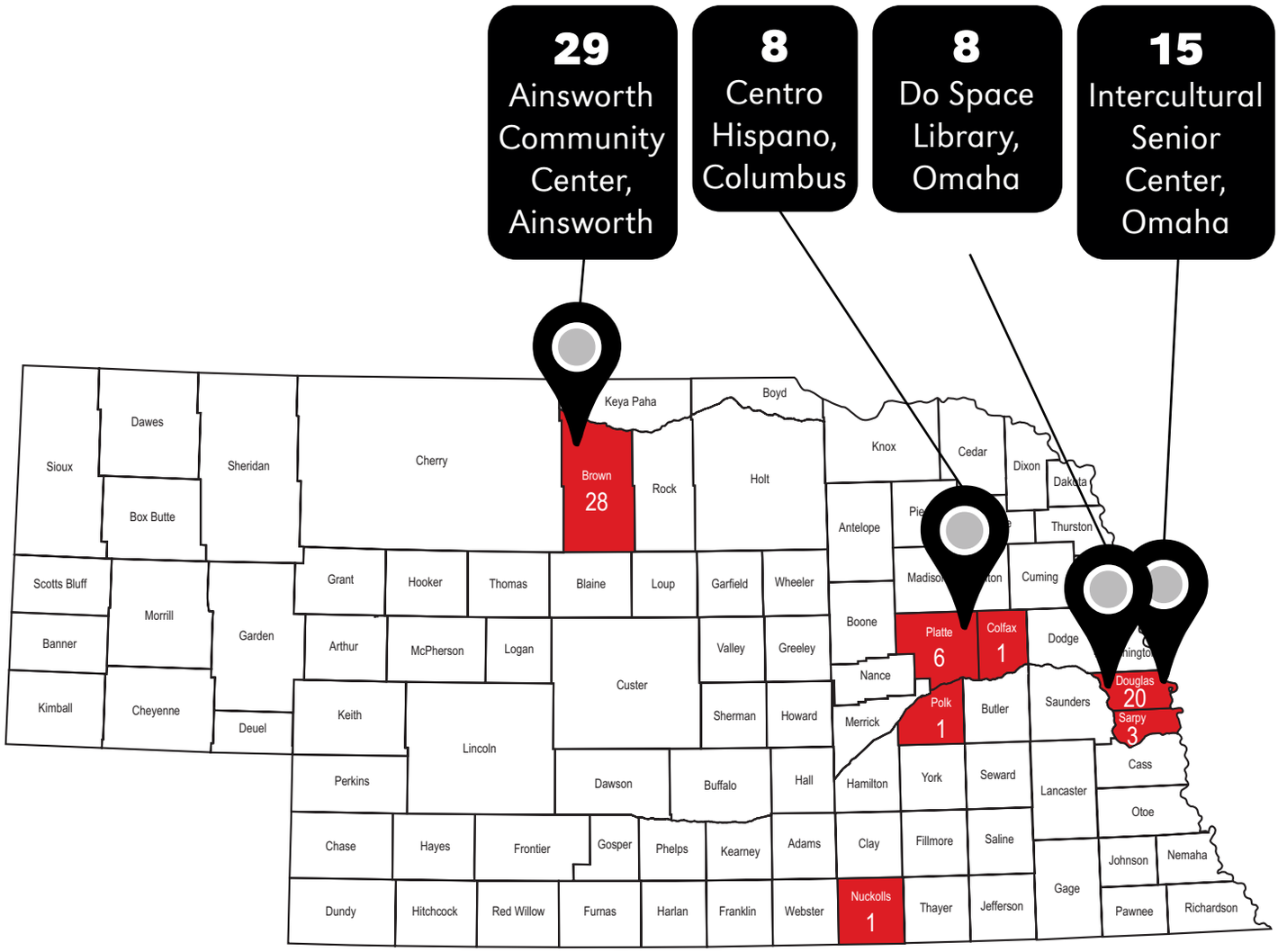
Nebraska, a largely rural state, was the fourth highest state on a 2021 USDA survey of ranchers and farmers who rely on high-speed internet for agricultural technology (Dejka, 2023, p. 1). There is now a multi-million-dollar effort underway to make broadband more accessible—and faster—for the estimated one-third of Nebraskans who lack adequate support for both home (computer) and mobile (phone) service. The plan will include community engagement around the proposed updated service maps, which residents can challenge by coordinating their efforts through one of a number of nonprofit organizations, internet service providers, and municipal offices involved in the upgrade (Dejka, 2023).

Living in a rural area is not the only access problem, though; many people in urban areas do not have equitable digital access and these inequities are exacerbated by investments restricted to low-density populations carrying an official 'rural' classification based on U.S. Census data. In fact, federal over-investment in rural-focused initiatives siphons off resources that may otherwise be available to those in need in urban communities. Previous research from the National Digital Inclusion Alliance found that "there are millions more people living in households with no broadband in big cities and urban counties than there are in the most rural and covered counties" (Siefer & Callahan, 2020, p. 4). Additionally, deficient social infrastructure, resulting from unaffordable, inaccessible, or low quality broadband in some urban areas "contributes to a widening of the divide between advantaged and disadvantaged populations" (Reisdorf et al., 2022, p. 300).

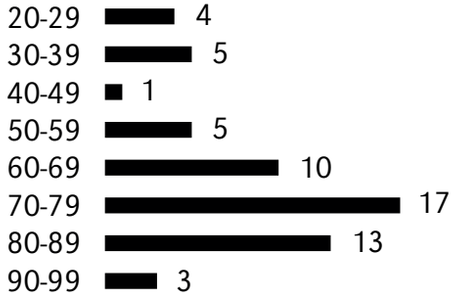
The next section presents findings from four focus groups conducted with covered populations in Nebraska. First, an overview of focus group participant demographics is shared, followed by key findings and themes from focus groups. An overview of the research methodology is provided in Appendix A, along with recruitment and focus group materials. It should be noted that a total of 60 individuals participated in focus group discussions; however, not all participants answered all demographic questions, so the frequency of responses will vary from question to question.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of Participants at each Focus Group Location and Counties of Residence



Age



Gender

FEMALE

47

MALE

13

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

37	15	5	1
No	Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano	Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	Yes, Cuban

Race

2 American Indian or Native American

5 Black or African American

46 White

Current marital status

19 Married

17 Widowed

12 Divorced

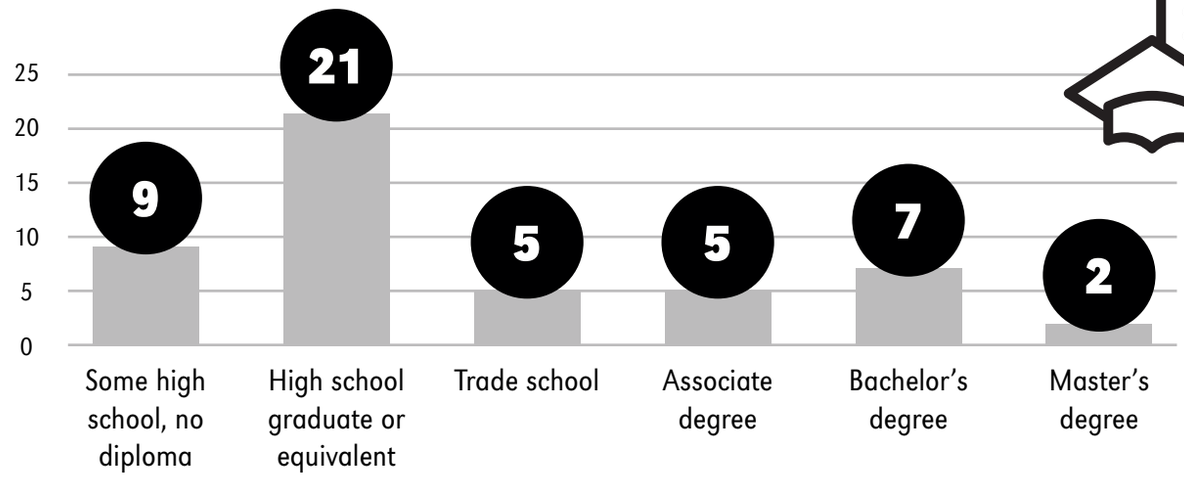
8 Single

1 Never been married

1 Separated

2 Domestic partnership/living with partner (not legally married)

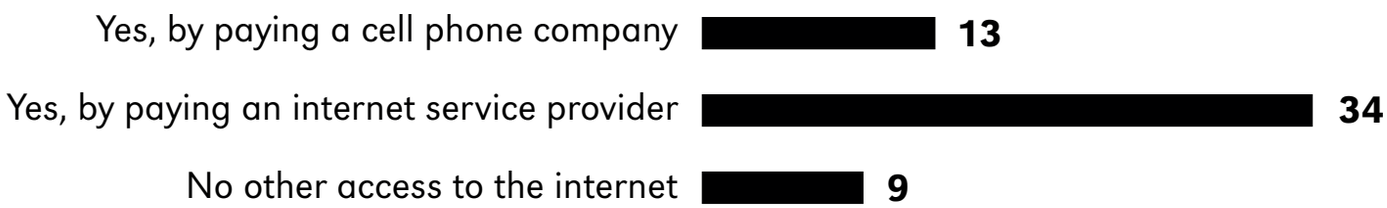
What is the highest level of education you have completed?



What best describes your current work status?

Do you or anyone in your household own any of the following?

Do you or anyone in your household have access to the internet?



KEY FINDINGS

Access and Usage

Understanding the current context in which Nebraskans access and use technology is the first step to tackling issues of digital equity within Nebraska communities. Focus group participants were asked to share all of the places where they currently access computing devices and the internet.

Common responses included:

- Using their smartphones
- Using computers or tablets at home
- Using computers at local libraries and community centers, such as the Intercultural Senior Center, Catholic Charities, Do Space in Omaha, and Centro Hispano in Columbus

Nearly 30 focus group participants said the primary mechanism they use for accessing the internet is their smartphone. As participants noted later in discussions, while smartphones are a resource and deemed essential in today's high-speed environment, smartphones do have limited capabilities for completing more extensive tasks that require a computer (e.g., homework assignments, job applications, immigration paperwork, etc.). Among participants, 35 said they use a computer, laptop, or tablet at home for access to a computing device and the internet. It should be noted that 13 of those 35 participants only have access to a computing device by participating in technology access programs through Do Space Library and the Intercultural Senior Center, both in Omaha. Therefore, without these programs, findings suggest many vulnerable populations would still lack technology access.

Based on responses, participants use computing devices and the internet for a variety of reasons. Interestingly, top reasons for using computing devices were slightly different based on the composition of participants. For example, for focus groups conducted at the Ainsworth Community Center and Intercultural Senior Center, both of which cater to serving older adults, the top reasons for using computing devices centered around connecting with family and entertainment.

Some examples include:

- Communicating with grandchildren and family
- Accessing email and social media sites like Facebook and WhatsApp
- Online shopping
- Listening to music and playing games
- Online banking
- Using Google to access information

For the focus groups conducted at Do Space and Centro Hispano, which both included younger adults, participants shared different reasons for using computing devices, emphasizing education and job opportunities in addition to expanding social connections.

For example, participants discussed:

- Using computing devices for creating resumes and submitting job applications
- Doing research to start their own businesses
- Completing their GED or adult education classes
- Completing their immigration paperwork

Again, among younger participants, computing devices are used for household activities like online banking and online shopping, accessing social media, and staying connected with family and friends. Only a handful of participants among all four focus groups said they do not use a computing device and/or the internet, citing lack of knowledge of technology, lack of access to the internet, and language barriers as the primary reasons.

Participants, particularly older adults, shared that they rely on others for help with using their computing devices and internet. Helpers are often grandchildren, caregivers, or neighbors. Close to 30 participants admitted to relying on others for help using their devices. Others mentioned how staff at the specific locations (i.e., Intercultural Senior Center, Centro Hispano, and Do Space) provide assistance for using computing devices and offer technology classes to teach digital literacy skills.

Top Reasons for Using Computing Devices

- Accessing social media and entertainment apps
- Connecting with family and friends
- Applying for jobs
- Researching information and getting news
- Taking online classes and training
- Submitting immigration paperwork
- Household activities (banking, ordering groceries, etc.)

Barriers to Access

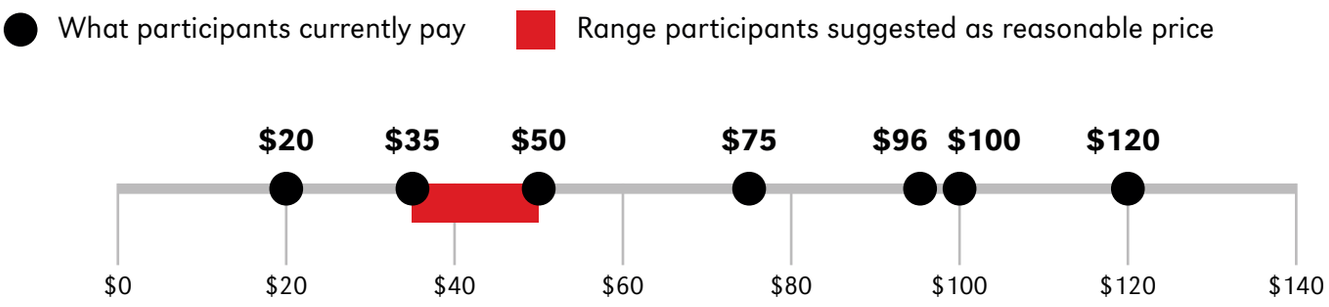
When asked about the major barriers that prevent people from accessing computing devices and the internet, participants engaged in robust discussions about the prominent barriers they face in accessing technology.

Broadly, barriers include:

- Cost
- Unstable internet
- Accessibility of devices and digital formats
- Lack of knowledge of how to use technology
- Lack of internet providers in rural areas

Cost

Across focus groups, the number one barrier participants cited for accessing technology was the cost, including both the cost of computing devices as well as the cost of internet service. Put simply, one participant said, "Internet is really, really expensive." Participants were asked to share how much they pay monthly for internet service currently, and pricing ranged from $20 to $120. Facilitators also asked participants what they feel is a reasonable price to pay for internet service per month. Across all four focus groups, answers ranged between $35 to $50.



Participants also shared suggestions for how internet cost might be addressed. For example, one participant suggested, "Internet price should depend on your budget. It should be a sliding scale. For example, Amazon offers discounts to students or people on SNAP. It should be the same way with internet." Many participants mentioned that finding grants or other resources would be helpful to assist with paying for internet service, but also cautioned that sometimes grants create unintended consequences. For instance, as one participant explained, "The Affordable Connectivity Program is out there for those who need help paying for the internet. But internet companies take advantage of that and increase prices in different areas." Thus, some constraints on internet pricing still seem necessary, particularly in areas where there is a lack of market competition among providers. The cost of internet service was unanimously agreed upon as the most prominent barrier to accessing technology.

> "Internet is so needed that it feels bizarre paying for something that is needed for everything.

Unstable internet

Another barrier participants shared was paying for internet service but frequently experiencing unstable internet. According to one participant, "The wind can blow hard and it's going to go out." Obviously, unstable internet is disruptive for many reasons. For example, participants described instances when the internet goes down and they need it for work or school. This disruption then requires them to go somewhere else, which can be an additional challenge for remote workers if they need a secure network. Some participants said when the internet goes down, they use their mobile hotspot, but that causes an additional cost when their mobile fee goes up. Put simply, one participant said, "When the internet goes down, it shuts us down." Participants also explained that the internet is not as stable when you get it at a reduced price or when it is being overused.

> "With inflation, families do not have money to spend on internet even though they need it. When kids are at school, they use [the internet] at school. But when they need it for homework, where do they go?

Accessibility of devices and formats

Participants shared that, for some, not having access to the appropriate type of computing device is a major barrier and hampers future opportunities. In short, this is a problem of accessibility. There are some things best viewed on a desktop computer, for example a resume that needs editing. Participants explained that people want to make everything accessible, but sometimes "just accessible" is not a practical solution. As one participant said, "there are layers to accessibility that people don't understand." For example, participants discussed needing to review and submit immigration and legal documents which can be difficult to

> "It's frustrating when the internet goes out.

comprehensively review on a tablet or smartphone device. Additionally, several participants shared that applications for state social assistance programs are not mobile friendly and, therefore, are difficult for people to access on a smartphone if they do not own a different computing device.

Lack of knowledge of how to use technology

Many participants acknowledged that they are deficient in technological skills and capabilities. Thus, a barrier to accessing technology or the internet is knowing how to use devices. This was especially prevalent among older adults in focus groups. One participant shared an anecdote that she recently had access to a mobile hotspot provided through the Do Space Tech Pack Program, but the hotspot kept going out. It wasn't until her cousin explained that the hotspot needed to remain plugged in that she understood the problem. Her reaction was "duh, but I didn't know." Although community centers like Do Space, Centro Hispano, and the Intercultural Senior Center do offer technology classes, we must recognize the learning curve for some individuals who have historically had very limited access to technology. Understanding how to use technology requires lifelong learning for many as opposed to a one-time education session.

Lack of internet providers in rural areas

Finally, participants living in rural areas of Nebraska shared that many internet providers still will not provide service in rural areas of the state. In many cases, this leaves one cable company as the only provider in town and enables them to dictate service terms which is unfair for consumers. As one participant said, "Rural areas are last on the list when new technology comes out." Since the size of communities may be too small for some companies, participants suggested that the state could provide incentives for companies to provide service, especially if there are only a few households in the area. Another option would be to assist households with service costs to make it more affordable for those who live in rural areas without many internet service providers. Despite the lack of multiple providers, participants who reside in rural areas did acknowledge that there has been an improvement in cell service recently.

Opportunities for Expansion: How can the state help?

After gaining a better understanding for the barriers covered populations face in accessing technology and the internet, researchers specifically asked participants to share opportunities or areas where the state may be able to expand access and enhance digital equity.

Discussions included four main themes:

- Address rising costs of internet service
- Develop innovative programs that provide equipment to covered populations
- Invest in more technology classes to expand digital literacy
- Make Wi-Fi accessible across communities in Nebraska

> "When there is no access and no affordability, then we get hit as a community.

Address rising costs of internet service

By far, the number one concern among focus group participants was the cost of internet service and, not surprisingly, the priority action item for the state to address, at least among this study's participants. In particular, when participants were asked what the state could do to better support access to technology, one participant who did not speak English said, "money, money down." Some participants acknowledged that there were affordability programs during the COVID-19 pandemic which were

helpful but now individuals are left without assistance. Another participant, speaking from her own experience, shared that there are some programs to help people get cell phones and establish home internet connection; for instance, when a person in the family has a child on Medicaid or some other type of public assistance. Even when these opportunities exist, people have to provide proof to companies and there is virtually no communication between the internet provider and the Medicaid program contact. Participants cited applying for grants and instituting protections for vulnerable populations as solutions. For example, many participants recommend a sliding affordability option so that what individuals pay for internet service is based on their income. Other participants recognized the value of applying for federal grants, particularly as a strategy for expanding service in all areas of the state. Ultimately, participants want recognition from the state that internet costs are increasing. As one older adult participant said, "I can afford to have multiple devices but some people can't. A fixed income makes it tough."

Develop innovative programs that provide equipment to covered populations

An important and innovative idea that was recommended as an opportunity for promoting digital equity in Nebraska is developing programs that provide computing devices and other equipment to underserved or vulnerable populations. Two of the four focus groups conducted for this study included participants from similar programs. Most recently, the Do Space Library in Omaha received funding from the Emergency Connectivity Fund from the Federal Communications Commission to provide 945 Omaha residents with laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots for one year. Findings from the Do Space Tech Pack Program final report suggest that over 65% of program participants reported that the program "improved their life a great deal." Among the Tech Pack participants that participated in focus groups, it is clear the impact was substantial in their lives. Similarly, focus groups participants at the Intercultural Senior Center in Omaha shared that they received GrandPads from the Intercultural Senior Center. Older adults appreciated the GrandPads as a way to connect with their families. Thus, any funding that the state can allocate or apply for to provide more people with technology equipment will greatly increase digital equity and literacy in the state. One focus group took this discussion deeper, suggesting that computing devices should be provided to younger generations of Nebraskans. More specifically, one participant said, "Get devices into the hands of young students. They are receiving education on how to use the devices so they are getting raised with the expertise and skills."

Invest in more technology classes to expand digital literacy

Across focus groups, participants expressed a need for more technology classes to help people learn how to use computing devices and internet skills. There was overwhelming agreement across focus groups that community centers similar to the Intercultural Senior Center, Centro Hispano, and Do Space are valuable hubs within their communities and people depend on these community centers for help with their technology needs. It is important for the state to recognize the value provided by these community centers (and others with similar missions) in enhancing digital equity and increasing digital literacy skills. Opportunities to provide additional funding or expand access hubs like these should be considered. Similarly, community centers can continue to offer technology classes and training for residents. Making classes more accessible is beneficial for individuals, including evening and weekend offerings, pre-recorded trainings, and online classes.

Make Wi-Fi accessible across communities in Nebraska

Overall, participants recommended that the state needs to commit to making Wi-Fi accessible for all across communities, urban or rural, in Nebraska. One participant shared that the City of Columbus is working to provide Wi-Fi at all of their parks and recreation areas. There is a need for advocacy among legislators and other policymakers to help them understand the importance of internet access, since ultimately they are the individuals who can produce change to improve connectivity.

CONCLUSION

This report provides a deeper understanding of digital inequities that exist in Nebraska for covered populations, notably older adults, low-income persons of color, and residents in rural areas of the state. After conducting four focus group discussions with individuals representing these populations, key findings emerged related to how covered populations access and use technology, as well as the barriers to access and opportunities for expansion in Nebraska. While most individuals have smartphones and admit they are essential, smartphones are limiting in the types of tasks individuals can complete. This is especially challenging for individuals trying to attain further education, seek job opportunities, or review important legal documents. In terms of barriers, the number one barrier across all covered populations in this study was cost. The cost of internet service, in particular, is unaffordable for many Nebraskans, which is especially frustrating for individuals when the internet is vital to engagement and advancement in society today. One notable finding was that there are some innovative equipment distribution programs, such as the Do Space Library Tech Pack Program, that provide covered populations with technology equipment, in an effort to level the digital divide. Many participants recommended that the state look into more investment opportunities like these innovative programs to assist covered populations in obtaining initial access.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

In 2023, the Nebraska Information Technology Commission partnered with the Center for Public Affairs Research and the Department of Gerontology both at the University of Nebraska at Omaha to conduct focus groups on specific covered populations in Nebraska on the topic of digital equity. The State of Nebraska received a one-year grant for $600,000 from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to develop a state digital equity plan to address state digital equity needs, including internet connectivity, access to appropriate devices, digital literacy skills, awareness of privacy and security best practices, and accessibility and inclusivity of public resources. More specifically, the UNO research team was asked to conduct focus groups with certain covered populations that are less likely to participate in other data collection methods to better understand access to technology and digital equity needs across the state. The covered populations in this study include older adults in rural and urban areas; low income, persons of color in urban areas; and persons of color with limited-English proficiency in rural areas.

The research questions for this project were:

- What are the digital equity needs for specific covered populations in Nebraska?
- How does digital equity (or inequity) impact the lives of Nebraskans?

The primary data collection mechanism was focus group listening sessions with the aforementioned covered populations in Nebraska to better understand the gaps in access to technology and opportunities for improvement. Focus group discussions are useful for facilitating discussions on a specific topic with persons from similar backgrounds (Krueger, 1998). Given the goal of generating robust discussion to better understand digital equity in Nebraska, we asked open-ended questions to generate open and honest discussion among participants.

Researchers conducted four focus groups of three covered populations: (1) older adults in rural areas; (2) older adults in urban areas; (3) low-income, persons of color, in urban areas of the state; and (4) persons of color, with limited-English proficiency in rural areas of the state. The four focus groups were conducted between May 17 and June 27, 2023. The focus groups were conducted at the Ainsworth Community Center in Ainsworth, the Intercultural Senior Center in Omaha, the Do Space Library in Omaha, and Centro Hispano in Columbus.

The research team identified the four geographic locations and sites to conduct the focus groups based on the requested covered populations. Each location was chosen because of its central location and convenience for participants representing the covered populations. Drawing on the professional networks of the research team, we obtained approval for site use at the Intercultural Senior Center in Omaha, the Do Space Library in Omaha, the Community Center in Ainsworth, and the Centro Hispano in Columbus. Since these site locations already had contact with persons meeting the inclusion criteria for this study, recruitment materials (see Appendix B) were distributed by the site locations, advertising the date, time, and topic for the focus group discussions. Researchers also obtained approval from site coordinators/directors to recruit research participants from their existing lists of clients.

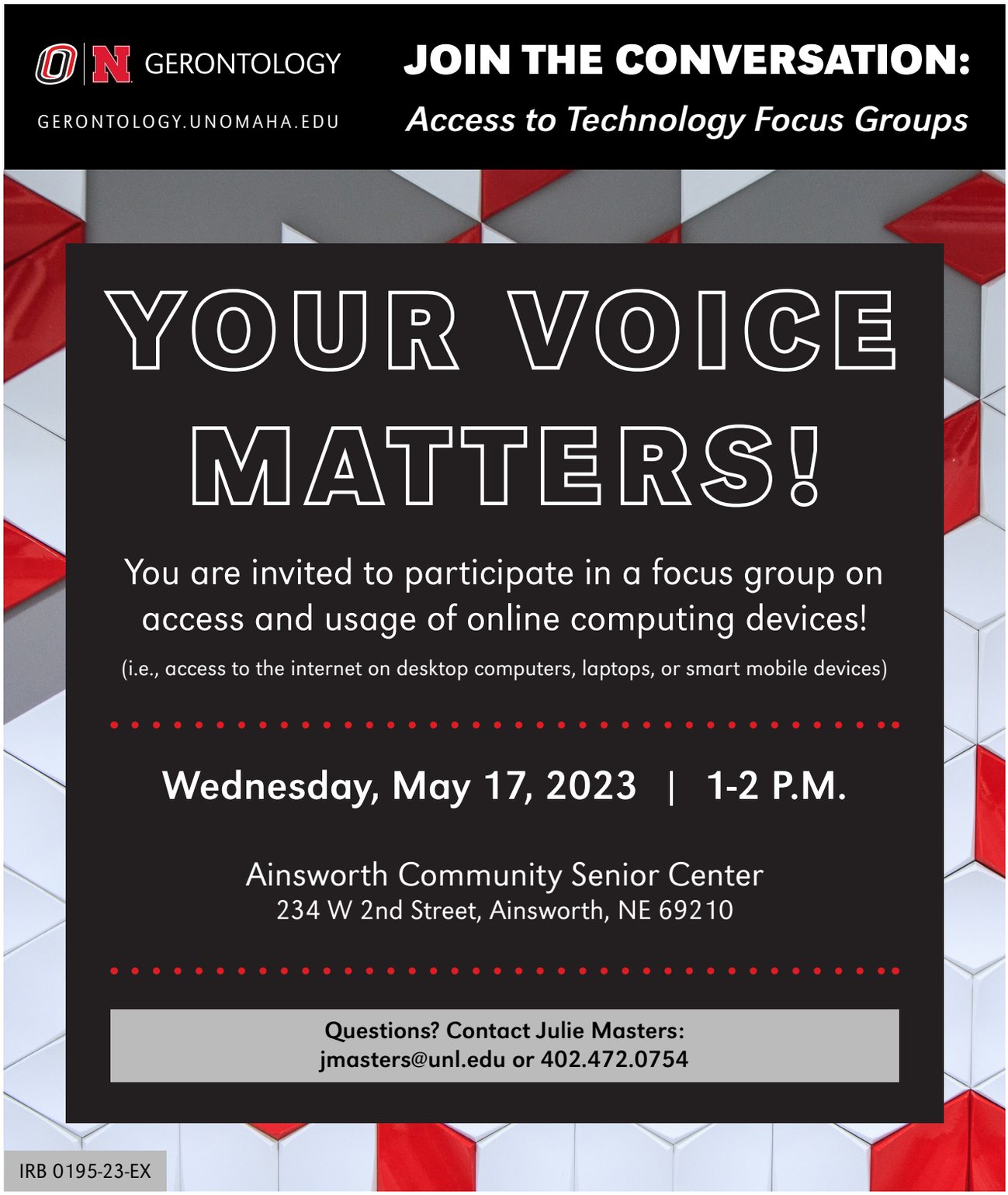
Participants were also asked to complete a demographic survey upon their arrival that included questions about age, race/ethnicity, gender, and marital status. Included on the form and as part of the general instructions, participants were reminded not to include their names or any other identifying marks.

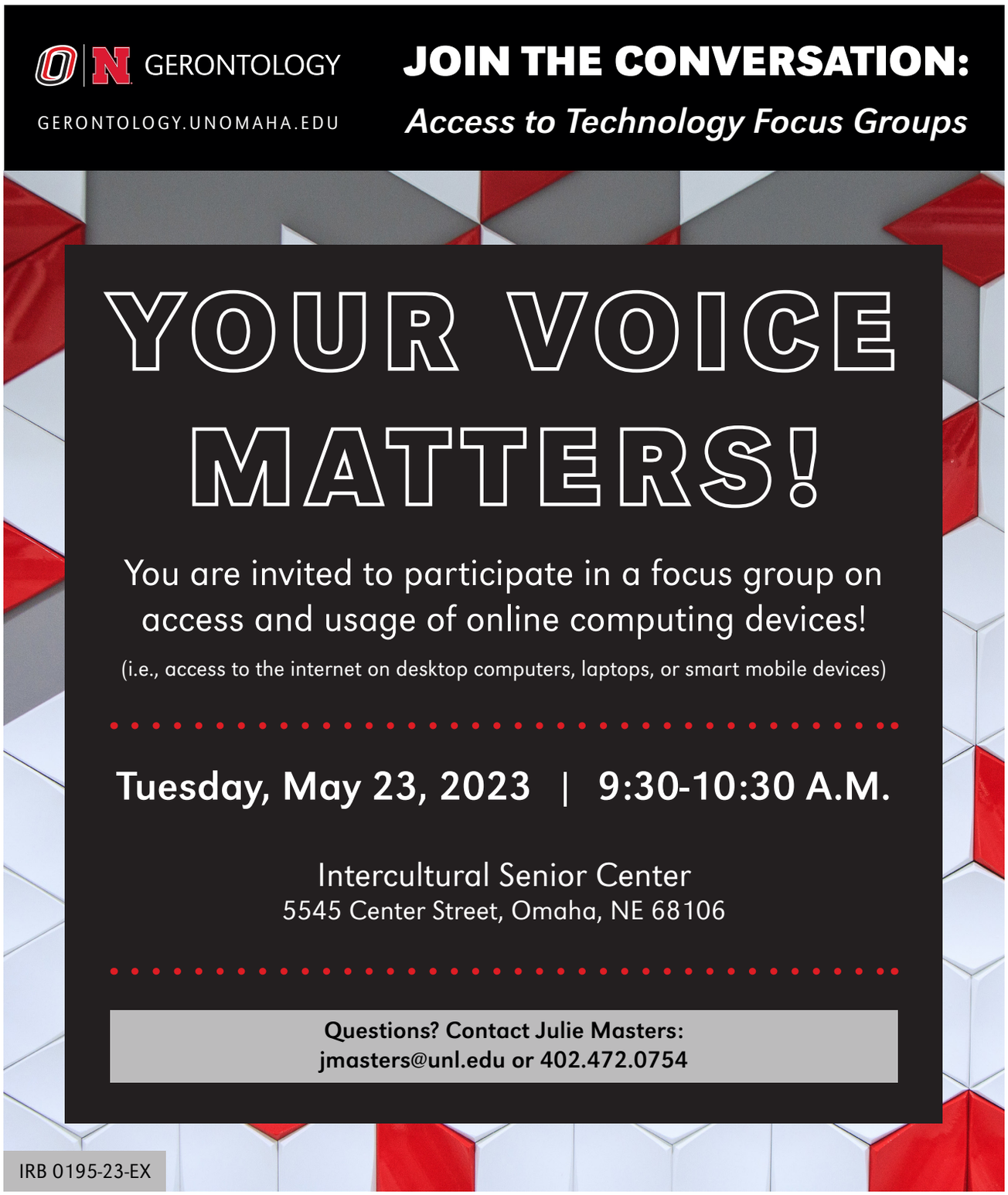
In order to protect participants' privacy, no identifying information of participants was included in this research report. Protections of confidentiality and anonymity for participants were documented in the participant information sheet which was shared with participants prior to the start of focus groups. Members

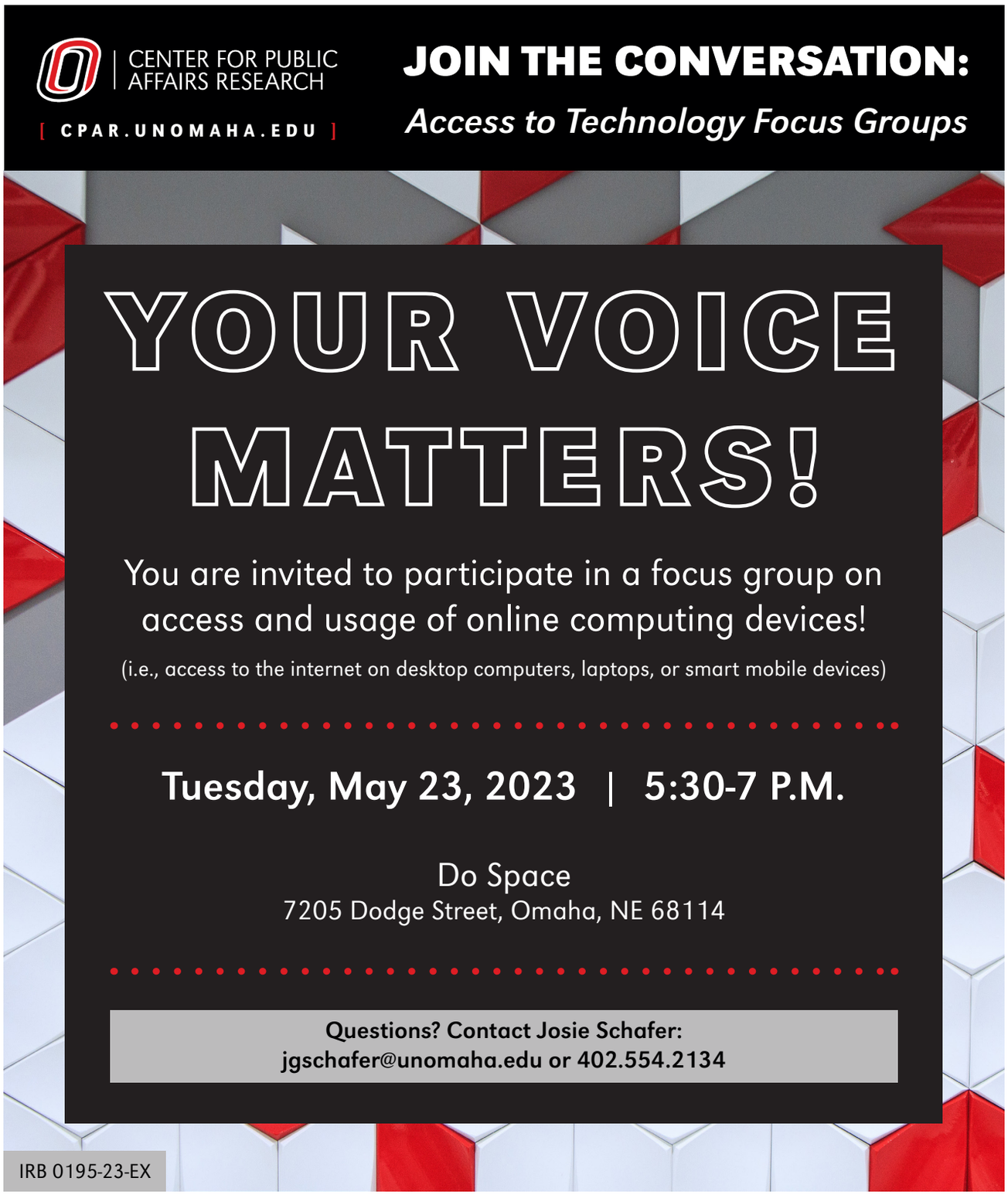
of the research team also reiterated this information to participants before beginning each focus group. After reviewing confidentiality and privacy protections with participants, the researchers obtained verbal consent from participants to start the focus group. It should be noted that participants' permission was obtained to take and use the photos included at the beginning of the report.

The four focus groups varied in length but on average lasted about one hour. Researchers decided not to record the focus groups but instead took copious notes with a member of the research team as a dedicated notetaker. Researchers decided not to record focus group discussions so that participants could speak more freely in discussion. In the event that the session included non-native English speakers, a member of the research team provided translation in real-time. Only two of the four focus groups included non-English speakers and Spanish was the preferred language for both. Following the focus groups, the notetaker cleaned and summarized the session's notes and shared them with an additional member of the research team who was in attendance to check for accuracy in themes and discussion, or inter-coder reliability.

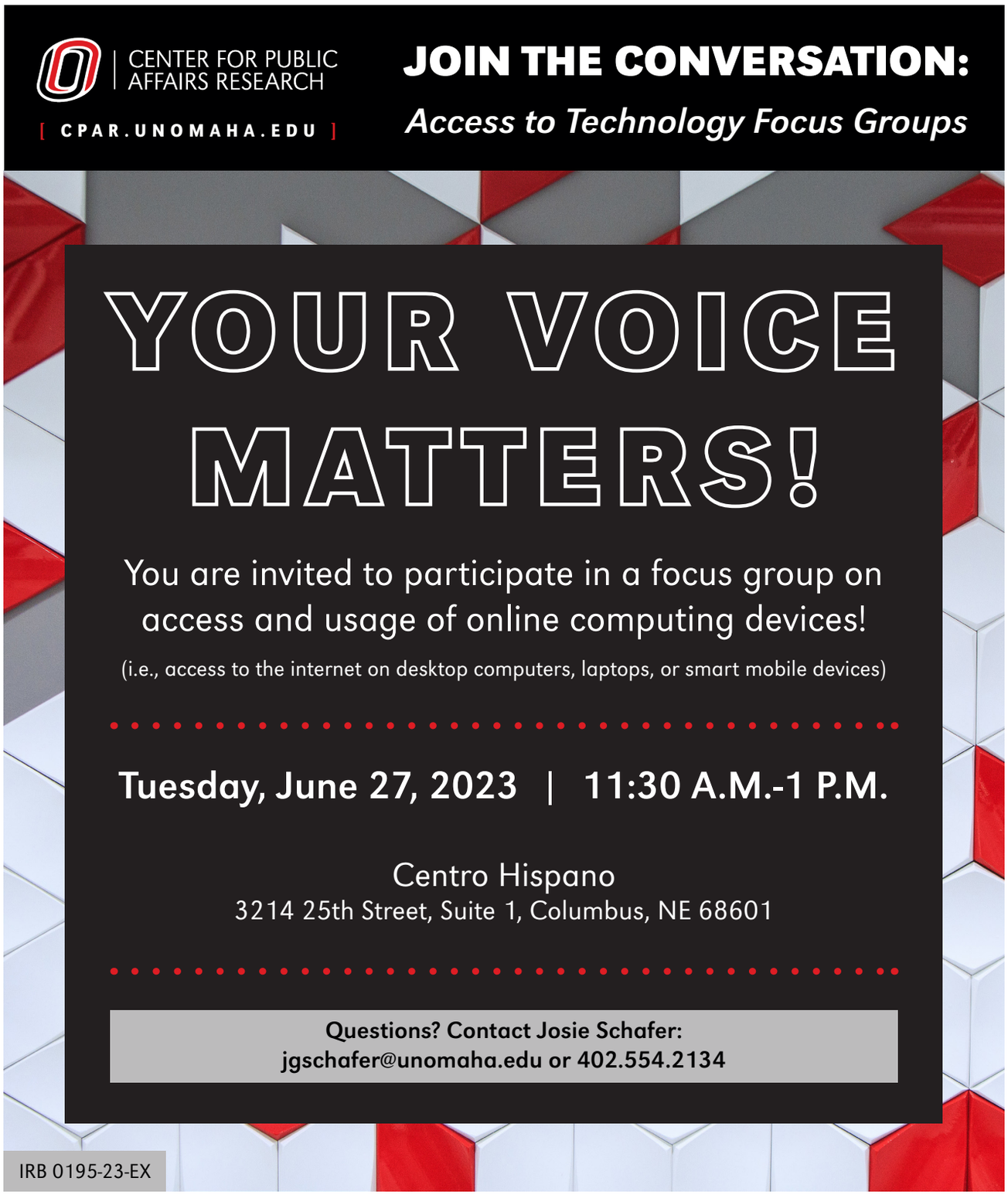
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT FLIERS







University of Nebraska Omaha



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APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
GERONTOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

Information about the Research Project

You are being asked to participate in a research study to better understand access to technology in Nebraska. This study is being conducted by the University of Nebraska at Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research and Department of Gerontology to support development of a statewide digital equity plan.

Your identity will only be known to the researchers and that information will be kept confidential. The insights provided during the focus group listening sessions will not be attributable to you in any way. Only the researchers will have access to the audio recording from the listening sessions and will destroy the recording as soon as it is transcribed. Any reports written from the information gathered during this project will contain *no* mention of your name or any other identifying characteristics. Throughout the course of this project, information about your identity will be kept secured.

You will be asked to share your opinion related to your experiences accessing technology in Nebraska. You will also be asked to complete a demographic survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to provide any information that you do not wish to provide or answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. The listening session should last about one hour.

We sincerely appreciate your participation in this research. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please do not hesitate to contact:

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APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

University of Nebraska Omaha

Digital Equity Listening Session Survey

*** PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER ***

1. What county do you currently live in? _____

2. What is your age? _____ years

3. What is your gender? _____

4. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or others? (Mark (X) in one box)

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
- ☐ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ☐ Yes, Cuban
- ☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (Print below name of nationality if you would like to specify, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.)

5. What is your race? (Mark (X) in all that apply)

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Native American
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

6. What is your marital status? (Mark (X) in one box)

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Never been married
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Domestic partnership/living with partner (not legally married)
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

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OVER →

7. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Mark (X) in one box)

- ☐ Some high school, no diploma
- ☐ High school graduate or equivalent
- ☐ Associate degree
- ☐ Trade school
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctorate or professional degree

8. What best describes your current work status? (Mark (X) in one box)

- ☐ Unemployed, but looking for work
- ☐ Unemployed, not looking for work
- ☐ Full-time employment
- ☐ Part-time employment
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Temporary employment
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Other

9. Do you or anyone in your household own any of the following? (Mark (X) to all that apply)

- ☐ Desktop
- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Smartphone
- ☐ Tablet or other portable computing device
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None

10. Do you or anyone in your household have access to the internet? (Mark (X) in one box)

- ☐ Yes, by paying a cell phone company
- ☐ Yes, by paying an internet service provider
- ☐ No other access to the internet

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APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
GERONTOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

Connect Nebraska Focus Group Listening Sessions – Discussion Protocol

Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this listening session about access to technology in Nebraska and your experiences with technology. We would like to discuss with you the use of electronic devices, such as smartphones, mobile phones, computers, and tablets. We will refer to these as computing devices. We are also interested in your access to and use of the internet. Our discussion today will help to inform the creation of a statewide digital equity plan for Nebraska.

We want to briefly share reminders and expectations for today's discussion. First, be sure to complete and return the survey you received upon entering. Today, we want to hear from you – there are no right or wrong answers. We don't expect everyone to agree. Please talk one at a time. Everyone will get equal time; if we run out of time, please feel free to email us your comments.

Finally, we would like to record this discussion so that we can accurately transcribe the discussion so we can identify challenges and opportunities for creating a statewide plan. All comments will be de-identified and anonymous. No names will be attributed to any comments that come from the discussion in the final report. Everyone should have also received a participant information sheet, explaining confidentiality. ***Are there any objections to being recorded***?

*START RECORDING MEETING

Discussion Questions

Section I. Access and Usage

1. Where do you access a computing device and/or the internet? Tell us all the places where you access these resources.

2. What are your top reasons for using a computing device and/or the internet?

3. If you do not use a computing device and/or the internet, why not?

4. What would you be comfortable paying for internet service each month?

5. Are there times when your internet is unstable or not working? How does this impact you?

6. Do you rely on others for help with your internet or computing devices?

Section II. Barriers to Access and Opportunities for Expansion

7. What challenges or barriers are there to accessing technology?

8. What do you believe are the gaps in access to technology in your community?

9. What do you think is working well and could be expanded to address access to technology in your community?

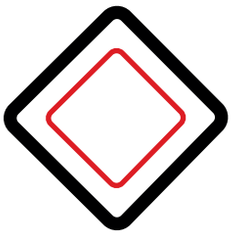
10. How can the state and your community best support expanding access to technology in your community?

11. Nebraska has communities of all sizes and types. How does this variation in community size, economy, and values affect how we approach the gaps in access to technology?

As our discussion comes to a close...

12. Is there anything else you would like to say about access to technology or about your experiences with computing devices and the internet?

That concludes our discussion. We sincerely appreciate you taking the time to talk with us today and share your experiences accessing technology in Nebraska. Thank you.



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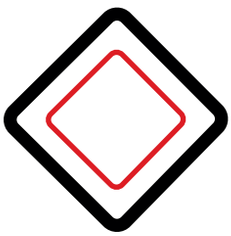

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