ALABAMA STATEWIDE DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

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1. Executive summary

The Alabama Digital Expansion Division of ADECA, the Eligible Entity for the State of Alabama, hereby submits to NTIA this Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan (the Plan).

The Plan includes all 15 requirements outlined in NTIA's State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). For more information, see Appendix H.

1.1 Vision and principles for digital opportunity

To meet the needs of our 21st century economy, **the State of Alabama envisions a connected, interconnected future**. In that envisioned future, all Alabamians—including those who are not currently connected or who face other barriers to digital opportunity—will have the opportunity to benefit from broadband, for purposes of economic opportunity, education, healthcare, and all the other ways the internet offers digital opportunity.

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

1. Availability of affordable, reliable internet connectivity at home
2. A computing device and the opportunity to maintain it
3. Opportunity to learn digital skills
4. Tools and information to be safe online
5. Online state resources that are accessible and usable

To achieve this vision for digital opportunity, the State of Alabama will adopt the following three framework principles for its digital opportunity efforts:

1. Prioritize data and rigorous information gathering
2. Engage and collaborate
3. Build on existing achievements and collaborations

1.2 Current state of digital opportunity: Barriers and assets

The single greatest impediment to digital opportunity in Alabama is the lack of physical infrastructure for broadband; in rural areas of the state, broadband infrastructure is minimal and rural Alabamians do not have the opportunity to use the internet at home or, in some cases, at their places of work or at community anchor institutions (Anchor Institutions) that serve them. For that reason, this Plan prioritizes extension of broadband infrastructure as the first and most important element of ensuring digital opportunity.

A second significant impediment to digital opportunity in Alabama is broadband service affordability and the fact that many Alabamians struggle to afford access to the internet as well as computing devices and technical services to support those devices. For this reason, this Plan recognizes affordability as a key priority for digital opportunity efforts in Alabama.

A third critical impediment to digital opportunity in Alabama is that some residents, including many aging individuals, lack the digital skills to navigate the internet and to do so without risk to their privacy and security. Given these challenges, this Plan prioritizes skills training as a key area for digital opportunity efforts.

1.3 Needs assessment

Through methodical data collection, extensive community engagement,[1] and rigorous analysis,[2] ADECA has identified a range of key challenges associated with the needs of Alabama households and communities, with an emphasis on the needs of covered populations. Outreach and data collection efforts were made to assess the baseline from which the state is working and to identify the barriers to digital opportunity faced generally and by each of the covered populations in Alabama, which includes:

1. Individuals who live in covered households (i.e., low-income households)
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or have low levels of literacy
7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, and
8. Individuals who primarily reside in rural areas.

[1] The research and analysis are based on available and relevant data from the American Community Survey (ACS), NTIA's Internet Use Survey (administered as a supplement to the Current Population Survey), FCC's National Broadband Map, and ADECA's custom scientific phone survey (administered in 2023). As described in detail in Section 3.2, the data and analysis are intended to facilitate understanding of the extent to which: (1) broadband internet service is available to and adopted by residents; (2) residents are confidently performing various digital skills; (3) residents are aware of and impacted by online security and privacy concerns; (4) computer devices are abundant and adequate for meaningful internet use; and (5) online government resources and services are accessibly built and maintained.

[2] Analysis was undertaken to benchmark Alabama against national averages, and to benchmark its residents belonging to covered populations against those that do not belong to covered populations. Analytical tools include a range of statistical tools and models, including regression analysis, in order to isolate factors and make appropriate conclusions regarding correlation and causation, thereby shaping the selection of metrics.

In sum, affordability of service is the primary reason cited by Alabama households for why they do not subscribe to broadband. The same is true for all covered populations in the state. This is followed by issues of a lack of available service, a lack of general interest or need for internet at home, and privacy or security concerns.

Notably, no respondents claimed that a lack of an adequate computer device was preventing them from using the internet at home, although other data on device adoption suggest there remains a measurable device access gap. Reasons cited for a lack of home internet use are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Reported reasons for no home internet use[3]

Reasons for no home internet use	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Can't afford it	42.6%	45.6%	-2.9%
Not worth the cost	30.0%	24.8%	5.2%
Can use it elsewhere	17.8%	10.1%	7.7%
Not available in area	14.3%	7.6%	6.7%
Don't need or not interested	9.7%	7.3%	2.4%
Online privacy or security concerns	5.4%	7.2%	-1.8%
No or inadequate computing device	0.0%	2.6%	-2.6%
Reasons for no home internet use	**Covered groups**	**Non-covered groups**	**Gap**
Can't afford it	42.4%	43.2%	-0.8%
Not worth the cost	33.8%	17.7%	16.1%
Can use it elsewhere	23.4%	0.0%	23.4%
Not available in area	14.2%	14.7%	-0.5%
Don't need or not interested	3.0%	30.8%	-27.8%
Online privacy or security concerns	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%
No or inadequate computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The data indicate that Alabama's digital opportunity needs encompass access to affordable broadband services, increased enrollment in broadband service subsidy programs, device access, and digital skills training.

Regarding broadband adoption, findings include:

1. Alabama does not outperform the nation in any meaningful indicator of broadband availability.

2. Individuals living in rural areas face the most urgent needs for broadband availability.

[3] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.

3. Alabama trails the nation in all indicators of internet adoption and subscription rates.

4. Covered populations in Alabama are uniformly adopting the internet less frequently than individuals that do not belong to a covered population. This gap is largest when compared across incomes.

5. Alabama outperforms the national average for the percentage of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) broadband subsidy, but Alabama still has a large opportunity for enrollment growth.

Regarding digital skills, findings include:

1. Alabama trails the nation in frequency of online digital skill use. Further, members of covered populations underperform compared to non-covered populations.

2. Individuals living in low-income households, at or above 60 years of age, living with disabilities, or living in rural areas express the most urgent need for digital skills programming.

3. Alabama underperforms compared to the nation across all measured telemedicine-related online activities. Similarly, members of covered populations tended to underperform compared to non-covered populations.

4. Individuals living in low-income households, at or above 60 years of age, or living in rural areas express the most urgent need for telemedicine digital skills programming.

Regarding telemedicine, findings include:

1. Among Alabamians belonging to covered populations, telemedicine is less frequently practiced compared to non-covered populations.
2. Among covered populations, individuals living in low-income households and individuals living in rural areas exhibit the most urgent needs for increased telemedicine skills.
3. Aging individuals may also benefit from specific telemedicine education given their increased risk for medical needs.

Regarding online security and privacy, findings include:

1. Alabama residents are similarly concerned with online security and privacy threats when compared against the nation.

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

3. There are reasons to believe that members of covered populations are less aware of online security and privacy concerns when compared against non-covered populations, with this gap largest for low-income and rural households.

4. Members of covered populations do not appear meaningfully more dissuaded than non-covered populations to undertake various online activities as a result of security or privacy concerns.

Regarding device adoption, findings include:

1. Alabama lags the nation in desktop or laptop access rates.

2. Device access rates are uniformly lower for members of covered populations compared to non-covered populations.

3. Low-income households are in the most urgent need for increased desktop or laptop computer access, and racial or ethnic minorities, aging individuals, individuals living with a disability, and English language learners also significantly lag their non-covered counterparts.

Regarding broadband affordability, findings include:

1. In Alabama, an estimated 40 percent of eligible households have enrolled in the ACP, a rate higher than the estimated national level of 35 percent, but still leaving significant opportunity for growth.
2. The percentage of ACP enrollment by county shows that participation is highest throughout the Black Belt region and, within this region, is highest in Wilcox, Dallas, and Perry counties.

More information about Alabama's digital opportunity needs assessment, including detailed information regarding barriers for covered populations, broadband adoption, and broadband affordability, can be found in Section 3.2 and Appendix C. Additional descriptions of needs and gaps identified through the state's outreach efforts are included in Appendix D.

1.4 Collaboration and partner engagement

ADECA's approach to collaborating with key constituencies and partners in the state has been thorough, extensive, inclusive, and transparent. The agency conducted a comprehensive and coordinated external engagement process in preparation of this Plan.

This outreach approach included:

- **In-person engagements in all 67 counties** for technical assistance purposes, leading to the delivery of county profiles that detailed broadband infrastructure and digital opportunity needs and strategies

- **Partner organization engagement** through virtual workshops and questionnaires
- **Scientific phone survey of Alabama households** with regional and statewide findings
- **Ongoing meetings** with state agencies and community organizations that represent covered populations
- **A new public website**—Be Linked Alabama—featuring the 67 county profiles, the Alabama Broadband Map, and other community-level information for the public about ADECA's broadband deployment and digital opportunity efforts[4]

ADECA took a three-fold approach to conducting outreach at the county level throughout the state: 1) initial engagements, 2) information gathering and follow-up if needed, and 3) delivery of publicly available county profiles that serve as informational and strategic tools for local governments to forge partnerships to achieve their broadband deployment and digital opportunity policy goals.

ADECA also conducted a series of virtual workshops with government agencies and Anchor Institutions, community-based organizations representing covered populations, and internet service providers (ISPs). In parallel to outreach through in-person engagements, ADECA used a statistically valid data collection methodology to conduct nine regional phone surveys to inform this Plan and capture resident input across the state on a region-by-region as well as statewide basis. ADECA continues to conduct ongoing outreach to Tribal governments, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and state agencies serving covered populations and to collaborate with higher education and workforce organizations on workforce development.

1.5 Implementation plan

Digital opportunity in Alabama will likely involve multiple initiatives and efforts associated with each strategy. ADECA looks forward in particular to the opportunity to use its future State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant to support and develop the digital opportunity strategies and activities proposed in this Plan, in partnership with the many local and regional entities that have participated in ADECA's community engagement work over the past year.

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

[4] "Supporting the State of Alabama's United Effort for All of its Residents to Be Linked," Be Linked Alabama website, https://broadband.alabama.gov/.

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

As described in detail (including activities and timelines) in Section 5, the following are potential strategies aligned with each key digital opportunity challenge:

1. Key challenge: Lack of broadband availability

    Strategy 1: Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure

    Strategy 2: Enable gigabit services at Anchor Institutions

2. Key challenge: Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services and devices with adequate technical support

    Strategy 1: Increase Affordable Connectivity Program enrollment among eligible households

    Strategy 2: Increase low-cost service offerings

    Strategy 3: Expand access to computing devices and tech support

    Strategy 4: Develop data and informational resources to enable application of a digital opportunity lens to infrastructure and program decisions

3. Key challenge: Low-income households and aging individuals lack digital skills

    Strategy 1: Enable digital skills development through training courses

    Strategy 2: Expand opportunity to learn online safety and privacy

    Strategy 3: Expand accessibility of information

4. Key challenge: Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital opportunity efforts

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

    Strategy 2: Support and develop local capacity

    Strategy 3: Sustain and grow the state's efforts in digital opportunity

1.6 Coordinated use of funding

ADECA's planned use of State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant funding to further digital opportunity through the potential strategies outlined above is aligned with the state's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) goals to drive broadband availability to all Alabamians. In alignment with BEAD efforts, this Plan sets out implementation strategies, activities, and

measurable objectives for achieving broadband availability goals (see Sections 2.3.2.1 and 5.1.1) and broadband adoption goals (see Sections 2.3.2.2 and 5.1.2) for all covered populations as a critical component of the state's overall digital opportunity strategy.

The state's efforts are also coordinated in partnership with the many local and regional entities that have participated in ADECA's community and stakeholder engagement for BEAD planning and this Plan over the past year. As discussed further in sections 4 and 5, the state's strategy has been developed and will be implemented in collaboration with key partners to complement and leverage existing digital opportunity initiatives and funding.

2. Introduction and vision for digital opportunity

ADECA is the Eligible Entity for the State of Alabama. With the strong support of Alabama's Governor and Legislature, ADECA has conducted innovative work with the primary goal of ensuring that all Alabama residents have access to reliable, affordable broadband internet.

As detailed in this Plan, ADECA has conducted a comprehensive outreach effort, developed a data-driven broadband and digital opportunity needs assessment, and identified a clear implementation path for achieving the state's objectives.

2.1 Vision

2.1.1 Vision statement

The State of Alabama has long identified broadband internet as the infrastructure of our era. Alabama recognizes that **the internet is a platform for economic and community development in the 21st century** just as electricity and phone service were in the 20th century.

In light of this recognition—and the state's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the digital world accrue to all Alabamians—Governor Kay Ivey and the Alabama legislature have made considerable investments in broadband and digital opportunity for nearly a decade.

The state's commitment arises from Alabama's recognition of the criticality of digital opportunity to economic opportunity in the 21st century. **Meaningful access to the internet is an essential ingredient for thriving in the economy of our era and of the future**. Digital opportunity enables economic opportunity and activity for Alabamians—from applying for new jobs to learning new job skills; from running a home-based business to working remotely for a distant employer; from banking to managing personal finances online; from selling homemade products in distant markets to attracting interested customers—and all these hallmarks of the digital economy require broadband access and digital opportunity.

To meet the needs of our 21st century economy, **the State of Alabama envisions a connected, interconnected future**. In that envisioned future, all Alabamians—including those who are not currently connected or who face other barriers to digital opportunity—will have the opportunity to benefit from broadband, for purposes of economic opportunity, education, healthcare, and all the other ways the internet offers digital opportunity.

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

1. Availability of affordable, reliable internet connectivity at home
2. A computing device and the opportunity to maintain it
3. Opportunity to learn digital skills

4. Tools and information to be safe online

5. Online state resources that are accessible and usable

To achieve this vision for digital opportunity, the State of Alabama will adopt the following three framework principles for its digital opportunity efforts:

1. **Prioritize data and rigorous information gathering:** As it has done in awarding broadband infrastructure grants, Alabama will adopt a data-driven approach to grantmaking in the digital opportunity area, making awards based on data regarding both the need for the work and the capacity of the grantee that seeks to do the work. Data will similarly be the basis for measuring both needs and achievements over time and ADECA will continue to lead in data collection through the Alabama Broadband Map, which will be updated at least twice a year and ADECA's digital opportunity scientific phone survey, which will be undertaken periodically.

2. **Engage and collaborate:** Digital opportunity work will require collaboration and partnerships. As it has done in visiting all 67 Alabama counties and preparing county profiles detailing broadband and digital opportunity needs and strategies in collaboration with county partners, ADECA will continue to engage with its local government, ISP, labor, and Anchor Institution partners to solicit ideas, insights, priorities, and lessons learned. ADECA will similarly continue its efforts to collaborate with Tribal Nations, MSIs, and HBCUs.

3. **Build on existing achievements and collaborations**. The State of Alabama will leverage and benefit from the efforts of other entities that have spent years developing expertise and capabilities in digital opportunity. Rather than attempt to replicate or recreate those capabilities, ADECA will provide data, support, and resources to entities that already have developed—and proven the efficacy and efficiency of—existing programs to address digital opportunity. In this way, the State of Alabama will respect local and community experience and know-how, working to support its local government and nonprofit partners that have proven capabilities in digital opportunity.

2.1.2 Goals and objectives

Alabama's digital opportunity goals are developed from and expand upon key goals for achieving broadband connectivity stated in the Alabama Connectivity Plan adopted by the Alabama Digital Expansion Authority (ADEA) in December 2021.[5] The plan states the following goals for achieving broadband connectivity for Alabamians:

[5] "The Alabama Connectivity Plan," ADECA, December 2021, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/Alabama-Connectivity-Plan.pdf.

1. Facilitating the expansion of high-speed broadband
2. Considering the need for broadband expansion in rural, underserved, and unserved areas
3. Addressing obstacles to broadband adoption
4. Developing funding strategies and plans for middle-mile and long-haul fiber, as well as last-mile infrastructure and services

Informed by the Alabama Connectivity Plan and the Alabama Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Action Plan prepared by ADECA, as well as by ADECA's comprehensive and ongoing outreach efforts, the State of Alabama has identified key objectives for achieving its broadband and digital opportunity goals.

The strategies, goals, and objectives outlined in this Plan rely upon and complement the achievement of goals 1 and 4, which drive broadband deployment and access through the expansion of middle-mile and last-mile networks, and expand upon goals 2 and 3, which address the needs of Alabamians in rural areas in the state and address obstacles to broadband adoption throughout the state for all Alabamians, including covered populations.

Generally, the overarching goals of this Plan are the following:

1. **Goal 1: Increase access to broadband infrastructure.** Consistent with the Alabama Connectivity Plan and considerable efforts of recent years, ADECA seeks to ensure that all Alabamians have access to a robust fixed broadband connection at their home. As contemplated in the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan, ADECA will seek to maximize the reach and impact of various funding sources, including the BEAD Program allocation, to extend broadband infrastructure throughout the state.

2. **Goal 2: Increase broadband affordability**. ADECA seeks to work with partners on strategies that can improve affordability, particularly for the covered populations for whom this is a significant barrier. This effort will involve coordination with entities dedicated to enabling eligible households to access federal support programs such as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and Lifeline, as well as building affordability into the scoring and requirements for all broadband grant programs.

3. **Goal 3: Expand access to computing devices and tech support.** ADECA seeks to work with nonprofit and public partners to expand ownership of computing devices, as well as the ability to support, maintain, and repair those devices. Among other approaches, ADECA will work with partners to support eligible households to purchase computing devices using the ACP and to support and expand existing programs that provide free devices to lower-income households.

4. **Goal 4: Expand opportunity to learn digital skills.** ADECA seeks to expand access to digital skills, recognizing that covered populations, particularly lower-income

households and aging individuals, face significant challenges in this area. ADECA will seek to work through experienced partners that have established digital skills training courses and to support and expand existing efforts to serve more Alabamians.

5. **Goal 5: Expand opportunity to learn online safety and privacy.** ADECA recognizes that some Alabamians, particularly those that are lower-income or older adults, report greater challenges and more discomfort regarding their ability to protect themselves online. ADECA seeks to work through experienced partners that have established training courses in this space, seeking to leverage existing capabilities and expand existing programs to reach more Alabamians and to distribute relevant materials to share expertise and guidance.

6. **Goal 6. Expand online accessibility**. Alabama seeks to ensure that members of the community who face barriers associated with disabilities can use the internet and that government resources and programs are accessible online. ADECA will endeavor to develop and distribute guidance to state and local agencies regarding best practices for website design and maintenance that align with accessibility standards and will also seek to support partners that aid individuals with disabilities to use the ACP.

2.2 Alignment with existing efforts to improve outcomes

ADECA's role in administering broadband infrastructure development and digital opportunity efforts is fully aligned with state priorities. This section of the Plan describes other State of Alabama programs and priorities and how they align with, and in some cases complement, this Plan and ADECA's overall broadband expansion efforts.

A list of the organizations with which ADECA collaborated to develop the Plan is provided in Appendix B and additional information regarding existing digital opportunity plans in the state is included in Section 3.1.2.

In 2017, Governor Kay Ivey's Executive Order 704[6] established ADECA as the agency to assume all powers, duties, responsibilities, authority, and obligations belonging to the Office of Broadband Development.

In 2021, the Connect Alabama Act[7] created the Alabama Digital Expansion Division as a division of ADECA, with enumerated powers and duties and a division chief. It also created the ADEA as a governing body "to advise, review, and approve the statewide connectivity plan" and

[6] Governor Kay Ivey, "Executive Order 704," https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2017/04/executive-order-no-704/.
[7] "Connect Alabama Act," ADECA, passed in 2021 and amended in 2022, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/Connect-Alabama-Act.pdf.

"recommend policies and procedures for the expansion and availability of high-speed broadband services throughout the state through review and approval of the statewide connectivity plan."[8]

Through its partnership role with state agencies and local government leaders, as well as nonprofits and businesses, ADECA has aligned the goals and strategies in this Plan with the state's priorities and existing efforts to impact outcomes in economic and workforce development, education, health, civic and social engagement, and the delivery of other essential services.

The following table shows the alignment between key partners, plans, goals, outcomes, and covered populations.

[8] *Id.* ADEA is engaged throughout the broadband implementation planning and execution phases for reporting status and program oversight.

Table 2: Digital opportunity alignment with state outcomes

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan	Goals / priorities	Digital opportunity alignment	Covered populations alignment
Economic & Workforce Development	ADECA	Alabama Connectivity Plan (2021)	Broadband availability and adoption in rural areas	Broadband availability and adoption in rural areas	All covered populations, with emphasis on rural
	Appalachian Regional Commission	Annual Strategy Statement (2023)	Economic development in north and central Alabama	Broadband availability and adoption for covered populations, education, health, workforce training	All covered populations, with emphasis on rural and individuals with low income
	Delta Regional Authority	DRA Regional Development Plan	Economic development in Black Belt and east Alabama	Broadband availability and adoption for covered populations, education, health, workforce training	All covered populations, with emphasis on rural and individuals with low income
	Southeast Crescent Regional Authority	Annual Strategy Statement (2023)	Economic development in southwest and coastal Alabama	Broadband availability and adoption for covered populations, education, health, workforce training	All covered populations, with emphasis on rural and individuals with low income
	Regional Planning Commissions	Comprehensive economic development strategic plans and annual updates	Broadband availability	Broadband availability and adoption for covered populations, education, health, workforce training	All covered populations, including programs for low-income and aging individuals
	Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation, the Alabama Workforce Development Board, the Alabama Workforce Council, Regional	Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Combined Plan 2020	Expanding and developing workforce capacity throughout the state	Digital skills and workforce development	All covered populations, with emphasis on individuals with low income

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan	Goals / priorities	Digital opportunity alignment	Covered populations alignment
	Workforce Councils, AlabamaWorks				
Education	Alabama State Department of Education	Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan – Education Technology Blueprint for Success	Leverage technology to enhance teaching and learning and improve outcomes for all students across Alabama	Student access to devices and educational programs and services Family access to school communications	All covered populations
	County School Districts	Strategic plans	Effective access to and use of technology and devices by students Effective use of technology for communications with parents and students	Student access to devices and educational programs and services Family access to school communications	All covered populations
Health	Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)	Strategic Plan (revised 2022)	Improve health outcomes for access to care Improve workforce development for ADPH workers	Access to telehealth for covered populations Access to online training for workforce	All covered populations, with emphasis on rural, individuals with low income, aging individuals, and racial or ethnic minorities
	Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs	Website	Improve connectivity for service offices Access to veteran benefit programs and services including telehealth	Access to veteran benefit programs and services including telehealth Access to devices and workforce training	Veterans

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan	Goals / priorities	Digital opportunity alignment	Covered populations alignment
	Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	Meeting with ADECA	Improve capacity and efficiencies in in-home service delivery and client access to the internet	Access to telehealth and other rehabilitative services for covered populations	Individuals with disabilities
	Alabama Department of Senior Services	State Plan on Aging FY2021-FY2024	Improve delivery of high-quality, efficient services	Access to health care and supportive services for covered populations	Aging individuals and individuals with disabilities
Civic and Social Engagement	GOVS	Website	Coordination among agencies, nonprofit organizations, and public volunteers	Broadband availability, device access, digital skills training, workforce development	All covered populations, based on situational needs
	Alabama Public Library Service	Alabama's Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States Five-Year Plan (2023-2027)	Support information access for all populations by providing statewide access to electronic resources and enabling technology	Availability of broadband and devices, access to educational services, and workforce development	All covered populations, with emphasis on individuals with low income, individuals with disabilities, English language learners, and individuals with low literacy
Delivery of Essential Services	Alabama Emergency Management Agency; GOVS	State Emergency Operations Plan (2023)	Rural populations situational awareness before, during, and after emergency events	Broadband availability, device access, digital skills training, workforce development	All covered populations, based on situational needs, with emphasis on individuals living in rural areas
	ADECA	State's Annual Action Plan (2023)	Broadband availability and affordability for those with housing instability	Broadband availability and adoption for covered populations, device access, digital skills training, workforce development	All covered populations, with emphasis on individuals with low income
	Alabama Department of Corrections	Meeting with ADECA	Improved broadband availability, education,	Access to educational services and workforce	Multiple covered populations with

Outcome	Key agency partners	Plan	Goals / priorities	Digital opportunity alignment	Covered populations alignment
			and workforce development	development for covered populations	emphasis on incarcerated individuals
	Alabama Department of Youth Services	Meeting planned with ADECA	To be determined	Access to educational services and workforce development for covered populations	Multiple covered populations with emphasis on incarcerated individuals
	Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles	Meeting planned with ADECA	To be determined	Access to educational services and workforce development for covered populations	Multiple covered populations with emphasis on incarcerated individuals

2.2.1 Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes

Digital opportunity efforts support Alabama's economic and workforce development goals by strengthening online job training opportunities and facilitating greater access to employment for all covered populations, especially for rural and lower-income Alabamians.

Innovation and Small Business Act

As part of The Game Plan, a set of four bills passed in April 2023 that focus on economic development issues such as incentives, site development, small business support and transparency, the Innovation and Small Business Act aims to supercharge growth in Alabama's innovation economy and support underrepresented businesses and enterprises in rural areas, transforming the state into a hub for technology and innovation.[9]

Appalachian Regional Commission, Delta Regional Authority, and the Southeast Crescent Regional Authority

Through its Federal Initiatives and Recreation Division, ADECA partners with federal commissions, authorities, and departments to invest in projects that improve the economy and quality of life for Alabamians. Digital opportunity goals are aligned with goals and programs that ADECA oversees for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Delta Regional Authority (DRA), and the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) in partnership with Local Development Districts (LDDs), which are regional planning commissions and councils of government.[10]

The ARC encompasses 37 of Alabama's 67 counties[11] throughout the central and northern parts of the state and spans eight LDDs. In its 2023 annual strategy statement regarding economic development in the region, ADECA noted that much of the region is unserved or underserved with respect to broadband access, and that expansion of broadband in the region is critical. "The need for access to high-speed broadband internet is vital to the success of the Appalachian counties in the state. COVID-19 further amplified the need for broadband internet access, mobile hotspots, and other equipment in Appalachian Alabama. Educational institutions and businesses were unprepared when the need to provide virtual learning and remote or distance employment opportunities due to COVID-19 arose. Broadband internet and the availability of digital devices and software to support and facilitate virtual learning and training are key to economic

[9] Governor Ivey signs 'The Game Plan' legislation, strengthening Alabama's economic future: https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2023/04/governor-ivey-signs-the-game-plan-legislation-strengthening-alabamas-economic-future/.
[10] ADECA: Federal Initiatives and Recreation Division: https://adeca.alabama.gov/fir/.
[11] "About the Appalachian Region," Appalachian Regional Commission, https://www.arc.gov/about-the-appalachian-region/.

development and continued educational opportunities as well as the continuation of business activities."[12]

The DRA serves 20 counties in Alabama, primarily through the southwest and Black Belt region and the southeast parts of the state. Its focus is to improve education, infrastructure, transportation, and businesses with an emphasis on private enterprise.[13]

The SCRC serves 13 counties in Alabama, primarily in the southeast and coastal areas of the state. Its focus is to build sustainable communities and strengthen economic growth across the region.[14] In its Annual Strategy Statement for 2023, the state identifies the expansion of broadband as a key economic opportunity for the region and key enabler for enhancing education and workforce development programs in the region.[15]

Workforce development

Alabama's 2020 Combined Plan for Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act[16] outlines key state workforce system goals and cross-agency partnerships. Goals include developing and implementing an online resource for all information about state workforce development efforts and career opportunities, with a focus on target demographic groups including students, adults seeking to re-enter the workforce, parents, and educators. Digital opportunity efforts foster access to and effective use of tools and training available through AlabamaWorks and other resources.[17]

Partners in this effort include the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation, the Alabama Workforce Development Board, the Alabama Workforce Council, Regional Workforce Councils, and AlabamaWorks.

Alignment with other programs and initiatives

Other notable economic and workforce development initiatives that ADECA administers, in addition to those listed above, which complement digital opportunity efforts include:

- Opportunity Zones program to foster private-sector investments in low-income rural and urban areas[18]

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[12] Appalachian Regional Commission State of Alabama 2023 Annual Strategy Statement: https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023-ARC-State-Strategy.pdf.
[13] ADECA, Delta Regional Authority: https://adeca.alabama.gov/dra/.
[14] ADECA, Southeast Crescent Regional Commission: https://adeca.alabama.gov/scrc/.
[15] Southeast Crescent Regional Commission State of Alabama State Annual Strategy Statement 2023: https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023-State-Strategy-Statement.pdf.
[16] State of Alabama 2020 Combined Plan for WIOA: https://alabamactso.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Alabama-Perkins-V-WIOA-Combined-Plan-2020-Final.pdf.
[17] AlabamaWorks: https://alabamaworks.alabama.gov/vosnet/default.aspx.
[18] "Opportunity Zones Program," ADECA: https://adeca.alabama.gov/opportunityzones/.

- Enterprise Zone program to spur business investment in Alabama counties that have a population of 50,000 or less[19]
- Office of Minority Business Enterprise to identify small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses capable of providing goods and/or services to both government and private sectors[20]

2.2.2 Educational outcomes

Digital opportunity efforts support Alabama's educational goals and outcomes by strengthening access to online learning at K-12 and post-secondary levels, improving digital skills for all Alabamians, and increasing the effectiveness of school-to-work initiatives.

Alabama State Department of Education

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan, issued in 2020, provides a comprehensive set of educational goals, including the expansion of computer science offerings to every school by providing equitable access to computer science courses and experience-related activities outside the classroom.[21]

As an extension of the Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan, ALSDE's Educational Technology Blueprint for Achievement[22] provides a roadmap that outlines the agency's mission, programs, and goals to provide an equitable and quality education for Alabama's students through the use of technology. Its vision is to "proactively seek to increase digital equity, effective technology integration, and innovation in Alabama's classrooms while also increasing accountability for the effective and safe use of technology to increase academic achievement and educator effectiveness…." [23] The plan also provides information about ALSDE technology—enabling programs and an action plan for expanding and improving these.

2.2.3 Health outcomes

Digital opportunity efforts support Alabama's health goals and outcomes by improving access to health services and records and enabling opportunities for telehealth across all covered populations. This is especially critical for individuals living in rural areas, people with disabilities, aging individuals, and individuals in covered households.

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[19] "Enterprise Zone Program," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/enterprise-zone-program/.
[20] "Office of Minority Business Enterprise," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/ombe/.
[21] Alabama Achieves: A Strategic Plan for a New Decade: https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ACHIEVES2020-V20.pdf.
[22] Alabama Achieves Blueprint for Achievement: https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SL_20235l9_Blueprint-for-Achievement_V1.0.pdf.
[23] Enhancing the Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan through Educational Technology Support, p. 5: https://alsde-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/mshields_alsde_edu/EWFJXyRvU-BKsAJzVyPQcdgB2dLIWvDPb3-KwOKudoq4iQ?e=4dVKaS.

Alabama Department of Public Health

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) Strategic Plan identifies a key goal to "improve specific health outcomes or health disparities so that Alabama is a healthier place to live and work," with the first strategy being to improve access to care and one of the measures to achieve that being telehealth utilization.[24] In support of this, ADPH operates a Telehealth program in coordination with 66 county health departments.[25]

In addition, the ADPH Office of Health Equity and Minority Health has issued a strategic plan to further equity-specific public health best practices throughout ADPH, to identify barriers to health services, and to report annually on progress toward addressing health disparities, building awareness of health equity, and increasing training around health literacy.[26]

Alabama Department of Veterans Services

Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) provides a variety of services to veterans and their families through its service offices located in 61 counties throughout the state, many of which are housed in county government locations. In a meeting with ADECA conducted in July 2023, ADVA leadership noted that internet connectivity to these offices in rural counties can be inadequate, negatively impacting services offered and hence veterans' access to critical health, education, and employment services. These service offices provide computing capabilities and access to veterans' service benefits and programs, including telehealth, scholarships, and training.[27]

In addition, ADVA leadership provided insight into the agency's efforts to introduce a new online case management system, digitize service forms, move its process for dependent scholarship applications online, and take other steps toward digitization. Veterans' needs for access to broadband infrastructure at service centers and in homes, their need for computing devices to access services and programs including telehealth, and their need for digital skills training will be critical to ensure this covered population can effectively access services.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) provides programs in four primary areas: 1) early intervention for infants and children 0-3 years, 2) children's rehabilitation services, 3) vocational rehabilitation services (VRS) and the VRS deaf and blind service, and 4) homebound services. ADRS has 25 clinical and community office locations throughout the state. The agency

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[24] ADPH Strategic Plan (2019-2023, revised 2022): https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/about/assets/adph-strategic-plan-2019-2023.pdf.
[25] ADPH 2022 Annual Report: https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/blog/assets/annualreport2022.pdf
[26] ADPH Office of Health Equity and Minority Health Strategic Plan, 2021-2024: https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/healthequity/assets/ohemh-strategic-plan.pdf.
[27] ADVA, https://va.alabama.gov/serviceofficer/.

also conducts in-home caseworker visits and provides in-home care services. While all clientele of ADRS services are individuals with disabilities, many clients live in rural areas of the state, are from low-income households, and are members of other covered populations.

ADRS leadership, in a meeting with ADECA in August 2023, stressed the need for reliable broadband in the home for the successful delivery of ADRS services (including telehealth, caseworker visits, and home rehabilitative care), adequate access to internet-enabled devices that accommodate for given disabilities, and training that enables individuals and family members to effectively access services online. Leadership stressed the importance of broadband for not only rehabilitative services but for vocational development and work-from-home opportunities in its VRS program. It also noted that reliable in-home broadband will facilitate greater efficiency in care-giving timesheet management and rehabilitative oversight, as required by federal benefit programs.

Alabama Department of Senior Services

The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) administers statewide programs for aging individuals, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers through the Regional Planning Commissions and local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), which provide comprehensive services through grants and contracts to public and private local agencies.[28] On behalf of the state, ADSS submits the State Plan on Aging every four years to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) within the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. According to the most recent State Plan on Aging, for FY2021-2024,[29] ADSS plans to launch a more user-friendly website as part of its objective to improve service delivery, with the goal of making it easier for individuals to access information about programs and increase the utilization of ADSS's services.[30]

2.2.4 Civic and social engagement

Digital opportunity efforts support Alabama's civic and social engagement goals by enabling equitable access to government services and civic events (including voting and tele-townhalls) and public information.

Volunteer services

The Governor's Office of Volunteer Services (GOVS) works to increase the ethic of service and volunteerism in Alabama, strengthen the capacity of Alabama's faith and community-based organizations, and promote collaboration among individuals and organizations striving to meet some of the greatest needs in the state, including education, health care, substance abuse,

[28] "About ADSS," ADSS, https://alabamaageline.gov/about/.
[29] "State Plan on Aging Fiscal Years 2021-2024," ADSS, https://alabamaageline.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/State-Plan-on-Aging-Alabama-2021-2024-FINAL.pdf.
[30] *Id.*, p. 30.

homelessness, and maintaining a healthy environment.[31] GOVS also helps local communities mobilize resources and recover from disasters as lead agency for Volunteer and Donations Management (as written in the state's Emergency Operations Plan) and the state's Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) to faith-based and voluntary agencies. In its role as a coordinating agency between the emergency and health response agencies and public volunteers, GOVS provides online and in-person trainings available to the public.

Alabama Public Library Service

The Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) provides resources, leadership, and programming for the statewide network of public libraries to support "outstanding library service to every individual in the state."[32] As a network member of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), APLS provides services to individuals with temporary or permanent low vision, blindness, or a physical, perceptual, or reading disability through the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled.[33]

APLS's Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan (2023-2027),[34] APLS's long-range planning document prepared in accordance with requirements for funding under the LSTA program distributed by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), establishes as one of three strategic goals to "[p]rovide information access to all populations through the provision of statewide access to electronic resources and cooperative services, enabling technology, and increased public awareness and use of libraries for information access, knowledge, ideas and cultural heritage," in alignment with LSTA priorities.[35] In focus groups conducted for the LSTA Five-Year Plan, partners ranked providing internet access, computers, and technology within APLS's five most impactful services, noting that, "in many communities, public library computers and internet connections fill a critical gap in access to information for residents."[36]

APLS concurs in its 2022 Annual Report,[37] noting that "low-income adults are more likely to rely on the public library as their sole access to the Internet, and APLS recognizes public libraries' role in being the great equalizer to keep Alabama's communities connected, informed, and thriving."[38] APLS recently utilized American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to install more than 2,000 computers at 202 libraries across the state, replacing many computers that had been in use for over a decade. APLS also launched a mobile hotspot lending program for rural libraries in

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[31] "Alabama Governor's Office of Volunteer Services," https://www.servealabama.gov/.
[32] Alabama Public Library Service, https://aplsws2.apls.state.al.us/.
[33] "Library for the Blind," APLS, https://aplsws2.apls.state.al.us/library-for-the-blind/.
[34] "Alabama's Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States Five-Year Plan (2023-2027)," APLS, June 30, 2022, https://aplsws2.apls.state.al.us/uploads/files/LSTA/LSTA_Five-Year_Plan_2023-27_(6.17.22).pdf.
[35] *Id.*, p. 12.
[36] *Id.*, p. 14.
[37] "2022 Annual Report," APLS, https://aplsws2.apls.state.al.us/uploads/files/Annual%20Reports/2022%20APLS%20annual%20report.pdf.
[38] *Id.*, p. 7.

August 2021, supported by an IMLS grant.[39] Data use through the program grew by almost 60 percent from FY2022 to FY2023.[40]

Per the LSTA Five-Year Plan, APLS will conduct a biennial survey of "library bandwidth and hardware," and intends to use additional federal funding to support statewide programs for online homework help and online learning tools for Alabama workers.[41]

As of the writing of this Plan, ADECA has a meeting planned with APLS to discuss its goals, efforts, and needs related to digital opportunity and potential alignment with this Plan and gather more information on barriers to digital opportunity for individuals in the state with low literacy.

2.2.5 Delivery of other essential services

Digital opportunity efforts support Alabama's goals for the delivery of essential services to all covered populations by facilitating more effective access to social benefits, housing, utility, workforce, and other programs.

Emergency readiness and response

Digital opportunity efforts, especially those which increase availability of reliable broadband connectivity to the home, support devices, enable accessibility to government services, and leverage digital skills, are aligned with state emergency readiness and response goals for the public.

The State of Alabama Emergency Operations Plan (April 2023)[42] stresses that, in addition to its criticality during emergency response (along with other communications systems), the need for reliable access to the internet is critical to getting information to the public in advance of, during, and after emergency events. In a recent meeting with ADECA, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) noted that, due to the unreliability of cellular communications and the lack of broadband connectivity to homes in rural areas of the state, which impacts all covered populations, residents are at greater risk of not receiving and being able to respond to emergency alerts and warnings.

As a key part of its broader volunteer and service efforts, GOVS is the state's lead agency for volunteers and donations before, during, and after disasters. It administers ReadyAlabama.gov, a statewide initiative promoting disaster preparedness events and messaging across Alabama.[43]

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[39] *Id.*
[40] "Hotspot Lending Program Cumulative Report FY2023," October 24, 2023, provided to ADECA by APLS.
[41] "Alabama's Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States Five-Year Plan (2023-2027)," APLS, June 30, 2022, pp. 6, 14, https://aplsws2.apls.state.al.us/uploads/files/LSTA/LSTA_Five-Year_Plan_2023-27_(6.17.22).pdf.
[42] State of Alabama Emergency Operations Plan (April 2023): https://ema.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/alabama-emergency-operations-plan-eop_4-03-23-final.pdf.
[43] GOVS, https://www.servealabama.gov/; Ready Alabama, https://www.readyalabama.gov/.

Housing

The Plan aligns with and complements the goals of ADECA's portfolio of housing programs, including the Community Development Block Grant, Emergency Solutions Grant, and Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS programs, which enable stable housing opportunities for low-income and other covered populations, many of whom need access to health, workforce development, and other wraparound services.[44]

Alabama Department of Corrections

ADECA met with the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) to discuss needs and goals related to digital opportunity and gather additional data on barriers experienced by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals in the state. State priorities for broadband availability align with ADOC goals for improved connectivity at prison facilities and enabling digital opportunities for incarcerated individuals. All inmates have access to a basic device and digital content, educational/workforce training, and telehealth as part of health services.[45] In addition, ADOC's Strategic Plan for 2019-2022[46] included an action item to "integrate electronic methods of program delivery" as part of its goal to improve the delivery of research and evidence-based rehabilitative programs.[47] More information on broadband availability for incarcerated individuals can be found below in Section 4.1.6.3.

Alabama Department of Youth Services

As the state agency responsible for administering and regulating juvenile justice programs in Alabama, the mission of the Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS) is to "be a life-changing resource for youth involved in the justice system by providing quality educational opportunities, services and supports to reduce reoffending, improve positive outcomes, strengthen families, and enhance community safety."[48] It operates three institutional facilities, providing educational services to youth through the DYS School District 210. Through the DYS School District's Career Technical Education program, students can earn certifications in computer skills through the Microsoft Academy.[49] DYS also oversees contracted community-based treatment programs and funds diversion grant programs.

One of DYS's priority areas, according to the three-year strategic plan it began developing in 2022, is to "secure necessary resources and technology to promote safe environments, enhance

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[44] ADECA, Strategic Plans and Action Plans: https://adeca.alabama.gov/strategic-plans-and-action-plans/.
[45] ADOC, in a meeting with ADECA, December 11, 2023.
[46] "Strategic Plan 2019-2022," ADOC, https://doc.alabama.gov/docs/ADOC%20Strategic%20Plan%202019.2022-public.pdf.
[47] *Id.*, p. 15.
[48] "DYS Overview," DYS, https://dys.alabama.gov/dys-overview.
[49] "FY 2022 Annual Report," DYS, https://dys.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/DYS2022AnnualReport2.pdf, p. 29.

program effectiveness, and work force satisfaction."[50] ADECA has a meeting planned with DYS as of the writing of this Plan to discuss goals, needs, and barriers to digital opportunity for justice-impacted youth in the state.

2.3 Strategy and objectives

This section of the Plan describes, at a high level, the key strategies and objectives of the Plan, which are designed to address the key digital opportunity challenges described below. Additional information regarding the strategies and their associated initiatives is provided in Section 5, which details ADECA's plans for digital opportunity implementation.

2.3.1 Strategies

In brief, the strategies are as follows (see Section 5 for further detail), organized based on the key challenge they are designed to address:

1. **Key challenge: Lack of broadband availability.** ADECA recognizes the extent of broadband's far-reaching impacts on individuals, communities, businesses, education, healthcare, and overall economic and social development. Broadband facilitates online learning, enabling students of all ages to access educational materials, participate in virtual classrooms, and engage in distance education programs. It bridges the gap in educational opportunities, especially for those in remote or underserved areas. It stimulates economic growth and innovation, enables e-commerce and remote work opportunities, and enables access to government services. Broadband enables remote healthcare services, such as telemedicine and virtual doctor consultations. It helps people stay connected regardless of geographical distances. Broadband enables efficient communication and coordination among emergency responders, authorities, and affected communities in the event of emergency and it supports agriculture and rural development by enabling farmers to access online resources to improve farming techniques, track weather patterns, manage crops, and access market information. Through this Plan—and ADECA's associated broadband infrastructure plans—the State of Alabama seeks to ensure the availability of broadband for all Alabamians.
    a. **Strategy 1: Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure**
    b. **Strategy 2: Enable gigabit services at Anchor Institutions**

2. **Key challenge: Low-income households struggle to afford broadband services and devices with adequate technical support.** Affordability of broadband services and devices is essential for ensuring that all members of society can participate in the digital world and the digital economy, regardless of their financial circumstances. Affordability reduces the scope of the digital divide, promotes equal access to opportunities, and supports Alabama's

[50] *Id.*, p. 18.

economy and citizenry. Through this Plan, ADECA seeks to increase affordability of broadband services and devices through collaboration with ISP and community partners.

   a. **Strategy 1: Increase ACP enrollment among eligible households**
   b. **Strategy 2: Increase low-cost service offerings**
   c. **Strategy 3: Expand access to computing devices and tech support**
   d. **Strategy 4: Develop data and informational resources to enable application of a digital opportunity lens to infrastructure and program decisions**

3. **Key challenge: Low-income households and aging individuals lack digital skills.** Digital skills are not only about using technology but also about fostering empowerment, critical thinking, and participation in the digital society. They enhance people's abilities to learn, work, communicate, and engage effectively in the rapidly evolving digital economy by promoting education, employability, small business and entrepreneurship, health care access, financial management, and lifelong learning. Through this Plan, ADECA seeks to develop partnerships and strategies to expand access to digital skills training and support local entities that train Alabamians to access the internet and to do so with their safety and privacy protected.

   a. **Strategy 1: Enable digital skills development through training courses**
   b. **Strategy 2: Expand opportunity to learn online safety and privacy**
   c. **Strategy 3: Expand accessibility of information**

4. **Key challenge: Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital opportunity efforts.** Alabama's commitment to digital opportunity means a significant commitment of resources to sustain the initiatives contemplated in this Plan and to support local communities, nonprofits, and Anchor Institutions to develop local capacity. To sustain these efforts over time, Alabama will require resources beyond what NTIA will provide under the State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program. ADECA seeks to develop a strategy for continuing the work launched under this Plan by partnering with philanthropic organizations and seeking other funding sources, and by tracking the impact of Alabama's digital opportunity efforts to quantify the business case for further investment in digital opportunity programs.

   a. **Strategy 1: Build collaboration among state, local, and nonprofit entities**
   b. **Strategy 2: Support and develop local capacity**
   c. **Strategy 3: Sustain and grow state's efforts in digital opportunity**

2.3.2 Measurable objectives and key performance indicators

In connection with each of the key digital opportunity challenges described above, ADECA has established the following measurable objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) toward achieving digital opportunity in Alabama, if sufficient funds are available.

2.3.2.1 Key challenge: Lack of broadband availability

ADECA intends to track broadband availability for residents by measuring access to 100/20 Mbps service in alignment with the goals of the BEAD Program. The baseline for formerly incarcerated individuals is set at TBD, as sufficient data are not available from federal and state sources regarding broadband availability to establish a meaningful KPI at this time. ADECA did not include currently incarcerated individuals in this measurable objective because broadband availability is facility based with access managed by the overseeing state agency per state law and regulations. As of the writing of this Plan, the state is coordinating with entities representing this covered population to gather data as described in Section 4.1.6.3 and Section 5.1.4 that will be used to set a baseline and goals.[51]

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
Every Alabamian can access 100/20 Mbps at home (if sufficient funds are available to reach all	Percentage of locations with access to 100/20 Mbps broadband	80%[52]	100%	100%	FCC National Broadband Map
	Percentage for individuals in covered households	81%	100%	100%	
	Percentage for aging individuals	80%	100%	100%	

[51] The state intends to establish this KPI before Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program funding is available.
[52] 80% for internet service availability at 100/20 or higher in Alabama is based on FCC National Broadband Map, accessed October 18, 2023, which provides a current representation of access. The Alabama Five-Year Action Plan cites 87.8% for internet service availability at 100/20 Mbps or higher in Alabama, which was based on the FCC National Broadband Map accessed May 30, 2023, plus federal and state broadband deployment programs underway and provides a representation of current and future planned access,

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
underserved locations)	Percentage for formerly incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)[53]	TBD[54]	100%	100%	
	Percentage for veterans	80%	100%	100%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	80%	100%	100%	
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier (English learner or low literacy)	80%	100%	100%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	80%	100%	100%	
	Percentage of rural residents	71%	100%	100%	
Every Anchor Institution that wants it can access 1/1 Gbps to enable their missions and	Percentage of Anchor Institution locations with access to 1/1 Gbps	47%[55]	50%	60%	ADECA data based on Anchor Institution surveys and mapping efforts

[53] ADECA did not include currently incarcerated individuals in this measurable objective because broadband availability is facility based with access managed by the overseeing state agency per state law and regulations.
[54] Baseline data for formerly incarcerated individuals for this measurable objective are not yet available. ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data. ADECA sets preliminary 5- and 10-year goals for formerly incarcerated individuals to be the same as for other covered populations and will reevaluate these goals when baseline data is available.
[55] This baseline is an estimate based on a screening of CAI locations in census blocks that have at least one 1 Gbps symmetrical service available according to the v3 Broadband Data Collection data updated January 9, 2024.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
serve their communities					

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

The table below establishes measurable objectives for access to affordable services and access to workable devices with available technical support.

For the measurable objective of lowering the average cost of home internet for members of covered populations, sufficient data are not available from federal and state sources to establish a meaningful baseline and goals for lowering the average cost of home internet for individuals with a language barrier and rural residents. These KPIs are set at TBD with 5- and 10-year goals matching those for other covered populations. As of the writing of this Plan, the state is coordinating with entities representing these covered populations to gather data as described in Section 4.1.6.3 and Section 5.1.4.[56] Regarding the affordability of internet service for incarcerated individuals, ADECA did not include currently incarcerated individuals in this measurable objective because broadband availability is facility based with costs managed by the overseeing state agencies (the Alabama Department of Corrections and the Alabama Department of Youth Services) per state law and regulations.[57]

For the measurable objective of members of covered populations that have access to a workable computing device, for individuals with a language barrier (English language learners and individuals with low levels of literacy), the KPI percentage is set at TBD with 5- and 10-year goals matching those for other covered populations. As of the writing of this Plan, the state is coordinating with entities representing this covered population to gather data as described in Section 4.1.6.3 and Section 5.1.4. [58]

[56] The state intends to establish these KPIs before Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program funding is available.
[57] Note that, as discussed above in Section 2.3.2.1, ADECA is gathering data regarding broadband availability to prison facilities as of the writing of this Plan to help determine the extent to which internet access is available to incarcerated individuals.
[58] The state intends to establish this KPI before Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program funding is available.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
Increase enrollment in the ACP[59]	Percentage of eligible households participating in ACP	40%	50%	60%	Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)[60]
Increase the percentage of ISPs that offer low-cost products for lower-income households	Percentage of ISPs that offer low-cost products for lower-income households	64%	75%	85%	ADECA
Lower the average cost of home internet for all Alabamians	Average cost of home internet for Alabama residents	$74.85	$70.00	$65.00	ADECA phone survey
Lower the average cost of home internet for members of covered populations	Average cost of home internet for individuals in covered households	$66.76	$65.00	$65.00	ADECA phone survey except for incarcerated individuals, for whom data were provided by ADOC and DYS
	Average for aging individuals[61]	$73.11	$70.00	$65.00	

[59] *See Fourth Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Affordable Connectivity Program)*, FCC 22-87, (Nov. 15, 2022), p. 101, https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-creates-acp-transparency-data-collection (noting the FCC declined proposals to adopt reporting that required detailed demographics to instead adopt aggregate-level data collection).

[60] Baseline estimate based on ACP participation data from USAC.

[61] Data gathered through the residential phone survey categorized aging individuals as aged 65 or older. Future survey instruments will reflect the NTIA's definition of aging individuals as 60 or older.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
	Average for formerly incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)[62]	TBD[63]	$70.00	$65.00	
	Average for veterans	$71.88	$70.00	$65.00	
	Average for individuals with disabilities	$70.66	$70.00	$65.00	
	Average for individuals with a language barrier (English learner or low literacy)	TBD[64]	$70.00	$65.00	
	Average for members of racial or ethnic minorities	$72.25	$70.00	$65.00	
	Average for residents in rural zip codes	$75.73	$70.00	$65.00	

[62] ADECA did not include currently incarcerated individuals in this measurable objective because broadband availability is facility based with costs managed by the overseeing state agency per state law and regulations.
[63] Baseline data for formerly incarcerated individuals for this measurable objective are not yet available. ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data. ADECA sets preliminary 5- and 10-year goals for this covered population to be the same as for other covered populations and will reevaluate these goals when baseline data are available.
[64] Baseline data for individuals with a language barrier for this measurable objective are not yet available. ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data. ADECA sets preliminary 5- and 10-year goals for this covered population to be the same as for other covered populations and will reevaluate these goals when baseline data are available.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
All Alabamians have access to a workable computing device	Percentage of all survey respondents who report they can get a broken or lost computing device fixed or replaced within a month	92%	93%	95%	ADECA phone survey
Members of covered populations have access to a workable computing device	Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who report they can get a broken or lost computing device fixed or replaced within a month	90%	93%	95%	ADECA phone survey, except for incarcerated individuals, for whom data were provided by ADOC
	Percentage for individuals in covered households	80%	93%	95%	
	Percentage for aging individuals	89%	93%	95%	
	Percentage of formerly incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility) with access to a workable device	85%	93%	95%	

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
	Percentage of currently incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility) with access to a workable device	100%[65]	100%	100%	
	Percentage for veterans	94%	95%	95%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	86%	93%	95%	
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier (English learner or low literacy)	TBD[66]	93%	95%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	90%	93%	95%	
	Percentage of rural residents	94%	95%	95%	

[65] In a meeting with ADECA on December 11, 2023, ADOC representatives stated that inmates in state prison facilities are provided a Securus Technologies-managed handheld device on a one device per one inmate basis. These basic devices provide access to phone, messaging, educational content, books, and entertainment content, with a video component. The devices operate on a largely closed network, with any indirect external access to the internet managed through security filters and a firewall managed by Securus. For a list of Alabama facilities supported by Securus Technologies, see https://securustech.online/#/facilities-we-serve.

[66] Baseline data for individuals with a language barrier for this measurable objective are not yet available. ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data. ADECA sets preliminary 5- and 10-year goals for this covered population to be the same as for other covered populations and will reevaluate these goals when baseline data are available.

2.3.2.3 Key challenge: Low-income households and aging individuals lack digital skills

The baselines and goals shown below are based on the measurement of 14 digital skills representing common online activities.[67] ADECA's phone survey asked respondents to rate their confidence performing each of these activities. As a general indicator of digital literacy, the first KPI analyzes the total number of these skills individuals in each population can perform with confidence, on average. While the needs of all covered populations will be addressed, baseline measurements for low-income and aging individuals are notably lower than the population as a whole and other covered populations, making them a particular focus for ADECA.

Additional KPIs are based on subsets of the 14 skills that reflect individuals' confidence protecting their privacy, ensuring their security, and accessing government services. Note that sufficient data were not available from state and federal sources to establish a baseline and goals for the latter objective for individuals with a language barrier; the state is coordinating with entities representing this covered population as described in Section 4.1.6.3 and Section 5.1.4 to gather data that will be used to set this KPI.[68]

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
All Alabamians are confident in their ability to use the internet if they so choose	Average number of key digital skills performed confidently (out of 14 measured)	11.0/14	12/14	12.5/14	ADECA phone survey
Members of covered populations are confident in	Average number of key digital skills performed confidently by members of covered populations (out of 14 measured)	10.5/14	12/14	12.5/14	ADECA phone survey

[67] Skills measured are 1. sending and receiving emails; 2. using social media; 3. participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime); 4. operating a small home business; 5. working remotely and telecommuting; 6. searching for a job online; 7. taking classes or participating in job training online; 8. accessing medical services online; 9. accessing government services online; 10. shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services; 11. accessing online financial services; 12. identifying online fraud (such as phishing schemes); 13. identifying misleading information or disinformation; and 14. adjusting privacy settings online (such as on social media).

[68] The state intends to establish this KPI before Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program funding is available.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
their ability to use the internet if they so choose	Average for individuals in covered households	8.9/14	12/14	12.5/14	
	Average for aging individuals	8.9/14	12/14	12.5/14	
	Average for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	10.4/14	12/14[69]	12.5/14	
	Average for veterans	10.6/14	12/14	12.5/14	
	Average for individuals with disabilities	10.3/14	12/14	12.5/14	
	Average for individuals with a language barrier (English learner or low literacy)	10.7/14	12/14	12.5/14	
	Average for members of racial or ethnic minorities	10.8/14	12/14	12.5/14	
	Average of rural residents	10.5/14	12/14	12.5/14	
All Alabamians can access information or training to learn how to protect their security online	Percentage of all survey respondents who say they are confident they can protect their security online	80%	85%	90%	ADECA phone survey
Members of covered populations can access information or training	Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who say they are confident they can protect their security online	75%	85%	90%	ADECA phone survey

[69] These goals assume the availability of data and that state laws and regulations allow incarcerated individuals to have access to the internet.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
to learn how to protect their security online	Percentage for individuals in covered households	72%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for aging individuals	69%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	71%	85%[70]	90%	
	Percentage for veterans	77%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	75%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier (English learner or low literacy)	71%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	72%	85%	90%	
	Percentage of rural residents	84%	85%	90%	
All Alabamians can access information or training to learn how to protect their privacy online	Percentage of all survey respondents who say they are confident they can protect their privacy online	76%	85%	90%	ADECA phone survey
Members of covered populations can access	Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who say they are confident they	71%	85%	90%	ADECA phone survey

[70] These goals assume the availability of data and that state laws and regulations allow incarcerated individuals to have access to the internet.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
information or training to learn how to protect their privacy online	can protect their privacy online				
	Percentage for individuals in covered households	69%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for aging individuals	57%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	84%	85%[71]	90%	
	Percentage for veterans	69%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	69%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier (English learner or low literacy)	68%	85%	90%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	68%	85%	90%	
	Percentage of rural residents	77%	85%	90%	
All Alabamians can access government services online	Percentage of all survey respondents who say they are very confident using the internet to access government services online	88%	90%	95%	ADECA phone survey
Members of covered populations can access government services online	Percentage of all covered population survey respondents who say they are very confident accessing government services online	85%	90%	95%	ADECA phone survey
	Percentage for individuals in covered households	83%	90%	95%	

[71] These goals assume the availability of data and that state laws and regulations allow incarcerated individuals to have access to the internet.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
	Percentage for aging individuals	80%	90%	95%	
	Percentage for incarcerated individuals (other than in a federal facility)	76%	90%[72]	95%	
	Percentage for veterans	81%	90%	95%	
	Percentage for individuals with disabilities	84%	90%	95%	
	Percentage for individuals with a language barrier (English learner or low literacy)	TBD[73]	90%	95%	
	Percentage for members of racial or ethnic minorities	84%	90%	95%	
	Percentage of rural residents	87%	90%	95%	

2.3.2.4 Key challenge: Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital opportunity efforts

In the table below, the state's objective to provide grant writing support to help localities access funding through NTIA's Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program will be measured by participation in seminars by ADECA—an activity that is planned as part of the state's implementation strategy (see Section 5.1.4). As these events have not yet begun, the baseline is set as 0 percent. The 10-year goal is not applicable, as ADECA expects funding through this program to no longer be available at that time.

[72] These goals assume the availability of data and that state laws and regulations allow incarcerated individuals to have access to the internet.

[73] Baseline data for individuals with a language barrier for this measurable objective are not yet available. ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data. ADECA sets preliminary 5- and 10-year goals for this covered population to be the same as for other covered populations and will reevaluate these goals when baseline data are available.

Measurable objective	KPI	Baseline (current state)	5-year goal	10-year goal	Data source
Data are available to all counties regarding the status of broadband and digital opportunity in their communities	Availability of county profiles detailing broadband and digital opportunity needs and strategies	100%	100%	100%	ADECA data
Partnership opportunities are available for localities, nonprofits, and Anchor Institutions	Number of convening events per year	3	12	12	ADECA data
Localities have access to grant writing guidance and expertise for accessing federal digital opportunity funds	Percentage of localities that participate in ADECA seminars regarding applying for federal digital opportunity funds	0%	50% in 2025	N/A[74]	ADECA data

[74] Because ADECA expects grant writing guidance and expertise implementation activities to be completed during 2025 and does not anticipate additional funding to be available after this time, the 10-year goal is not applicable.

3. Current state of digital opportunity: Barriers and assets

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

ADECA has always supported local broadband planning and development. To that end, it held outreach meetings in each of Alabama's 67 counties between December 2022 and May 2023.[75] The key purpose of these meetings was to engage the community, seek local input on priorities and goals, and identify local challenges and assets related to broadband access and digital opportunity. These half-day sessions gave community leaders, organizations, and members of the public the opportunity to interact with ISPs and to learn more about broadband and digital opportunity. In parallel, ADECA has hosted a series of broadband webinars and workshops that are archived on the ADECA website and available to assist local and regional entities.[76] Furthermore, ADECA has conducted additional outreach meetings with Alabama HBCUs, federal- and state-recognized Tribal governments, and a wide range of nonprofits, community-based organizations, and state agencies.

3.1 Asset inventory

This section identifies assets that promote digital opportunity for each of the state's covered populations, including resources, programs, plans, and strategies from public and private entities.

3.1.1 Digital opportunity assets by covered population

Through its outreach and research, ADECA has identified key digital opportunity assets that support covered populations in the state, including workforce development training and employment services related to broadband adoption; technical assistance programs aimed at supporting digital opportunity; and nonprofits, partnerships, and coalitions that work toward digital opportunity. Table 3 lists a selection of representative digital opportunity assets and indicates the primary covered population(s) they serve. Additional assets can be found in Appendix A.

[75] "Alabama Community Broadband Technical Assistance Program," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/alabama-community-broadband-technical-assistance-program/. Outreach to the first 10 counties was funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and outreach to the remaining 57 counties is funded by the NTIA's BEAD Program.

[76] "Broadband Webinars and Workshops," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/broadband-webinars-and-workshops/.

Table 3: Digital opportunity assets by covered population(s)

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Alabama Alliance for Students with Disabilities, Alabama State University	Works to increase the opportunities in STEM education for students with disabilities.[77]				X					
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging	The 13 regional area agencies on aging, some of which are part of regional councils of government, provide a range of programs for aging individuals including computer skills.[78]	X								
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities	Provides training to local housing authorities, some of which offer programs in digital skills; maintains directory of 300+ housing authorities throughout the state.[79]	X							X	X
Alabama Association of Nonprofits	Provides broad communication and local and regional training for nonprofit partners; grant writing training.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)	The 12 regional commissions and councils of government provide a variety of programs including job training, financial counseling, youth leadership programs, veterans' programs, programs for aging individuals, and other programs that may include digital skills and training.[80]	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
Alabama Career Center System	Provides online basic computer skills and business software skills and other workforce development resources. System has 7 comprehensive career centers, 25 affiliate career	X		X	X			X	X	X

[77] "Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities," Alabama State University, https://www.alasu.edu/academics/researchcenters/alabama-alliance-students-disabilities.
[78] "Alabama Area Agencies On Aging (By Region)," Area Agency on Aging of West Alabama, https://www.westalabamaaging.org/alabama-area-agencies-on-aging.
[79] "Housing Authority Directory," Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities, https://www.aahra.org/hadirectory.
[80] "Programs," AARC, https://alarc.org/programs/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	centers, 7 satellite career centers, and 16 itinerant career centers located around the state.[81]									
Alabama Community College System (ACCS)	Offers adult education technical and workforce development programs; the ACCS Innovation Center provides industry-recognized non-credit training. Senior service organizations can partner with ACCS to hold classes at senior centers and town halls. Leverages World Education digital skills programs.[82] Provides educational and training opportunities for incarcerated and reentering citizens.[83]	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Alabama Cooperative Extension System	Primary outreach and engagement organization for the land-grant mission of Alabama A&M University and Auburn University in cooperation with Tuskegee University. Provides a range of programs in each county through state and online courses, including computer science skills, personal finance, and workforce development.[84] Received a 4H Tech Changemakers grant to train youth to teach digital skills to underserved audiences.[85]	X		X	X			X	X	X
Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR)	County field representatives are the primary point of contact for families that receive assistance for government services and are in a unique position to communicate about ACP and other broadband access subsidies, digital opportunity, and workforce training programs that may be available to covered populations.[86]	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

[81] "Alabama's Career Center Services," Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act | Alabama, https://wioa-alabama.org/career-services.
[82] See, e.g., "Fiber Optics," Wallace Community College, https://www.wallace.edu/programs-training/fast-track-workforce-development-training-programs/fiber-optic-training/.
[83] "Correctional and Post-Correctional Education," Alabama Community College System, https://www.accs.edu/correctional-and-post-correctional-ed/.
[84] Alabama Cooperative Extension System, https://www.aces.edu/blog/category/counties/.
[85] Angela Williams, "Success Story: 4-H Tech Changemakers," Alabama Cooperative Extension System blog, March 28, 2023, https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/about-us/success-story-4-h-tech-changemakers/.
[86] "County Office Contacts," DHR, https://dhr.alabama.gov/county-office-contact/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)	Provides telehealth/digital health services out of county health and partner locations throughout the state.	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)	State agency that serves Alabamians with disabilities from birth throughout their lives. Provides a "continuum of care" approach to service through four main programs at 25 community offices throughout the state.	X			X	X		X	X	X
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA)	Assists veterans in obtaining benefits and healthcare, including telehealth, through resources in each county throughout the state.[87]	X		X	X			X	X	X
Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS)	State agency charged with administering and regulating juvenile justice programs and services. DYS provides quality educational opportunities, services, and supports to youth involved in the justice system.[88] DYS uses Microsoft IT Academy in its facilities.[89]		X							X
Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance (AELA)	Works to ensure Alabama youth, families, and communities have access to high-quality programming during out-of-school time that promotes positive development and lifelong learning.[90]						X	X	X	X
Alabama Giving	Convenes and coordinates networking for public, private, and corporate funders; communicates with funders on issues and state and national programs							X	X	

[87] "Find Your Veterans Service Office," ADVA, https://va.alabama.gov/serviceofficer/.
[88] "DYS Overview," DYS, https://dys.alabama.gov/dys-overview.
[89] "DYS Schools & Programs," DYS, https://dys.alabama.gov/dys-school-district.
[90] "About Us," AELA, https://www.alabamaexpandedlearningalliance.org/about.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)	Provides opportunities for students to earn Northstar Digital Literacy certifications. Offers individualized Assistive Technology training and instruction relating to the use and care of equipment and devices. The Computer Skills program prepares students with skills to obtain entry-level office technology, computer support and/or Web technology positions. AIDB's 10 regional centers extend the program offerings throughout the state.[91]				X	X		X	X	X
Alabama Literacy Alliance	Networking group comprised of literacy leaders and advocates from across the state who advocate for reading issues with elected officials and promote literacy efforts in the state.		X			X	X	X	X	
Alabama Literacy Association (ALA)	Non-profit membership organization comprised of 10 local literacy councils that promote literacy across the state.					X	X	X	X	
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers	23 centers connect families to programs and services and offer case management, support, and help to overcome barriers like transportation and childcare. Helps families access subsidized internet service, provides hotspots, and loans tablets and laptops for educational use; some centers provide internet skills classes to students and parents. Partners with community colleges and provides workforce training.					X	X	X		X
Alabama Prison Arts & Education Project (APAEP)	Auburn University and APAEP offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, combining emphases in Business, Leadership, and Human Development and Family Sciences at Staton Correctional Facility and Tutwiler Prison for Women.		X							

[91] "General Services," AIDB, https://www.aidb.org/Page/281.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)	Supports a statewide network of nearly 300 local and regional libraries. Programs include "Get the Internet to Go," which provides mobile hotspots to select libraries in many of Alabama's most underserved rural communities. [92] Data use through the program grew by almost 60 percent from FY2022 to FY2023, and as of October 2023, 223 units are active at 66 project sites.[93] APLS is also a network member of the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled, a division of the Library of Congress; the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled circulates free books and magazines in braille or audio formats for people with temporary or permanent low vision, blindness, or physical, perceptual, or reading disability.[94]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)	Offers numerous programs to persons 50 years of age or older through local and nationwide partnerships. AARP encourages ACP enrollment and advocates for high-speed internet and devices needed for making online connections for rural communities and older residents.	X				X		X	X	X
Autauga Area Community Foundation	Affiliate of the Central Alabama Community Foundation; distributes grants that provide critical funds for food banks, libraries, educational programs, and art programs.							X	X	X
The Arc of Alabama	Nonprofit, volunteer-based membership organization whose primary role is to advocate for the rights and protections of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. This advocacy is provided through Information and Referral services, educational opportunities				X					

[92] "Alabama Hotspot Lending Program: Home," APLS, https://apls.libguides.com/hotspot/.
[93] "Hotspot Lending Program Cumulative Report FY2023," October 24, 2023, provided to ADECA by APLS.
[94] "Library for the Blind," Alabama Public Library Service, https://aplsws2.apls.state.al.us/library-for-the-blind/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	like the annual Alabama disABILITY Conference, and public policy initiatives.[95]									
Bishop State Community College	Bishop State Community College, an HBCU, offers adult education and training courses, including the General Educational Development (GED) diploma, designed to be equivalent to a high school diploma, as well as the following telecommunications-relevant certifications: OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and Northstar Digital Literacy.[96]							X		
Black Belt Community Foundation	Working with Google to provide digital skills programs to advance economic opportunity for people impacted by incarceration.[97]		X							
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity	Developed toolkit to help Black church leaders spread the word in their communities about the ACP, encourage members of their congregations to sign up, and effectively advocate for digital equity.							X		
Capital Area Adult Literacy Council	Offers adult literacy courses, including one-on-one personalized tutoring in reading and writing, English for speakers of other languages, and basic computer skills and understanding					X	X	X	X	X
Central Alabama Community Foundation (CACF)	Distributes grants that meet diverse community needs, supporting programs and projects in education, human services, health, cultural arts, and other civic concerns							X	X	X

[95] The Arc of Alabama, http://thearcofal.org/; Alabama disABILITY Conference, https://www.aldisabilityconference.org/.
[96] "Adult Education & Workforce Development," Bishop State Community College, http://catalog.bishop.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=617.
[97] "Black Belt Community Foundation Joins Google Program to Offer Digital Skills Training for People Impacted by Incarceration," Black Belt Community Foundation, November 18, 2022, https://blackbeltfound.org/news/black-belt-community-foundation-joins-google-program-to-offer-digital-skills-training-for-people-impacted-by-incarceration/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)	Statewide association of member community action agencies that offer range of programs for low-income individuals and families. Received funding for ACP awareness campaign.[98]									X
Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham (CFGB)	Place-based foundation serving five counties in the Greater Birmingham area (Jefferson, Shelby, Walker, St. Clair, and Blount)[99] by providing support and funding for organizations in five priority areas: economic opportunity for all, persistent poverty, equity and inclusion, thriving communities, and regional cooperation.							X		X
Community Foundation of Greater Decatur	Distributes grants that meet diverse community needs, supporting programs and projects in education, human services, health, cultural arts, and other civic concerns	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville (CFGH)	Convenes donors, nonprofit organizations, community groups, local government, and businesses to create new pathways of philanthropy to address pressing challenges	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Foundation of South Alabama (CFSA)	Has created over 500 philanthropic funds throughout the eight counties of southwest Alabama	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama (CFNEA)	Manages over 230 charitable funds through effective donor philanthropy, grantmaking, and collaborative community partnerships	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Foundation of	Through philanthropy, supports a wide range of nonprofit organizations including social services, arts, education,	X			X	X	X	X	X	X

[98] CAA, https://caaalabama.org/.
[99] "About Us," CFGB, https://www.cfbham.org/about-us/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
West Alabama (CFWA)	environmental projects, and health.									
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc.	National Digital Navigator Corps awardee; plans to expand digital navigator program in west Alabama. Founded in 1967, it provides resources and services which resolve immediate needs and lead to long-term self-sufficiency for low-income and vulnerable populations.[100]	X			X	X		X	X	X
Compudopt	Provides technology access and education to under-resourced youth and their communities. Programs serve to eliminate limited access to computers, facilitate growth in technical and digital literacy skills, help provide no or low-cost high-speed internet options and support the future of youth and their communities.									X
The Link of Cullman County	Supports literacy needs for children and adults; partners with Wallace State Community College to provide GED and professional certification classes for English as a Second Language. Their One-Eighty Reentry Program is funded by the Second Chance Act Grant and is tailored for participants on probation or parole within Cullman County, Alabama who are at risk of recidivism/reoffending.		X			X	X	X	X	X
Digitunity	Partners with community-based organizations and nonprofit computer refurbishers to help students and their families obtain a computer. Offers digital skills training resources in collaboration with 250 organizations within the Digital Opportunity Network. Advocates for policies and practices that support digital opportunity and expand device ownership.					X	X	X	X	X
Elmore County Community Foundation	Affiliate of the Central Alabama Community Foundation; distributes grants that provide critical funds for food banks, libraries, educational programs, and art programs					X	X		X	X

[100] "NDIA's National Digital Navigator Corps in Rural & Tribal Communities," National Digital Inclusion Alliance, https://www.digitalinclusion.org/digital-navigator-corps/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)	Works with communities marginalized by poverty and discouraged by unequal treatment. Provides research and recommendations to assist advocates and policymakers in criminal justice reform.[101]		X					X		X
Equitable Neighborhoods Initiative	Equips communities to address pandemic-related issues while building capacity to deal with ongoing health and quality of life challenges. Connects 20 neighborhoods around the state to resources to improve health equity and the development of each community. Provides community-based health workshops.[102]					X		X	X	X
Family Guidance Center of Alabama	No-cost computer skills classes. Open computer labs allow for both group instruction and self-paced learning.	X			X	X		X		X
Gadsden State Community College	Gadsden State Community College, an HBCU, offers computer skills training and an individual action plan for each veteran served, via its Veterans Upward Bound program.[103]			X				X		
GOVS	Works to increase ethic of service and volunteerism in Alabama, strengthen the capacity of Alabama's faith and community-based organizations, and promote collaboration among individuals and organizations striving to meet some of the greatest needs in the state, including education, health care, substance abuse, homelessness, and maintaining a healthy environment. Administers ReadyAlabama.gov, a statewide initiative promoting disaster preparedness events and messaging across Alabama.[104]	X		X	X	X		X	X	X

[101] "About EJI," EJI, https://eji.org/about/.
[102] Equitable Neighborhoods Initiative, https://enialabama.org/.
[103] "Veterans Upward Bound," Gadsden State Community College, https://www.gadsdenstate.edu/students/vub.cms.
[104] GOVS, https://www.servealabama.gov/; Ready Alabama, https://www.readyalabama.gov/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama (HICA)	A community development and advocacy organization that champions economic equality, civic engagement, and social justice for Latino and immigrant families in Alabama, includes college readiness, workforce development and technical training programs.[105]					X		X	X	
Housing Authority of the Birmingham District	Received funding from FCC in 2023 through the Your Home, Your Internet pilot program to provide ACP outreach and application assistance to eligible households.[106]									X
J. F. Ingram State Technical College	As the sole correctional education provider in the State of Alabama, Ingram State prioritizes education and job training to give individuals the best opportunity for success and lower the recidivism rate in Alabama.		X							
Just Transition Fund	A national nonprofit that provides funding and technical support to enable coal communities to apply for federal grants, including for broadband infrastructure and digital opportunity efforts.[107]								X	X
Lee County Literacy Coalition	Offers digital and workplace literacy workshops to help adults increase their ability to communicate online.					X	X			
Literacy Council of Central Alabama	Helps people to learn to use a computer, among other programs.[108]					X	X			
Literacy Council of West Alabama	Partners with local universities and businesses to reduce illiteracy in children and adults in nine counties in West Alabama.					X	X			

[105] "About HICA!" HICA, https://hicaalabama.org/en/about-us.
[106] "Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Wireline Competition Bureau Announce ACP Pilot Program Grants Target Funding," FCC, March 15, 2023, https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-23-219A1.pdf.
[107] Just Transition Fund, https://justtransitionfund.org/broadband/.
[108] Literacy Council of Central Alabama, https://literacy-council.org/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama (LIHCA)	Increase housing opportunities for Alabamians with the greatest financial need.[109]									X
Magic City Literacy Council	Promotes literacy in the greater Birmingham area and provides professional development and community service opportunities					X	X			
Mercy House	Operates MAP Center for Excellence that offers career guidance, adult education, and family services. Partnered with Trenholm State Community College.[110]	X						X		X
Metro-Mobile Literacy Council	Partners with local, state, and international affiliates to promote literacy for children of all ages in the Mobile area as well as at the state and international levels through multiple projects and programs					X	X			
National Center for Women in Technology (NCWIT)	Digital skills training programs for women.[111]				X			X		
Plains Literacy Council	A chapter of the Alabama Literacy Association that advocates for making literacy accessible to all					X	X			
Randolph County Economic Development Authority (RCEDA)	Received funding from Microsoft Philanthropies to launch the Community Skills Initiative Alabama Region program. A suite of online training and resources, accessed through the								X	X

[109] LIHCA, https://lihca.org/.
[110] "Mercy House Connecting People to Resources," https://www.mercyhousemgm.org/.
[111] "Search Results for: Alabama," NCWIT, https://ncwit.org/?s=alabama.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	Community Skills Initiative Alabama website, offers access to free online digital skills training courses.[112]									
Shelton State Community College	Shelton State Community College, an HBCU, offers workforce development programs. Provides GED, Northstar Digital Literacy Certificate, and English as a Second Language.[113]					X		X		
Singing River Literacy Council	Local affiliate of the Alabama Literacy Association that conducts outreach and programs to promote literacy					X	X			
Social U	Offers consulting, training, and social media management services	X								X
Southeast Alabama Community Foundation (Coffee, Dale, Geneva, Henry, & Houston Counties)	Affiliate of the Central Alabama Community Foundation; provides grants and scholarships supporting programs and projects in education, human services, health, cultural arts, and other civic concerns in the Wiregrass Region	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE)	SWAPTE is a regional partnership of business, education, labor and community leaders serving Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington and Wilcox counties, in coordination with the Alabama Career Center System.								X	X

[112] "Randolph County Economic Development Authority," Community Skills Initiative, https://www.communityskilling.org/partner/rceda; Jerry Underwood, "Microsoft taps Randolph County to lead digital skills initiative in Alabama," Made In Alabama, October 13, 2022, https://www.madeinalabama.com/2022/10/microsoft-taps-randolph-county-to-lead-digital-skills-initiative-in-alabama/.

[113] "Adult Education," Shelton State Community College, https://www.sheltonstate.edu/instruction-workforce-development/adult-education/. See also, "Shelton State Adult Education Online Cycles Set to Begin," WVUA23, May 21, 2020, https://www.wvua23.com/shelton-state-adult-education-online-cycles-set-to-begin/ ("These online classes are free, and focus on topics such as digital literacy, workplace skills and GED preparation.").

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Thrive Regional Broadband Alliance	Thrive is a cross-sector partnership framework where partners can share ideas and resources related to digital access and opportunity, build empathy, and spark connections across organizations and county and state lines. Offers basic digital skills classes such as Broadband 101.[114]	X							X	X
United Ways of Alabama	Coordination of programs across the 20+ regional and local United Ways throughout the state. Delivers A-RESET employability training program through United Ways and other organizations, including Aid to Inmate Mothers.[115]	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
University of Alabama – Culverhouse School of Accountancy	Adults of any age can sign up for computer skills training classes and are paired with a university student who will teach them one-on-one.[116]	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
University of West Alabama	Digital Literacy Training and Workforce Development Training programs are offered in Sumter County and the Town of Boligee and will be replicated for other Black Belt communities. The Leveraging Integrated Networks for Change and Sustainability (LINCS) project aims to develop a rural regional workforce in 10 Black Belt counties based on industry-recognized credentials.[117] With funding from a Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program grant, UWA							X	X	

[114] "Regional Broadband Alliance," Thrive Regional Partnership, https://www.thriveregionalpartnership.org/projects/regional-broadband-alliance.
[115] "Mission," United Ways of Alabama, https://www.unitedwaysofalabama.org/mission/.
[116] "Computer & Phone Skills Training," Culverhouse School of Accountancy, University of Alabama, https://lift.culverhouse.ua.edu/classes/computer-skills-training/.
[117] Phillip Tutor, "UWA puts wheels under skills training, career exploration," UWA, November 2021, https://www.uwa.edu/news/dewd/skillsonwheelsNov2021.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	English learner	Low literacy	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	aims to "enhance broadband access, capacity, and adoption, and increase digital skills" in Sumter and Greene Counties.[118]									
Walker Area Community Foundation	Grassroots organization partnered with more than 100 nonprofits. Many partners provide the social-safety network of its service area: programs focused on children/youth, education, health, arts and humanities, and social welfare.[119]	X			X	X		X	X	X

[118] "Award Recipients – University of West Alabama," BroadbandUSA, https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/funding-programs/connecting-minority-communities/award-recipients#U.
[119] "Walker Area Community Foundation," https://www.wacf.org/.

3.1.2 Existing digital opportunity plans

In addition to the state plans discussed in Section 2.2, some regional entities have incorporated broadband and/or digital opportunity elements into their strategic planning. These existing digital opportunity plans have been reviewed and their goals have informed this Plan:

- **Regional comprehensive economic development strategy plans:** Alabama's 12 regional councils, organized under the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC), provide proactive economic planning leadership at the regional level.[120] Each council produces a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), many of which incorporate goals for broadband connectivity. The CEDS by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) highlights a need for greater digital skills, including the following strategy under its objective to "increase broadband accessibility": "Fund career centers to provide training to utilize technology, including equipment maintenance and the digital skills needed to navigate the internet, prioritizing underserved areas and communities with a relatively higher concentration of seniors and lower-income adults."[121] The CEDS by the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG), which serves the region including the City of Huntsville, also describes broadband availability as an "equity indicator," stating that "[a]ccess to reliable, high-speed internet is emerging as a key equity challenge of the coming decade" as "educational and professional opportunities increasingly rel[y] on or incorporat[e] digital skills and access."[122]
- **County school district strategic plans:** An informal review of county school district educational strategic plans developed or updated since the COVID-19 pandemic indicates that school systems see the effective use of technology as a key component of student learning and for communicating with parents and students. For example, Lee County sets a goal of using emerging technologies to support teaching, learning, and work.[123] Madison County sets digital citizenship as a performance goal, with supporting factors including resources for teachers on digital citizenship, digital skills, and digital well-being.[124] Other key performance goals of the Madison County plan include providing devices for all

[120] "The Councils," AARC, https://alarc.org/the-councils/.
[121] "Advance Greater Birmingham: CEDS 2023-2028," RPCGB, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bfc5ef3f93fd4e73b6c10fa/t/633ae9b69030ce56ab5a6e33/1664805327990/Advance+Greater+Birmingham+CEDS+2023-2025.pdf.
[122] "2023-2028 Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy," TARCOG, https://tarcog.us/wp-content/uploads/TPMA_TARCOG-Report_v2_FINAL.pdf, p. 38.
[123] Lee County: https://www.lee.k12.al.us/cms/lib/AL02210054/Centricity/Domain/3899/LCS%20Strategic%20Plan%202021-2026.pdf
[124] Madison County: https://www.madisoncity.k12.al.us/cms/lib/AL50000433/Centricity/Domain/123/MADISON%20CITY%20SCHOOLS%20STRATEGIC%20PLAN.pdf.

students, increasing support for student devices, and providing technology resources and device expectations for students, parents, and teachers.[125]

- **Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind:** The Strategic Plan by the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB), which operates ten regional centers as well as its main campus in Talladega, primarily addresses the needs of AIDB as an Anchor Institution to fulfill its mission "[t]o prepare individuals to reach their limitless potential by providing superior staff, facilities, training, and programs."[126] Under this, it identifies the need for better internet connectivity and wireless access at its locations to meet the increasing demand for online access to digital resources.[127]
- **Alabama Cooperative Extension System:** In its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System identifies a key action priority to enhance educational capacity.[128] Strategies include expanding 4-H STEM to enhance youth leadership and workforce preparedness and leveraging distance learning to support face-to-face engagement and increase accessibility to extension programs.[129]

At the local level, recent community plans created by RPCGB, including those for the City of Morris (adopted 2022),[130] City of Montevallo (adopted 2020),[131] City of Fultondale (draft in progress as of August 2023),[132] and Shelby County (adopted 2023),[133] include action items to improve broadband availability. In its overview of utility services in the city, the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan (created in 2012) both discusses the availability of internet services and analyzes the digital divide, drawing on national data from the Pew Research Center that indicate gaps in internet use according to race, ethnicity, income, and level of education.[134] Huntsville's 2018 comprehensive plan also includes a vision for a "modern data infrastructure" that provides access to affordable high-speed internet for all residents and businesses and attracts new

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[125] *Id.*
[126] Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind 2021-2026 Strategic Plan: https://www.aidb.org/domain/3464#:~:text=The%20Strategic%20Plan%20for%20Alabama,and%20community%2C%20external%20stakeholders%2C%20institutional.
[127] *Id.*
[128] Alabama Cooperative Extension System 2022-2026 Strategic Plan: https://www.aces.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ACES-2692-Strategic-Plan-Final-120722L.pdf.
[129] *Id.*
[130] Morris Master Plan: https://www.dropbox.com/s/me3vckxb17b21hz/MorrisMasterPlan_Final_20220812.pdf?dl=0.
[131] Making Montevallo Comprehensive Plan: https://www.dropbox.com/s/7bsvxqinqqaq4cb/Montevallo_ComprehensivePlan_20200727.pdf?dl=0.
[132] Fultondale Forward: City of Fultondale Comprehensive Plan: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/eqt6gs9wb84vyxqwf0jif/Fultondale_ComprehensivePlan_20230726.pdf?dl=0&rlkey=2l8tgbqe1sd0zypvt5evlbfvv.
[133] Shelby County Comprehensive Plan: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1ko6hqp5srsaafn/AAC-yP1AQMuLMt4dTqTisT5Ba?dl=0&preview=SC_ComprehensivePlan_20230414.pdf.
[134] "City of Birmingham Comprehensive Plan," City of Birmingham, 2012, https://www.birminghamal.gov/work/birmingham-comprehensive-plan/, p. 3.51.

industry.[135] Aside from broadband elements in current plans and regional CEDSs (as discussed above), ADECA was unable to identify recent, specific digital opportunity plans by major cities such as Birmingham and Huntsville.

ADECA's research and outreach were not able to identify Tribes in the state who have created digital opportunity plans or included related elements in current strategic plans.

3.1.3 Existing digital opportunity programs

Table 4 lists programs and resources in the state related to digital opportunity, including projects by HBCUs and MSIs that were awarded funding through NTIA's Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program.[136] Gap areas include programs specifically for veterans and incarcerated individuals.

Table 4: Existing digital opportunity programs

Program name	Description
Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile Program[137]	Provides grants to deploy middle-mile fiber networks connecting Anchor Institutions with an identified need for service with infrastructure capable of providing services of at least 1 Gbps symmetrical speeds, while facilitating last-mile deployment in unserved areas. Scoring criteria are designed to attract companies to build in census blocks that are more than 80 percent unserved and more than 50 percent unserved and support digital opportunity by ensuring residents have best-in-class service available at a community institution.
Alabama Statewide Middle-Mile Network Grant Program[138]	Competitive grant program for middle-mile deployment.
Alabama Capital Projects Fund Program[139]	Competitive grant program that funds eligible projects to deploy last-mile services to unserved, rural households.
Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund[140]	Competitive grant program for broadband deployment that funds eligible projects to deploy last-mile and related middle-mile services to unserved, rural households. The scoring criteria

[135] "Data Infrastructure – The Big Picture," City of Huntsville, last modified November 1, 2018, https://bigpicturehuntsville.com/policies/data-infrastructure/.
[136] "Rep. Sewell Announces $18.4 Million to Expand Broadband at Alabama HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions," press release by U.S. Representative Terri Sewell, February 28, 2023, https://sewell.house.gov/2023/2/rep-sewell-announces-18-4-million-to-expand-broadband-at-alabama-hbcus-and-minority-serving-institutions.
[137] "Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile Program," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/alanchormiddlemile/.
[138] "Alabama Statewide Middle-Mile Network Grant Program Application and Implementation," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/alabama-middle-mile-network-grant-program/.
[139] "Alabama Capital Projects Fund," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/alcapitalprojectsfund/.
[140] "Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant Application and Implementation," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/grant-application-and-implementation/.

Program name	Description
	award up to 10 out of 160 possible points for a commitment by the provider to support the adoption of services through programs such as providing low-cost options, digital skills training, or devices. The scoring criteria award up to an additional 10 points for a commitment by the provider to assist local libraries in offering digital skills training.
Alabama Broadband Map (internal to ADECA under nondisclosure agreements)	Visible only to ADECA, this map shows address-level service availability data collected under nondisclosure agreements from ISPs that enables ADECA to make funding decisions and track broadband deployment and availability statewide.
Alabama Broadband Map[141] (public)	Displays the percentage of an area that is served and any unserved locations. It includes data collected directly from ISPs and is updated semi-annually. Provides broadband service information to state and local officials so they can better understand connectivity in their community/jurisdiction.
Alabama Community Broadband Technical Assistance Program (TAP)[142]	Provide broadband technical assistance to all counties in the state. In addition to broadband planning and needs assessment, the program provides support to develop capacity needed to support telehealth, business, and employment opportunities and improve broadband adoption in communities of greatest need. Activities include: 1) Engage community and identify local challenges and assets; 2) Assess current broadband service levels and evaluate unmet needs for broadband, training, devices, and support; and 3) Develop strategic approaches to public-private collaboration and provide guidance on funding for broadband and digital opportunity.
ADPH – Telehealth Program	Recognizing that telehealth services can increase access to care and improve patient outcomes, as well as lowering costs, the ADPH has instituted a Telehealth Program involving 66 county health departments. Each department is equipped with telehealth carts, enabling staff to facilitate services including cardiology, nephrology, behavioral health, HIV follow-up, and neurology in collaboration with 15 healthcare agencies and other partners. The program has helped staff reach patients in rural communities and provide COVID-19 testing and mitigation among individuals experiencing homelessness, among other efforts. As of the close of 2022, the Department continues to grow the program.[143]

[141] "Alabama Broadband Map," ADECA, https://broadband.alabama.gov/broadband-maps/.
[142] "Alabama Community Broadband Technical Assistance Program," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/alabama-community-broadband-technical-assistance-program/.
[143] "Annual Report 2022," Alabama Department of Public Health, https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/blog/assets/annualreport2022.pdf.

Program name	Description
ALSDE – Educational Technology	The Educational Technology section (EdTech) of the ALSDE, which provides technology resources and training to support student learning, manages multiple programs in alignment with the Department's Strategic Plan, Alabama Achieves, that include a digital opportunity component:[144] • ACCESS Virtual Learning – Supplements local course offerings by providing all the courses necessary to earn an Alabama high school diploma at no cost to students or schools. • Alabama Learning Exchange – Provides instructional materials in accordance with Alabama content standards. • E-Rate – Alabama Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and schools receive $50 million per year on average in E-Rate funding/discounts for eligible internet services and equipment, with support from EdTech's Alabama Joint Purchasing (ALJP) procurement mechanism.[145]
Alabama State University (ASU) – "Broadening Access through Community, Connectivity, and Education" (BRACCE)	The University was awarded $2,999,695.37 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to improve broadband infrastructure and services on campus and establish a technology center in its community that will provide Digital Navigator services.
Drake State Community & Technical College – Connecting Minority Communities of North Alabama	The College was awarded $2,413,182 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to address historic inequities in broadband access within its community of Madison County by providing devices and home internet access as well as expanding access to online educational resources.
H. Councill Trenholm State Community College – "Connecting Montgomery: Bridging the Digital Divide – Closing the Opportunity Gap"	The College was awarded $2,066,454 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to improve broadband service, expand IT capacity, and promote digital opportunity for its students and community.
Internet speed test and location availability reporting[146]	Webpage that enables individuals to test internet speed and report lack of availability at business or residential locations.

[144] "Enhancing the Alabama Achieves Strategic Plan through Educational Technology Support," Alabama State Department of Education division of Educational Technology, https://alsde-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/mshields_alsde_edu/EWFJXyRvU-BKsAJzVyPQcdgB2dLIWvDPb3-KwOKudoq4iQ?e=4dVKaS.

[145] ALJP has supported the E-Rate application process for Alabama schools since 2004 in accordance with Title 16 Chapter 61E of the Code of Alabama 1975.

[146] "Take our survey and run a speed test!" ADECA, https://broadband.alabama.gov/survey/.

Program name	Description
Stillman College – "Fiber for the Future"	The College was awarded $2,774,257.37 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to deploy a fiber network on campus and wireless infrastructure for the campus and surrounding community, as well as purchasing devices to support remote learning for students dual enrolled at area high schools.
Talladega College – "Realizing Future Proof Technology to Create Connections between Talladega College's Students, Faculty and Surrounding Community in Rural Alabama"	The College was awarded $2,969,121.59 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to deploy a network that will serve its campus and extend into the City of Talladega and parts of the county.
Tuskegee University – "ConnecTUvity: Anchoring the Future of Tuskegee with Broadband Technology"	The University was awarded $3,569,618 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to upgrade its campus network and technology in learning spaces.
University of West Alabama (UWA) Connects Minority Communities	The University was awarded $1,649,440 through the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to increase broadband access, adoption, and digital skills in the surrounding area of Sumter and Greene Counties in collaboration with community partners.

3.1.4 Broadband adoption

According to the most recent NTIA data (November 2021), 71.7 percent of Alabama residents use the internet at home and 78.3 percent of residents use the internet at any location.[147]

A shortlist of key organizations for broadband adoption in Alabama includes the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the Alabama Career Center System, the Alabama Community College System, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Goodwill Industries, the AIDB, the APLS, regional planning councils, area agencies on aging, Community Action agencies, public housing authorities, regional United Ways, and state universities and HBCUs.

Programs by these and other entities that promote broadband adoption are described in Table 3: Digital opportunity assets by covered population(s) and Table 35: Additional digital opportunity assets by covered population(s).

[147] "Digital Nation Data Explorer," NTIA Data Central, https://ntia.gov/other-publication/2022/digital-nation-data-explorer.

In addition, some organizations that attended outreach meetings ADECA conducted to support the development of this Plan (as detailed in Section 4) were in search of partners and began to coordinate with each other to share resources and ideas for future collaboration regarding broadband adoption. For example:

- In Marshall County, ADECA introduced a representative of the ISP GoNetspeed[148] to a representative of Community Action[149] for a possible partnership between an ISP and a community service organization to improve digital skills.
- In Chilton County, Blackbelt and Central Alabama Housing (BBCAH)[150] expressed an interest in building or obtaining housing with broadband connectivity for low-income families and ADECA connected it with the Greene County Industrial Development Authority.[151]
- In Cullman County, a representative of the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments said that it has funding to offer digital skills training but no partner to teach the classes. A representative of the Alabama Community College System said that it was eager to participate.
- At a meeting in Greene County, a representative of AT&T[152] expressed an interest in creating public-private partnerships to deliver broadband to the most remote unserved and underserved communities in Alabama.

Individual residents are also making valuable connections through ADECA's outreach. At a meeting in Montgomery County, Alabama, one attendee said that every time she used her computer, she downloaded a virus and her children got angry at her, so she stopped using the computer. A representative of Montgomery Public Libraries offered a digital skills class that could install antivirus software on her computer and teach her to use it.

The state also intends to advance digital opportunity in unserved areas by making best-in-class service available to residents at Anchor Institutions through the Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile Program. The scoring criteria for the program, which provides grants for providers to deploy middle-mile infrastructure that will facilitate gigabit symmetrical service to Anchor Institutions with an identified need and facilitate last-mile deployment, prioritizes projects in census blocks that are more than 80 percent unserved and more than 50 percent unserved.[153]

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[148] GoNetspeed, https://www.gonetspeed.com/alabama/.
[149] Community Action Association of Alabama (Community Action), https://caaalabama.org/.
[150] Blackbelt and Central Alabama Housing, https://www.bcah99.com/.
[151] Green County Industrial Development Authority, https://www.gcida.com/.
[152] AT&T, https://www.att.com/.
[153] "Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile Program Application and Application Guide," https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/AIMM-Application-and-Guide-.docx.

3.1.5 Broadband affordability

ADECA continues to assess Alabama's broadband landscape and promote affordable broadband for residents and businesses.

The FCC's ACP, which offers eligible households a discount of $30 per month on their internet service ($75 for households on qualifying Tribal lands) and a one-time discount of up to $100 towards the purchase of a device, is one of the most significant programs available to low-income Alabama households to reduce the cost of broadband service.

A total of 376,367 households in Alabama were enrolled in the ACP as of August 14, 2023,[154] representing approximately 40 percent of households that are estimated to be eligible (see Table 34).[155] While Alabama is ahead of the national average in ACP adoption rate, many households who could potentially take advantage of the program have yet to enroll.

ADECA supports ACP enrollment[156] and in its outreach to each county in Alabama, entities such as public libraries and ISPs offered to support ACP outreach at the local, regional, and state level.

Some entities have already initiated outreach campaigns. For example, the City of Birmingham launched the Connect99 campaign to raise awareness about the ACP throughout the City's 99 neighborhoods, and the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District received funding from the FCC's "Your Home, Your Internet" pilot program in 2023 to conduct ACP outreach.[157] The City of Montgomery also received funding for ACP promotion from the FCC in 2023 through the National Competitive Outreach Program.[158]

Entities conducting outreach across the state include the Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA), a statewide association of member community action agencies that serve low-income individuals and families, which similarly received funding through the FCC's National Competitive Outreach Program.[159] The Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children (WIC)[160] program also shares information about the ACP while providing critical services to low-income households.

As Alabama seeks to support broadband affordability, its past subsidy programs, most notably the successful Alabama Broadband Connectivity (ABC) for Students program, have provided ADECA

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[154] USAC, "ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker: Enrollment by State," https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/#enrollment-by-state (accessed August 15, 2023).
[155] Estimates of eligible households based on proprietary model that uses American Community Survey Public Use Microdata to estimate number of households qualifying for ACP via several of its eligibility criteria.
[156] "Affordable Connectivity Program," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/affordable-connectivity-program/.
[157] "Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Wireline Competition Bureau Announce ACP Pilot Program Grants Target Funding," FCC, March 15, 2023, https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-23-219A1.pdf.
[158] *Id.*
[159] *Id.*
[160] "Women, Infants and Children (WIC)," Alabama Department of Public Health, https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/wic/.

with valuable relationships and an understanding of available assets. ABC for Students, a $50 million statewide initiative, provided connectivity to students so they could complete their education during the COVID-19 pandemic. At its conclusion, the program connected more than 200,000 low-income students (in 107,000 households). Out of these households, 76,000 received vouchers directly from ADECA, while 31,000 received hotspots through school districts.[161]

The program provided broadband funding for the entire 2020–2021 school year. As the subsidy funding came to an end in June 2021, the program's call center remained open through August and actively helped families transition from the ABC for Students program to the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program, which offered a similar monthly subsidy for broadband service as the ACP. The ABC for Students call center worked with ISPs and families to enable as smooth a transition as possible from the state's program to the federal program. The program was a first-of-its-kind effort with a remarkable set of outcomes, and significant elements of its structure have been replicated in other states, including Georgia, Delaware, and New Mexico.

In addition, ADECA previously offered internet subsidy vouchers through a partnership with Charter, and Charter has indicated interest in similar future partnerships.

Alabama has also made promoting service affordability and outreach for the ACP and similar subsidy programs a goal of the broadband deployment grant programs it administers. The Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund,[162] which supports last-mile and related middle-mile deployment, awards points to providers in the rating of their applications for making a commitment to improving the adoption rate of broadband services by offering low-cost service programs to qualifying households; participating in the ACP or other federal broadband subsidy programs; or providing devices or digital skills training.[163]

The state has also incorporated scoring criteria and requirements around affordability into the Alabama Capital Projects Fund program, which provides grants for providers to deploy last-mile service in rural, unserved areas. Subrecipients are required to participate in the ACP at a minimum, and applicants are scored based on their plans to offer services that are affordable to customers in the proposed service area—potentially including offerings with discounts in addition

[161] Erezi Ogbo, "Connecting Low-Income Families Using Broadband Vouchers," Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, September 20, 2022, https://www.benton.org/blog/connecting-low-income-families-using-broadband-vouchers.
[162] "Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant Application and Implementation," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/grant-application-and-implementation/.
[163] "2023 ABAF Rating Criteria," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023-ABAF-Rating-Criteria.xlsx.

to the ACP to deliver service at no cost to eligible subscribers—and their plans to promote these offerings.[164]

Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile (AIMM) Program subrecipients that provide service to households using AIMM-supported broadband infrastructure must, for as long as the AIMM-supported broadband infrastructure is in use, either participate in the ACP through the lifetime of the ACP or otherwise provide access to a broad-based affordability program to low-income consumers in the proposed service area of the broadband infrastructure that provides benefits to households commensurate with those provided under the ACP through the lifetime of the ACP.[165] AIMM Program subrecipients that enter into an agreement with a last-mile provider to serve households using AIMM-supported infrastructure must hold the last-mile provider to the same requirement.[166]

Research conducted for this Plan identified ISPs in the state that currently offer low-cost service options for eligible low-income subscribers, in addition to participating in the ACP. The table below identifies a sampling of ISPs' discounted service and device programs, and related broadband affordability assets in the state.

Table 5: Broadband affordability assets

Asset name	Description
Ardmore Telephone Company – ACP[167]	Participates in ACP, with plans starting at $54.95 per month for download speeds of 10 Mbps. Plans offering 300/300 Mbps for $89.90 are available in some areas.[168]
AT&T – ACP[169]	Offers up to 100 Mbps, where available, for $30 month (free after $30 ACP subsidy).
Brightspeed – ACP[170]	Households that qualify for ACP receive an additional $30 discount, supplementing the $30 discount for ACP. Brightspeed's plans cost $50 per month, no matter the speed.
Buzz Broadband (from the Covington Electric Cooperative) – ACP[171]	Participates in ACP; lowest priced tier is $59.95 per month for 200 Mbps.[172]

[164] "CPF Rating Criteria," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/CPF-Rating-Criteria.xlsx.
[165] "Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile Program Guide," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/AIMM-Program-Guide.pdf.
[166] *Id.*
[167] ACP participation indicated by a representative of Ardmore Telephone Company via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[168] "Ardmore Telephone Residential Internet," Ardmore Telephone Company, https://ardmore.net/internet/. Ardmore Telephone Company does not disclose upload speeds for these plans in its online resources.
[169] "Affordable Connectivity Program," AT&T, https://www.att.com/affordable-connectivity-program/.
[170] "Affordable Connectivity Program," Brightspeed, https://www.brightspeed.com/aboutus/community/lifeline/acp/.
[171] "Internet Bill Assistance," Buzz Broadband, https://buzzbroadband.com/internet-bill-assistance/.
[172] "Pricing Options," Buzz Broadband, https://buzzbroadband.com/for-home/internet/.

Asset name	Description
C Spire – ACP[173]	C Spire participates in ACP for both internet and cellular service, but prices of internet service may vary by location.[174]
Cable TV of East Alabama (CTV Beam, R.M. Greene, Inc.)[175]	Participates in ACP and prices may vary by location.[176]
Charter Communications – Spectrum Internet for Low Income Households[177]	Spectrum offers up to 300 Mbps for $49.99 for 12 months, before charges and fees, and participates in the ACP program.[178]
Comcast – Internet Essentials[179]	Comcast Internet Essentials delivers speeds of up 200 Mbps for $25.00 per month.[180] Households that subscribe to Internet Essentials can purchase a new Dell laptop or Chromebook for $149.99 plus tax.[181]
Coosa Valley Electric Cooperative (Coosa Valley Technologies) – ACP[182]	Participates in ACP, with plans starting at $59.99 for 300/300 Mbps.[183]
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative – ACP	Participates in ACP[184] (and Lifeline)[185] and its lowest-priced internet service is 60 Mbps symmetrical for the eligibility-required Community Connect Plan at $50 per month.
Frontier Communications – ACP[186]	Offers Fiber 100 and "Frontier Essentials Internet" (speeds may vary), both free after $30 ACP credit.
GoNetspeed – GoCommunity[187]	100/100 Mbps fiber service is free after $30 ACP credit.

[173] "Affordable Connectivity Program Form," C Spire, https://www.cspire.com/cms/home-services/packages/affordable-connectivity-program-fiber/.
[174] "Home Services Bundle," C Spire, https://www.cspire.com/cms/home-services/packages/home-services-bundle/.
[175] "Affordable Connectivity Program BEAM Registration Form," Cable TV of East Alabama, https://form.jotform.com/211256347505149.
[176] "High-Speed Internet for All East Alabama," Cable TV of East Alabama, https://ctvbeam.com/internet/.
[177] "Spectrum Internet for Low Income Households," Spectrum, https://www.spectrum.com/internet/spectrum-internet-assist.
[178] "Spectrum Internet Plans," Spectrum, https://www.spectrum.com/internet/plans.
[179] Comcast, application for Internet Essentials plan, https://apply.internetessentials.com/
[180] "Internet Essentials," Comcast, https://www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service/internet-essentials.
[181] "Low-Cost Computer," Comcast, https://internetessentials.com/low-cost-computer.
[182] ACP participation indicated by a representative of Coosa Valley Electric Cooperative via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[183] "Our Services," Coosa Valley Technologies, https://connect.coosavalleytech.com/front_end/products.
[184] "What is the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?" FTC, https://farmerstel.com/acp/.
[185] "Lifeline," FTC, https://farmerstel.com/lifeline/.
[186] "How you'll save on Frontier Internet with an ACP credit," Frontier, https://frontier.com/discount-programs/affordable-connectivity-program.
[187] "GoCommunity Program," GoNetspeed, https://www.gonetspeed.com/about/gocommunity-program/.

Asset name	Description
Hayneville Telephone Company (Camellia Communications) – ACP[188]	Participates in ACP, with plans starting at $39.95 per month for download speeds of 3 Mbps. Plans offering download speeds of 50 Mbps for $50.95 are available in some areas.[189]
Lit Communities – ACP[190]	Participates in ACP.
Mediacom Communications – ACP[191]	Offers Connect2Compete Plus (C2C+) tier for ACP households providing 100 Mbps download speeds for free after $30 ACP credit.
Micro-comm – ACP[192]	Participates in ACP.[193]
Millry Communications – ACP[194]	Participates in ACP, but prices of plans may vary by location.
Mon-Cre Telephone Cooperative – ACP[195]	Participates in ACP, with plans starting at $42 per month for 25/25 Mbps.
New Hope Telephone Cooperative (NHTC) – ACP[196]	Participates in ACP; lowest priced service is 1 Gbps for $69.99 per month.[197]
Open Broadband – ACP[198]	Offers ACP, with the lowest priced service of $39.99 per month before fees for up to 50/5 Mbps.
Omnipoint Technology – ACP[199]	Participates in ACP, with lowest-priced service of $65 per month for 100/50 Mbps, with 300/300 Mbps available for $49.99 per month in some markets.[200]
Pea River Electric Cooperative – ACP[201]	Participates in ACP; prices of plans may vary by location.[202]
Point Broadband – ACP[203]	Offers ACP; prices of plans may vary by location.[204]

[188] "Residential Fiber & Broadband Plans," Camellia Communications, https://camelliacom.com/broadband/.
[189] *Id.*
[190] Information provided by a representative of Lit Communities via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[191] "Affordable Connectivity Program," Mediacom Communications, https://mediacomcable.com/acp/.
[192] Information provided by a representative of Micro-comm via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[193] "Internet," Micro-comm, http://www.micro-comm.com/internet.php.
[194] Information provided by a representative of Millry Communications via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[195] "Internet," Mon-Cre, https://www.mon-cre.net/internet/.
[196] "What is the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?" NHTC, https://nhtc.coop/acp-program/.
[197] "Fiber Fast Internet Packages," NHTC, https://nhtc.coop/broadband-internet/.
[198] Information provided by a representative of Open Broadband via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[199] "ACP: Do I Qualify?," Omnipoint, https://omnipointbroadband.com/do-i-qualify/.
[200] "Omnipoint Home Plans," Omnipoint, https://omnipointbroadband.com/packages-2/.
[201] Participation indicated by a representative of Pea River Electric Cooperative via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[202] "Pea River Broadband," Pea River Electric Cooperative, https://broadband.peariver.com/.
[203] "Affordable Connectivity Program," Point Broadband, https://www.point-broadband.com/acp.
[204] "Ultra-Fast Internet for the Speed of Life," Point Broadband, https://www.point-broadband.com/services/internet.

Asset name	Description
Riviera Utilities – EBB[205]	Participated in the EBB Program, a precursor to ACP, and its lowest priced tier is 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload for $49.95 per month.[206]
Scottsboro Electric Power Board – ACP[207]	Participates in ACP, with services starting at $39.95 per month for 25/25 Mbps.
Sprout Fiber Internet (Cullman Electric Cooperative) – ACP[208]	Participates in ACP; prices of plans may vary by location.[209]
TDS – ACP[210]	Participates in ACP; prices of plans may vary by location.[211]
TEC (National Telephone of Alabama, Inc.) – ACP[212]	Participates in ACP; prices of plans may vary by location.[213]
Weiss Internet – ACP[214]	Participates in ACP. Residential service begins at 3/1 Mbps for $55 per month.
Windstream (Kinetic) – ACP[215]	Participates in ACP; prices of plans may vary by location.[216]
Wow! Internet – ACP[217]	Internet 100 service can be free after $30 ACP credit.

3.2 Needs assessment

The state's comprehensive partner outreach program included extensive efforts to identify the needs of all Alabamians, with an emphasis on the needs of covered populations and the barriers to digital opportunity faced by covered populations. Outreach and data collection efforts were made to assess the baseline from which the state is working and to identify the barriers to digital opportunity faced generally and by each of the covered populations in Alabama.

The state's research and analysis are based on available and relevant data from the American Community Survey, NTIA's Internet Use Survey (administered as a supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey), FCC's National Broadband Map, and ADECA's custom scientific phone survey (administered in 2023). Analysis was undertaken to benchmark

[205] "Emergency Broadband Benefit Program," Riviera Utilities, https://www.rivierautilities.com/newsroom/emergency-broadband-benefit-program.
[206] "Internet & Cable TV Services," Riviera Utilities, https://www.rivierautilities.com/services/internet#rates.
[207] "Residential Internet Packages," Scottsboro Electric Power Board, https://www.sepb.net/home/home-internet/.
[208] "Sprout Residential," Cullman Electric Cooperative, https://cullmanec.com/sprout-residential.
[209] "Check Availability," Cullman Electric Cooperative, https://cullmanec.com/check-sprout-availability.
[210] "Affordable Connectivity Program," TDS, https://tdstelecom.com/information/affordable-connectivity-program.html.
[211] "High-Speed Internet Plans," TDS, https://tdstelecom.com/shop/internet-services/high-speed-internet-plans.html.
[212] "Affordable Connectivity Program," TEC, https://www.tec.com/promotions/affordable-connectivity-program.
[213] "Residential Internet," TEC, https://www.tec.com/residential/internet.
[214] Information provided by a representative of Weiss Internet via survey and could not be confirmed through online resources.
[215] "Apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program," Windstream, https://www.windstream.com/affordable-connectivity-program.
[216] Windstream, click on "residential," https://www.windstream.com/.
[217] "WOW! Affordable Connectivity Program," Wow!, https://www.wowway.com/affordable-connectivity-program.

Alabama against national averages and to benchmark its residents belonging to covered populations against those that do not belong to covered populations.

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

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

More information about Alabama's digital opportunity needs assessment, including detailed information regarding barriers for covered populations, broadband adoption, and broadband affordability, can be found in Appendix C, and additional descriptions of needs and gaps identified through the state's outreach efforts are included in Appendix D. In brief, affordability of service is the primary reason cited by Alabama households for why they do not subscribe to broadband. The same is true for all covered populations in the state. This is followed by issues of a lack of available service, a lack of general interest or need for internet at home, and privacy or security concerns. Notably, no respondents claimed that a lack of an adequate computer device was preventing them from using the internet at home, although other data on device adoption suggest there remains a measurable device access gap. Reasons cited for a lack of home internet use are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Reported reasons for no home internet use[218]

Reasons for no home internet use	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Can't afford it	42.6%	45.6%	-2.9%
Not worth the cost	30.0%	24.8%	5.2%
Can use it elsewhere	17.8%	10.1%	7.7%
Not available in area	14.3%	7.6%	6.7%
Don't need or not interested	9.7%	7.3%	2.4%
Online privacy or security concerns	5.4%	7.2%	-1.8%
No or inadequate computing device	0.0%	2.6%	-2.6%
Reasons for no home internet use	**Covered groups**	**Non-covered groups**	**Gap**
Can't afford it	42.4%	43.2%	-0.8%
Not worth the cost	33.8%	17.7%	16.1%
Can use it elsewhere	23.4%	0.0%	23.4%
Not available in area	14.2%	14.7%	-0.5%
Don't need or not interested	3.0%	30.8%	-27.8%
Online privacy or security concerns	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%
No or inadequate computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Individuals belonging to covered populations were 16 percentage points more likely than those not belonging to a covered population to express that home internet was "not worth" the cost, whereas similar percentages of individuals belonging and not belonging to covered populations cited an inability to afford home internet use. This suggests that the challenges toward delivering digital opportunity to members of covered populations require both affordability interventions and education to raise awareness of the potential uses (or "worth") of home internet.

The data Indicate that Alabama's digital opportunity needs encompass access to affordable broadband services, increased enrollment in broadband service subsidy programs, device access, and digital skills training. The "Federal and state data sources" section of the table below summarizes key barriers for each covered population identified through this assessment.

As shown in the table, sufficient data were not available for a covered population in some cases, and in other cases the analysis of available data did not conclude statistically significant differences. As a supplement to the data analysis, the "State outreach sources" section of the table includes barriers and obstacles for each population that were stated by partners during ADECA's outreach, as described in Section 4.1.6. As noted in the table, outreach is ongoing as of the writing of this Plan to collect additional data on populations for which data were not available for analysis.

[218] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.

Table 7: Key barriers and obstacles for covered populations

Definitions		State outreach sources		Federal and state data sources				
Covered population	Definition	Key barriers and obstacles	Key partners	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
Low-income households - "covered households"	A household, the income of which for the most recently completed year is not more than 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level, as determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census	Unaffordable cost of service for speeds and data capacity necessary to meet critical needs, such as education and working from home; lack of knowledge or access to discount subsidy programs; living in rural or low-income communities with outdated, unreliable, and slow service; old buildings with inadequate wiring; and need for digital skills programs.	Alabama Department of Human Resources	It is likely that low-income households are disproportionately unserved by broadband	Low-income populations display the most urgent needs for more affordable broadband[219]	Low-income populations need digital skills and telemedicine programming[220]	Low-income individuals need online security and privacy programming[221]	Low-income populations display the most urgent needs for increased device access[222]
Aging individuals	Any individual who is 60 years of age or older	Lack of digital skills and comfort levels to use online tools to access public service or social and civic opportunities or entertainment; affordability of services and devices; inadequate services to receive remote healthcare in	Alabama Department of Senior Services, AARP	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	Aging individuals lag behind younger individuals in internet adoption[223]	Aging individuals indicate need for digital skills and telemedicine training[224]	Aging individuals report need for confidence in protecting themselves from online security and	Aging individuals lag behind younger individuals in device adoption[226]

[219] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.
[220] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[221] *Id.*
[222] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.
[223] *Id.*
[224] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[226] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.

Definitions		State outreach sources		Federal and state data sources				
Covered population	Definition	Key barriers and obstacles	Key partners	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
		appropriate/private places; lack of loan or PC refurbish programs; accessing documents online necessary for proving eligibility for other programs; need for digital skills programs.					privacy threats[225]	
Incarcerated individuals	Any individual currently or formerly incarcerated in a non-federal correctional facility	Lack of adequate broadband services and adequate funding for digital skills and workforce training inside correctional institutions; lack of digital skills and job training for formerly incarcerated to expand job opportunities.[227]	Alabama Department of Corrections, ACCS, J. F. Ingram State Technical College, Alabama Department of Youth Services, Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles	Commenters identified lack of devices with internet access/social media capabilities	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data.	Lack of adequate funding for digital skills and workforce training inside correctional institutions; lack of digital skills and job training for formerly incarcerated to expand job opportunities.[228]	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data.	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data.
Veterans	A person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service,	Alabama's veterans face crossover challenges with aging individuals, individuals from racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with	Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs	Veterans in rural areas are less likely to have home	Veterans lag behind non-veterans in internet adoption[230]	Older veterans need digital skills and telemedicine	Veterans need online security and privacy programming	Veterans in rural areas are more likely to rely on phones[233]

[225] *Id.*
[227] Alabama Department of Corrections in meeting with ADECA, December 11, 2023.
[228] *Id.*
[230] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.
[233] Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs in meeting with ADECA, July 21, 2023.

Definitions		State outreach sources		Federal and state data sources				
Covered population	Definition	Key barriers and obstacles	Key partners	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
	and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable	disabilities, individuals living in rural areas, and low-income individuals. These challenges are compounded in rural areas where lack of terrestrial and cellular broadband access is coupled with the inherent limitations of smartphones as inadequate to complete complex online benefits forms, participate in video hearings, or access other online veterans' services.		internet and more likely to rely on cellular service[229]		programming[231]	as part of benefits access[232]	
Individuals with disabilities	Any individual living with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual	Necessary adaptive technology can be expensive, scarce, and hard to use; affordability of services and appropriate devices; relevant online content; adequate services to allow work, education, and health care at home; access to telehealth.	Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	Individuals with disabilities in rural areas and in low-income households are less likely to have home internet and more likely to rely on	Individuals with disabilities lag behind those without disabilities in internet adoption[235]	Individuals with disabilities need digital skills programming[236]	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	Individuals with disabilities lag behind those without disabilities in device adoption[237]

[229] Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs in meeting with ADECA, July 21, 2023.
[231] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[232] *Id.*
[235] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.
[236] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[237] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.

Definitions		State outreach sources		Federal and state data sources				
Covered population	Definition	Key barriers and obstacles	Key partners	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
				cellular service.[234]				
Individuals with language barriers	Any individual that either reports an English language proficiency less than "very well" or with a literacy level beneath that of a grade 6 student[238]	Limited or lack of relevant and accessible content; lack of knowledge or access to accessibility tools to support online activity; lack of in-language digital skills training.	Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Public Library Service, Alabama Literacy Association	Individuals with significant language barriers are disproportionately unserved by broadband[239]	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data[240]	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data
Individuals who are English learners (alone)	Any individual that reports an English language proficiency less than "very well"	Need for outreach campaigns that are not limited to English and the need for computing devices and tools with language translation capabilities, not only for Spanish speakers but in other languages as well. These would help in internet adoption and access to	HICA, Hispanic Federation	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	English language learners lag behind those fluent in English in internet adoption[242]	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	English language learners lag behind those fluent in English in device adoption[243]

[234] Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services in meeting with ADECA, August 21, 2023.
[238] Grade 6 has been adopted as a reasonable threshold for practical purposes. Neither NTIA nor the U.S. Census Bureau define low literacy. Census has developed probabilistic estimates using National Center for Education Statistics data assigning "low literacy" to Level 1 (i.e., the lowest out of five levels). See "2019 State Total Covered Populations Under the Digital Equity Act of 2021: Quick Guide," U.S. Census Bureau, NTIA. 2022, https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/technical-documentation/community-resilience/state_total_covered_populations_quick_guide.pdf.
[239] U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html. Accessed August 15, 2023.
[240] ADECA is working with the Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Public Library Service, Alabama Literacy Association, HICA, Hispanic Federation, and other partner organizations to gather data regarding English language learners and individuals with low literacy.
[242] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.
[243] *Id.*

Definitions		State outreach sources		Federal and state data sources				
Covered population	Definition	Key barriers and obstacles	Key partners	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
		health and workforce services.[241]						
Individuals who have low levels of literacy (alone)	Any individual with a literacy level beneath that of a grade 6 student	Limited or lack of relevant and accessible content; lack of knowledge or access to accessibility tools to support online activity.	Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Public Library Service, Alabama Literacy Alliance, Alabama Literacy Association	It is likely that individuals with low levels of literacy are disproportionately unserved by broadband [244]	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data[245]	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data
Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority	Any individual that is not white (non-Hispanic) alone	Barriers that come from historic underrepresentation in programs and opportunities that may have provided digital skills and access to robust broadband; crossover barriers with limited English speaking and low-income populations.	Alabama Department of Public Health (Office of Health Equity and Minority Health), The Elmore Bolling Initiative, Student	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	Racial and ethnic minorities lag behind individuals who are not minorities in internet adoption[246]	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	Analysis of data for Alabama did not conclude a specific barrier or need	Racial and ethnic minorities lag behind individuals who are not minorities in device adoption[247]

[241] ADECA meeting with HICA, a nonprofit serving the Latino and Hispanic communities in Alabama, September 20, 2023.
[244] U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html. Accessed August 15, 2023.
[245] ADECA is reaching out to the Alabama Public Library Service to gather data for individuals who have low levels of literacy.
[246] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.
[247] *Id.*

Definitions		State outreach sources		Federal and state data sources				
Covered population	Definition	Key barriers and obstacles	Key partners	Broadband availability	Broadband adoption	Digital skills	Online security	Device adoption
			Freedom Initiative					
Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	Any individual living in any area other than a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and, in the case of a grant or direct loan, a city, town, or incorporated area that has a population of greater than 20,000 inhabitants	Lack of access to affordable and reliable broadband that, in turn, creates barriers to developing digital skills; those with long driveways have to pay extra for hookup; lack of access to public computing spaces and support for digital skills and workforce development skills; lack of competition drives up pricing; fear existing providers may leave due to low return on investment; lack of in-person customer support; slow to build to new rural communities.	Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Emergency Management Agency	Rural individuals are in the most urgent need of increased broadband availability[248]	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data	Rural individuals need digital skills and telemedicine programming	Rural individuals need online security and privacy programming	No data are currently available; ADECA is partnering with key agencies and organizations to develop relevant data

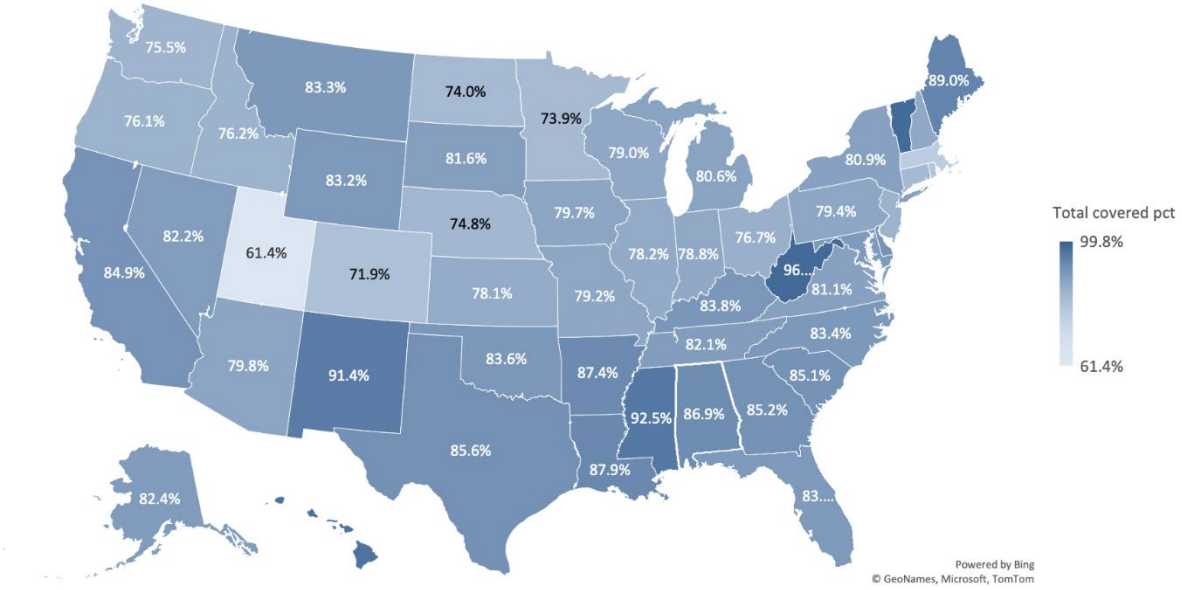
[248] U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html. Accessed August 15, 2023.

3.2.1 Covered population needs assessment

Due to the unique constraints of each data source used in the state's needs assessment for covered populations, various analyses focus on different subsets of covered populations. [249]

In Alabama, a relatively large portion of the state belongs to covered populations, with 86.9 percent[250] of the state belonging to a covered population. This ranks as the tenth most covered state (by portion of state population in a covered population) and implies that the interests of covered populations closely align to those of the whole state: Alabama as a whole and its covered populations are not likely to have misaligned priorities because the latter make up the vast majority of the former. Therefore, by planning to increase digital opportunity for covered populations, the state is taking meaningful steps to address the entirety of its digital opportunity needs. The portion of Alabama belonging to at least one covered population is contextualized in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

Figure 1: Portions of state populations belonging to a covered population (map)[251]

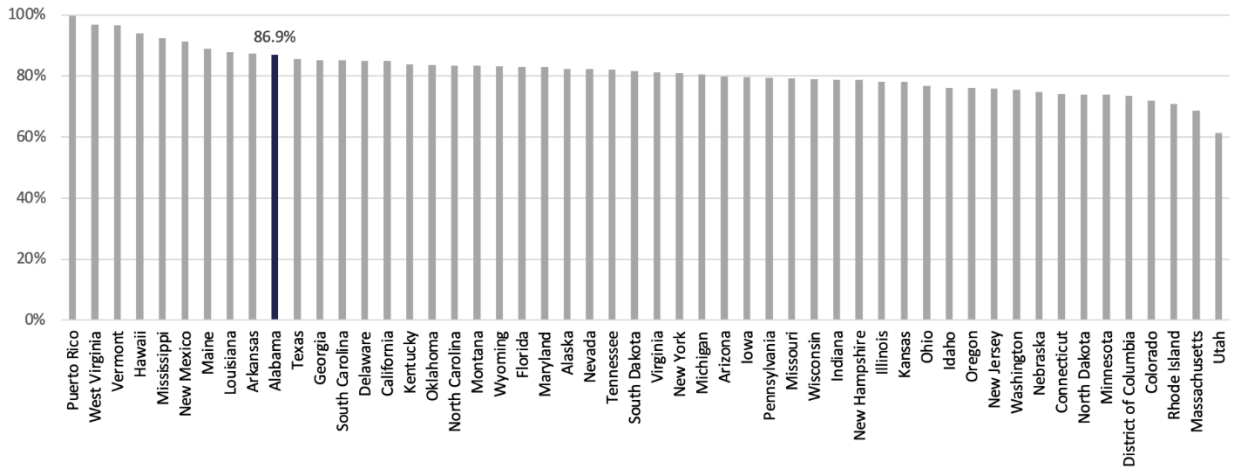


[249] This Plan relies on rigorously collected and reliable data to make statistically significant conclusions regarding each covered group. The data used include those collected by the U.S. Census Bureau through the American Community Survey and those collected by ADECA through its 2023 scientific phone survey of Alabama households. Where reliable data are not available, ADECA continues to develop plans to obtain or clarify available, relevant information sources.

[250] U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html. Accessed August 15, 2023.

[251] *Id.*

Figure 2: Portions of state populations belonging to a covered population (chart)[252]



Within Alabama, most individuals belonging to covered populations live in rural areas, are racial or ethnic minorities,[253] have a relatively low income, are aging individuals, and/or have low levels of literacy. These covered populations are much larger in the state than those defined by incarceration status, English language proficiency, and veteran status. Perhaps most notable is the size of Alabama's rural population: an estimated 50.6 percent of the state lives in a rural area (as opposed to only 28.5 percent nationally). Alabama and national demographics are illustrated in Table 8.

[252] *Id.*

[253] An analysis of 2020 Census data by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama found that "Alabama's Hispanic and Latino community represented just 5% of Alabama's population, but between 2010 and 2020, the growth in that demographic accounted for 32% of the state's total population growth." See "Data Collection for Hispanic and Latino Alabamians with HICA," Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, Sept. 15, 2023, https://parcalabama.org/data-collection-for-hispanic-and-latino-alabamians-with-hica/.

Table 8: Portion of Alabama and U.S. in various covered populations[254]

Covered group	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Any covered group	86.9%	81.5%	5.4%
Low income	25.4%	20.1%	5.3%
Aging	24.2%	22.9%	1.3%
Incarcerated	0.7%	0.6%	0.1%
Veteran	6.5%	5.3%	1.2%
Disabled	16.3%	13.3%	3.0%
Language barrier	18.2%	21.4%	-3.2%
English language learner	2.2%	8.4%	-6.2%
Low literacy	23.9%	21.9%	2.0%
Minority	34.9%	40.6%	-5.7%
Rural	50.6%	28.5%	22.1%

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

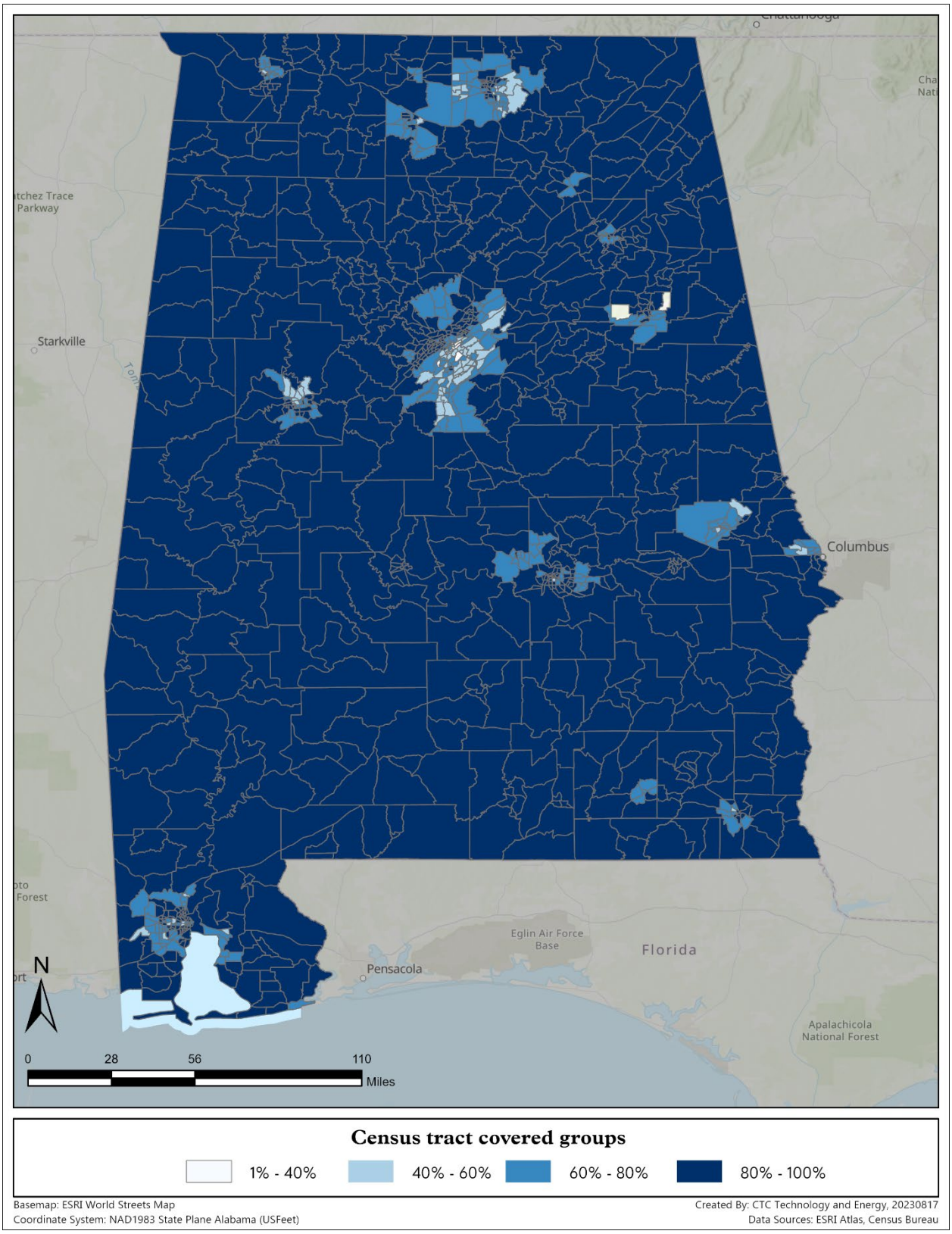
This implies an unintuitive idea that digital opportunity interventions may not be most impactful by targeting the covered population that appears in most urgent need. To continue the example, individuals living with disabilities might present in some cases as the covered population with the most urgent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

[254] U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html. Accessed August 15, 2023. These data are sourced from the Census Bureau's Digital Equity Act of 2021 collection, which includes ACS and NTIA Internet Use Survey data as well as imputations from external data sources, such as the National Center for Education Statistics to create the most comprehensive set of covered populations data. However, the dataset is slightly outdated, sourcing ACS data from 2019 (most recent) to as far back as 2015. Additionally, the full dataset is difficult to update given the limited documentation on the imputations performed. Therefore, for the remaining sections wherein analysis is performed on more specific broadband barriers rather than wholistic demographic statistics, more easily repeatable analysis is performed on more up-to-date data from ACS, ADECA's scientific phone survey, and the NTIA Internet Use Survey (via the Current Population Survey). As a tradeoff with the increased data quality and useability, some insight into covered populations is lost, specifically with regard to formerly incarcerated individuals and individuals with low levels of literacy.

broadband acquisition may be the most effective path towards impacting digital opportunity for individuals living with disabilities.

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

Figure 3: Map of covered populations in Alabama[255]



3.2.2 Broadband adoption

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

1. Alabama does not outperform the nation in any meaningful indicator of broadband availability.
2. Individuals living in rural areas face the most urgent needs for broadband availability.
3. Alabama trails the nation in all indicators of internet adoption and subscription rates.
4. Covered populations in Alabama are uniformly adopting the internet less frequently than individuals that do not belong to a covered population. This gap is largest when compared across incomes.
5. Alabama outperforms the national average for the percentage of eligible households enrolled in the ACP subsidy program, but Alabama still has a large opportunity for enrollment growth. (See Section 3.2.3 for more details.)

Of all Alabama households that do not use internet at home, an estimated 14.3 percent,[256] and 14.2 percent of those belonging to covered populations, claim that a main reason is a lack of available internet service. While this is not the most frequently cited cause, the availability of service is an absolute condition for all other digital opportunity efforts, and therefore deserves substantial attention.

Alabama does not outperform the nation in any meaningful indicator of broadband availability. When considering all internet delivery technologies (including those that are known to be less reliable, such as satellite-based services), the FCC reports that Alabama and the nation are entirely served through speeds of 25/3 Mbps (which is the federal threshold for broadband service of any kind). However, Alabama has 12.3 percentage points fewer units served by speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps than the nation.

[255] U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html. Accessed August 15, 2023.
[256] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.

This trend continues once service is limited to wireline technologies, which are known to be more reliable than other internet-delivering technologies. Only 82 percent of units in Alabama are within a coverage footprint for wireline internet delivering 25/3 Mbps, as opposed to 89.8 percent nationally. Across nearly every speed reported by the FCC, Alabama lags the nation in wireline coverage. The same holds for licensed fixed wireless, which can be helpful for delivering service to rural areas that present difficulty for wireline construction.

Table 9: Portion of units served with internet at various speeds in Alabama and the U.S.[257]

	Coverage (in Mbps)	Alabama	Nation	Gap
All technologies	0.2/0.2	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	10/1	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	25/3	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	100/20	79.8%	92.1%	-12.3%
	250/25	78.3%	87.2%	-8.9%
	1000/100	33.3%	33.2%	0.1%
	Coverage (in Mbps)	**Alabama**	**Nation**	**Gap**
Wireline	0.2/0.2	88.8%	93.4%	-4.7%
	10/1	84.9%	91.7%	-6.7%
	25/3	82.0%	89.8%	-7.8%
	100/20	79.1%	88.4%	-9.3%
	250/25	78.3%	86.6%	-8.4%
	1000/100	33.3%	32.3%	1.0%
	Coverage (in Mbps)	**Alabama**	**Nation**	**Gap**
Licensed fixed wireless	0.2/0.2	72.5%	79.5%	-7.0%
	10/1	35.2%	54.9%	-19.7%
	25/3	33.6%	51.7%	-18.2%
	100/20	7.7%	19.2%	-11.5%
	250/25	0.2%	2.6%	-2.5%
	1000/100	0.0%	0.2%	-0.2%

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

[257] FCC, National Broadband Map, Last updated August 9, 2023. Accessed August 17, 2023.

Figure 4: Map of units served by 25/3 Mbps[258]

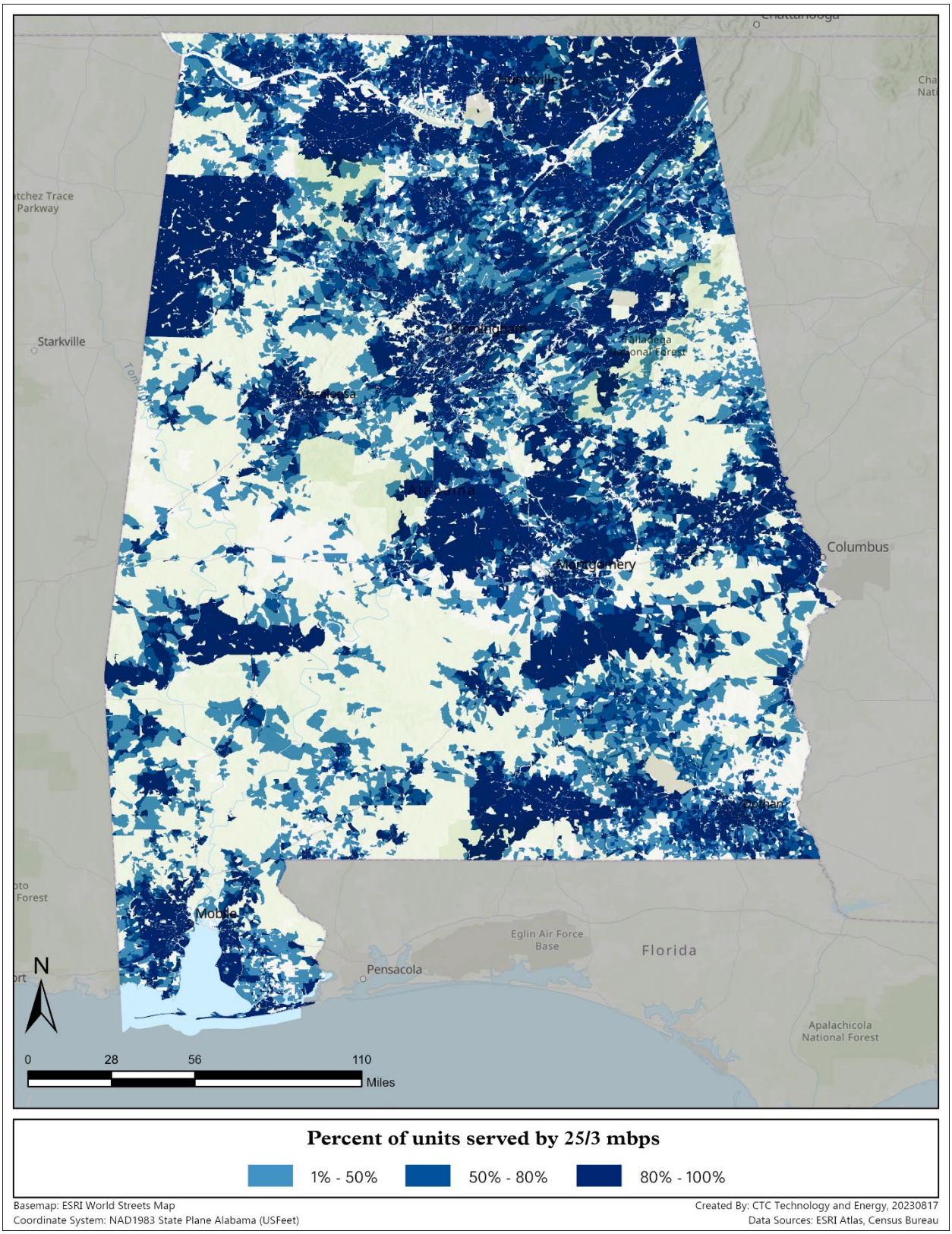
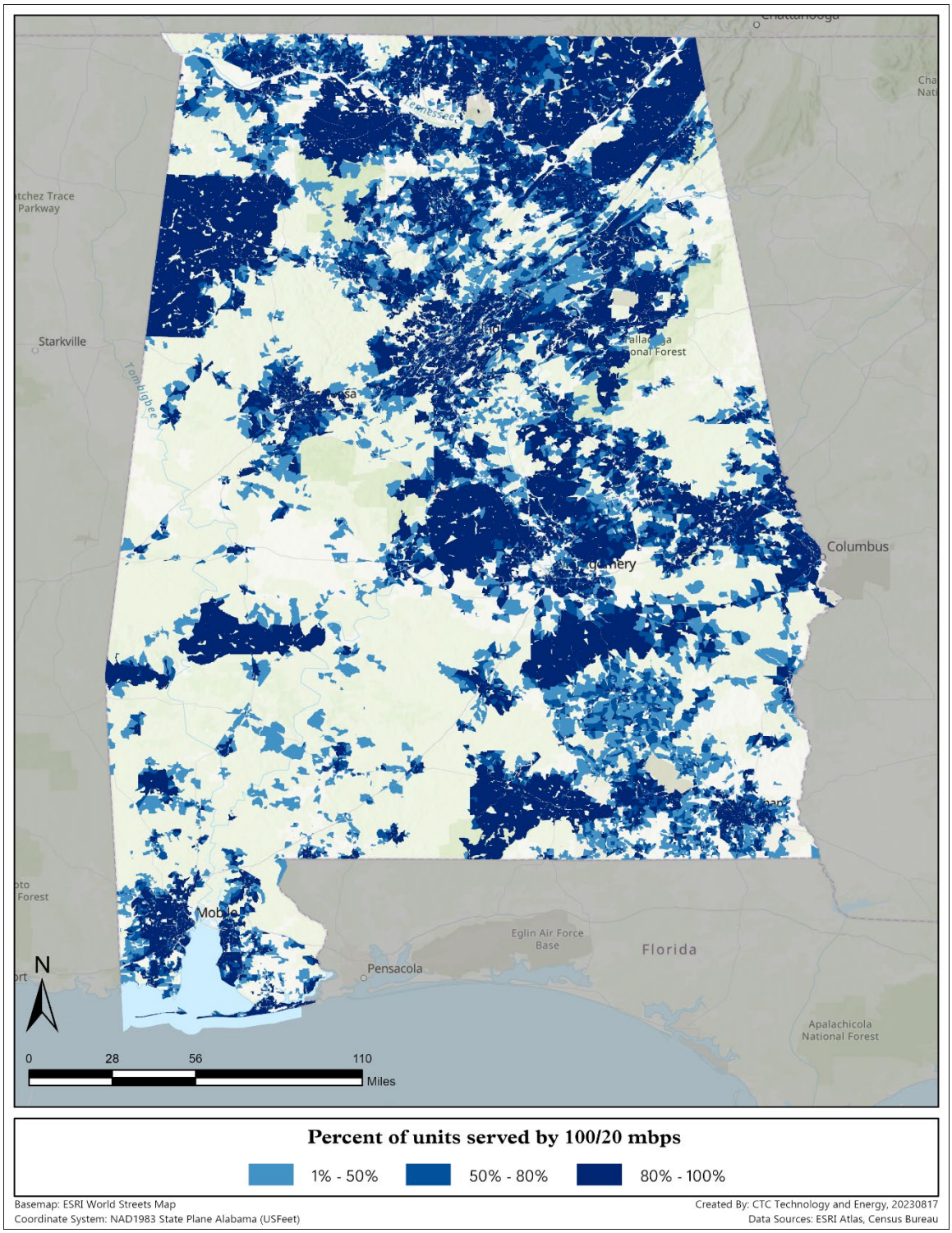


Figure 5: Map of units served by 100/20 Mbps[259]



[258] FCC, National Broadband Map, Last updated August 9, 2023. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[259] *Id.*

A regression analysis was undertaken by comparing the prevalence of various covered populations in each census tract in Alabama with the portion of units served by at least one broadband internet option with speeds of 25/3 Mbps or greater. The resulting correlation was relatively weak, with an R^2 value of 0.31. However, the analysis does further underline the relationship between rurality and broadband availability, as it was the most statistically significant correlation of all covered populations by a wide margin. Only two other covered populations achieved statistical significance in relation to availability: the portions of a census tract with a language barrier of any kind and English language proficiency.

The full results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Regression analysis of portion of census tract populations belonging to covered populations and portion of units served[260]

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.554308384
R Square	0.307257784
Adjusted R Square	0.30160018
Standard Error	0.19251617
Observations	1112

Dependent variables	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value	Statistically signficant
Intercept	-0.063	0.034	0.062	
Income	-0.011	0.057	0.851	
Age	0.035	0.109	0.745	
Incarceration status	0.277	0.152	0.069	
Veteran status	0.036	0.237	0.881	
Disability status	-0.011	0.129	0.930	
Langauge barrier (including literacy)	0.756	0.142	1.14E-07	✓
English proficiency	-0.606	0.216	0.005	✓
Race and ethnicity	-0.039	0.030	0.196	
Rurality	0.220	0.016	2.47E-38	✓

Neither broadband availability nor many of these demographic characteristics are uniform throughout census tracts or binary in nature. For example, extremely low-income populations tend to cluster in areas much smaller than census tracts, and they face distinct availability obstacles compared to other individuals that still belong to the "low-income" covered population. It is overwhelmingly likely that low-income households are less well served than higher-income households, although those trends have not appeared statistically when evaluating this exact

[260] Portion of census tract populations belonging to various covered populations from U.S. Census Bureau, Digital Equity Act of 2021, State Data, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates/partnerships/ntia/digital-equity.html. Accessed August 15, 2023. Portion of units served in each census tract from FCC's National Broadband Map. Accessed August 17, 2023. A number of outlier tracts were removed.

partitioning of the state. It is possible that a more granular study would reveal more informative relationships between various covered populations and service availability.

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

3.2.2.1 Overview of broadband adoption needs

Of all Alabama households that do not use internet at home, an estimated 42.6 percent,[261] and 42.4 percent of those belonging to covered populations, claim that a main reason is an inability to afford service. Therefore, challenges relating to service affordability, and the closely linked concept of reliability, seem to be the largest obstacles to digital opportunity for many Alabamians.

According to the American Community Survey, 89.9 percent of Alabama residents have a home internet subscription of any kind. This is similar to the national rate of 90.3 percent. However, Alabama residents do not have similar adoption of reliable broadband when compared against the nation. Only 68.2 percent of Alabama residents have a wireline home internet subscription. This is 7.3 percentage points less than the national rate of 75.5 percent.[262] Additionally, 18 percent of Alabama residents rely on a cellular data plan alone for home internet service, which is considered to be insufficient to realize the many benefits of broadband. Mobile-only individuals typically cite affordability, their smartphone being good enough, and/or having access to broadband somewhere else as the reasons for not having wireline home internet connectivity.

Table 11: Internet adoption rates in Alabama and the U.S.[263]

Internet in the house	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Internet subscription of any kind	89.9%	90.3%	-0.4%
Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	68.2%	75.5%	-7.3%
Only subscription via celllular data plan	18.0%	10.9%	7.1%

Within Alabama, individuals belonging to covered populations fare substantially worse than others in home internet adoption. 86.6 percent of individuals belonging to a covered population report having a home internet subscription as opposed to 96.7 percent of those outside of covered groups. The gap widens for wireline internet connections, for which 63.2 percent of individuals belonging to covered populations claim adoption compared to 78.7 percent of non-covered populations.

[261] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[262] This estimate of resident access differs slightly from household-based metrics, but the gap between Alabama and the nation is consistent whether measured at the resident or household levels.
[263] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.

Table 12: Internet adoption rates in covered and non-covered populations[264]

Internet in the house	Covered groups	Non covered groups	Gap
Internet subscription of any kind	86.6%	96.7%	-10.1%
Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	63.2%	78.7%	-15.5%
Only subscription via celllular data plan	19.0%	16.1%	2.9%

Individuals living in low-income households constitute the covered population with the largest adoption gaps. Low-income individuals are 15.7 percentage points less likely than higher-income individuals to have a home internet subscription and they are 21.6 percentage points less likely to have a wireline internet subscription.

Given the reported frequency of inability (and unwillingness) to pay for home internet use, it can be concluded that the state has substantial needs for interventions to bring down the cost of home internet subscriptions and use. Full breakdowns of each covered population's adoption rates are included in Table 13.[265]

Table 13: Internet adoption rates in various covered populations[266]

	Internet in the house	Low income	Higher income	Gap
Income	Internet subscription of any kind	78.5%	94.2%	-15.7%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	52.6%	74.2%	-21.6%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	20.9%	16.9%	3.9%
	Internet in the house	**Minority**	**White alone**	**Gap**
Race	Internet subscription of any kind	87.9%	90.9%	-3.1%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	65.0%	69.9%	-4.9%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	18.3%	17.9%	0.4%
	Internet in the house	**Aging**	**Younger**	**Gap**
Age	Internet subscription of any kind	81.9%	92.4%	-10.5%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	58.9%	71.2%	-12.2%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	18.5%	17.9%	0.7%
	Internet in the house	**With disabilities**	**Without disabilities**	**Gap**
Disability	Internet subscription of any kind	79.6%	91.9%	-12.3%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	55.3%	70.8%	-15.5%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	19.6%	17.7%	1.9%
	Internet in the house	**English learner**	**Fluent**	**Gap**
English proficiency	Internet subscription of any kind	87.6%	89.9%	-2.3%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	54.1%	68.5%	-14.4%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	27.0%	17.8%	9.1%
	Internet in the house	**Veteran**	**Non-veteran**	**Gap**
Veteran status	Internet subscription of any kind	87.4%	90.0%	-2.7%
	Internet subscription via wireline technology (i.e. fiber, cable, DSL)	66.2%	68.3%	-2.1%
	Only subscription via cellular data plan	17.6%	18.1%	-0.4%

[264] *Id.*
[265] This Plan follows the U.S. Census Bureau's standards on reporting data related to the terms "minority" and "white." See "About the topic of race," U.S. Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html.
[266] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.

3.2.2.2 Digital skills needs

Meaningful use of the internet necessitates confidence and practice with performing a variety of digital skills. Although some individuals may have internet service and a working computer, they can frequently be functionally limited by their inability to navigate the internet effectively. In Alabama, 9 percent of residents without home internet use cite a lack of need or interest in the internet as a reason why.[267] Additionally, 30 percent of residents without home internet use (and 33.8 percent of those belonging to a covered population) expressed that home internet use "was not worth the cost."[268]

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

1. Alabama trails the nation in frequency of online digital skill use. Further, members of covered populations underperform compared to non-covered populations.

2. Individuals living in low-income households, at or above 60 years of age, living with disabilities, or living in rural areas express the most urgent need for digital skills programming.

3. Alabama underperforms compared to the nation across all measured telemedicine-related online activities. Similarly, members of covered populations tended to underperform compared to non-covered populations.

4. Individuals living in low-income households, at or above 60 years of age, or living in rural areas express the most urgent need for telemedicine digital skills programming.

Almost uniformly, a lesser portion of Alabama residents regularly perform online activities compared to the national rates. As shown on Table 14, the gap is largest for activities such as accessing government resources online (such as registering to vote) in which only 23.4 percent of Alabama residents regularly engage, a 15-percentage-point gap from the national average. Also significant are the gaps for requesting services provided by other people via the internet (such as ordering a rideshare service) and telecommuting using the internet, which are 9.2 percentage points and 8.8 percentage points respectively. The only measured online activity where Alabama residents outpace the nation is in using online social networks such as Facebook or Twitter.

[267] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[268] *Id.*

Table 14: Digital skills in Alabama and the U.S.[269]

Online activity	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	91.0%	93.3%	-2.3%
Uses email	90.0%	91.8%	-1.8%
Uses online social networks	78.3%	74.6%	3.8%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	70.1%	74.1%	-4.1%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	68.8%	74.3%	-5.5%
Watches videos online	64.6%	70.1%	-5.5%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	59.9%	65.6%	-5.7%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	59.1%	60.0%	-0.9%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	33.8%	43.0%	-9.2%
Accessing government services	23.4%	38.4%	-15.0%
Takes class or participates in job training online	23.3%	25.7%	-2.5%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	21.6%	22.3%	-0.7%
Telecommutes using the internet	18.8%	27.7%	-8.8%
Searches for a job online	15.3%	21.3%	-6.0%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	14.8%	17.0%	-2.2%
Uses the internet to sell goods	8.2%	10.5%	-2.3%
Offers services for sale via the internet	7.7%	8.8%	-1.1%

Individuals belonging to covered populations almost uniformly practice digital skills at a lower rate than those that do not belong to covered populations. As shown in Table 15, the largest gaps can be found in requesting services provided by other people via the internet (26.8 percentage point gap); streaming or downloading music, radio, podcasts, etc. (21.7 percentage point gap); shopping, making travel reservations, or using other consumer services online (21.6 percentage point gap); and using online financial services like banking, investing, or paying bills (20.8 percentage point gap).

The only digital skill for which individuals in covered populations outpace their counterparts is in searching for a job online, which only 15.5 percent of those in covered populations performed recently. (It is possible that individuals in covered populations work less consistently—necessitating a greater need for job searches.)

[269] NTIA, 2021 Internet Use Survey. Accessed August 16, 2023.

Table 15: Digital skills in Alabama covered populations[270]

Online activity	Covered group	Non-covered group	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	89.4%	94.9%	-5.6%
Uses email	87.9%	95.4%	-7.5%
Uses online social networks	75.4%	85.7%	-10.3%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	63.9%	85.6%	-21.6%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	62.9%	83.7%	-20.8%
Watches videos online	59.7%	77.0%	-17.3%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	54.7%	72.8%	-18.0%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	52.9%	74.6%	-21.7%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	26.2%	53.0%	-26.8%
Accessing government services	17.7%	37.6%	-19.9%
Takes class or participates in job training online	18.9%	34.2%	-15.3%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	17.1%	32.9%	-15.8%
Telecommutes using the internet	14.4%	30.0%	-15.6%
Searches for a job online	15.5%	14.9%	0.5%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	12.8%	19.8%	-7.0%
Uses the internet to sell goods	6.0%	13.6%	-7.6%
Offers services for sale via the internet	6.8%	9.8%	-3.0%

The digital skills discrepancies are greatest for aging individuals and those living with disabilities or living in rural areas. For these covered populations, not a single online activity is more frequently practiced by the covered populations compared to the non-covered populations. Additionally, individuals living in low-income homes trailed measurably behind higher-income individuals in most digital skills. This suggests that digital skills training is a key need for all four populations.

Table 16: Digital skills in aging and younger populations[271]

Online activity	Aging	Younger	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	82.4%	93.9%	-11.4%
Uses email	85.3%	91.6%	-6.4%
Uses online social networks	61.6%	83.9%	-22.3%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	56.9%	74.5%	-17.7%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	59.5%	72.0%	-12.5%
Watches videos online	43.0%	71.9%	-28.9%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	44.2%	65.2%	-21.0%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	36.0%	66.9%	-30.9%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	19.5%	38.7%	-19.2%
Accessing government services	18.9%	24.8%	-5.9%
Takes class or participates in job training online	10.3%	27.6%	-17.3%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	14.2%	24.1%	-9.9%
Telecommutes using the internet	8.4%	22.4%	-13.9%
Searches for a job online	6.0%	18.5%	-12.5%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	5.1%	18.0%	-13.0%
Uses the internet to sell goods	4.2%	9.5%	-5.3%
Offers services for sale via the internet	4.7%	8.7%	-4.0%

[270] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.
[271] *Id.*

Table 17: Digital skills in people with disabilities and people without disabilities[272]

Online activity	With disabilities	Without disabilities	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	84.6%	91.7%	-7.1%
Uses email	81.9%	91.0%	-9.1%
Uses online social networks	65.3%	79.8%	-14.5%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	58.4%	71.4%	-13.0%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	57.9%	70.1%	-12.2%
Watches videos online	37.4%	67.7%	-30.3%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	41.9%	61.9%	-20.0%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	43.1%	61.0%	-17.8%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	19.8%	35.5%	-15.7%
Accessing government services	17.0%	24.1%	-7.1%
Takes class or participates in job training online	10.4%	24.7%	-14.3%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	9.8%	23.0%	-13.1%
Telecommutes using the internet	7.3%	20.2%	-12.9%
Searches for a job online	13.1%	15.6%	-2.5%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	6.9%	15.7%	-8.8%
Uses the internet to sell goods	2.4%	8.8%	-6.4%
Offers services for sale via the internet	3.9%	8.1%	-4.2%

Table 18: Digital skills in rural and metropolitan populations[273]

Online activity	Rural	Metropolitan	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	88.5%	92.0%	-3.5%
Uses email	84.0%	92.6%	-8.6%
Uses online social networks	73.3%	80.4%	-7.1%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	56.8%	75.7%	-18.9%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	49.2%	77.1%	-27.9%
Watches videos online	52.7%	69.6%	-17.0%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	47.1%	65.3%	-18.2%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	45.3%	64.9%	-19.7%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	14.7%	41.9%	-27.2%
Accessing government services	11.7%	28.3%	-16.5%
Takes class or participates in job training online	15.0%	26.8%	-11.8%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	11.1%	26.0%	-15.0%
Telecommutes using the internet	13.8%	21.0%	-7.2%
Searches for a job online	11.4%	16.9%	-5.5%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	7.6%	17.8%	-10.2%
Uses the internet to sell goods	3.6%	10.1%	-6.6%
Offers services for sale via the internet	4.4%	9.1%	-4.7%

[272] *Id.*
[273] *Id.*

Table 19: Digital skills in low and higher-income populations[274]

Online activity	Low income	Higher income	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	86.7%	92.3%	-5.6%
Uses email	82.3%	92.4%	-10.1%
Uses online social networks	77.7%	78.5%	-0.8%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	55.4%	74.7%	-19.3%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	49.8%	74.8%	-25.1%
Watches videos online	57.3%	66.9%	-9.6%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	47.9%	63.6%	-15.8%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	55.5%	60.3%	-4.8%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	22.9%	37.3%	-14.3%
Accessing government services	11.0%	27.3%	-16.3%
Takes class or participates in job training online	15.6%	25.7%	-10.1%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	9.4%	25.4%	-16.1%
Telecommutes using the internet	10.3%	21.5%	-11.2%
Searches for a job online	17.4%	14.7%	2.7%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	15.7%	14.5%	1.2%
Uses the internet to sell goods	6.5%	8.7%	-2.1%
Offers services for sale via the internet	7.5%	7.8%	-0.3%

Veterans and racial or ethnic minorities were also evaluated for digital skills use, although neither population illustrated a particularly urgent need for skills training. That said, the frequency of online activity performance does not necessarily imply competence or success in those activities. Therefore, digital skills training still may have a meaningful impact on both populations.

Table 20: Digital skills in veteran and non-veteran populations[275]

Online activity	Veteran	Non-veteran	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	84.0%	91.8%	-7.9%
Uses email	90.6%	90.6%	0.0%
Uses online social networks	61.7%	79.9%	-18.2%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	75.1%	70.0%	5.2%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	75.6%	68.8%	6.8%
Watches videos online	51.0%	65.9%	-14.8%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	60.7%	60.0%	0.7%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	45.5%	60.4%	-14.9%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	17.6%	36.0%	-18.4%
Accessing government services	27.7%	23.3%	4.4%
Takes class or participates in job training online	21.5%	23.3%	-1.8%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	21.0%	22.0%	-1.1%
Telecommutes using the internet	16.4%	19.4%	-3.0%
Searches for a job online	24.6%	14.2%	10.4%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	13.4%	14.6%	-1.2%
Uses the internet to sell goods	3.7%	8.7%	-5.0%
Offers services for sale via the internet	2.7%	8.3%	-5.6%

[274] *Id.*
[275] *Id.*

Table 21: Digital skills in racial/ethnic minority and white populations[276]

Online activity	Minority	White alone	Gap
Uses text messaging or instant messaging	91.8%	90.6%	1.2%
Uses email	88.7%	90.5%	-1.8%
Uses online social networks	80.5%	77.5%	3.0%
Shops, makes travel reservations, or uses other consumer services online	68.2%	70.8%	-2.6%
Uses online financial services like banking, investing, paying bills	66.3%	69.8%	-3.5%
Watches videos online	67.9%	63.3%	4.6%
Participates in online video or voice calls or conferencing	64.0%	58.3%	5.7%
Streams or downloads music, radio, podcasts, etc.	63.7%	57.3%	6.4%
Requests services provided by other people via the internet	30.0%	35.3%	-5.4%
Accessing government services	17.3%	25.7%	-8.4%
Takes class or participates in job training online	23.3%	23.2%	0.1%
Interacts with household equipment using the internet	23.4%	20.9%	2.5%
Telecommutes using the internet	18.5%	19.0%	-0.5%
Searches for a job online	20.4%	13.3%	7.1%
Posts or uploads blog posts, videos, or other original content	17.6%	13.7%	3.9%
Uses the internet to sell goods	7.9%	8.3%	-0.4%
Offers services for sale via the internet	9.6%	7.0%	2.6%

3.2.2.3 Telemedicine needs

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

Table 22: Telemedicine digital skills in Alabama and the U.S.[277]

Telemedicine activity	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Communicates with a health professional over the internet	37.3%	48.1%	-10.8%
Researches health information online	48.6%	52.9%	-4.3%
Uses an electronic health monitoring service	7.0%	8.4%	-1.5%
Accesses health or insurance records online	42.8%	53.1%	-10.3%

Among Alabamians belonging to covered populations, telemedicine is less frequently practiced compared to non-covered populations. As shown in Table 23, these gaps are especially prevalent in researching health information online (18.6 percentage point gap) and accessing health or insurance records online (15.5 percentage point gap). Individuals in covered populations do outpace non-covered populations in the rate of use of electronic health monitoring services—but this outcome may be skewed by a higher rate of medical needs among covered populations rather than a higher degree of digital skills.

[276] *Id.*
[277] *Id.*

Table 23: Telemedicine digital skills in covered and non-covered populations[278]

Telemedicine activity	Covered groups	Non-covered groups	Gap
Communicates with a health professional over the internet	34.4%	44.7%	-10.3%
Researches health information online	43.3%	61.9%	-18.6%
Uses an electronic health monitoring service	7.7%	5.3%	2.4%
Accesses health or insurance records online	38.4%	53.8%	-15.5%

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

Aging individuals may also benefit from specific telemedicine education given their increased risk for medical needs. However, this group did not report a particular lack in telemedicine participation. One covered population, veterans, outperformed their non-covered counterpart in many telemedicine digital skills, perhaps suggesting the efficacy of ADVA's health care facilities.

[278] *Id.*

Table 24: Telemedicine digital skills in various covered populations[279]

	Telemedicine activity	Low income	Higher income	Gap
Income	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	26.5%	40.7%	-14.2%
	Researches health information online	36.2%	52.5%	-16.3%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	10.0%	6.0%	4.0%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	25.9%	48.1%	-22.2%
	Telemedicine activity	**Aging**	**Younger**	**Gap**
Age	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	36.9%	37.4%	-0.5%
	Researches health information online	41.2%	51.1%	-9.8%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	5.1%	7.6%	-2.5%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	37.8%	44.5%	-6.6%
	Telemedicine activity	**Veteran**	**Non-veteran**	**Gap**
Veteran status	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	40.8%	37.6%	3.2%
	Researches health information online	46.8%	49.3%	-2.4%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	8.8%	6.7%	2.1%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	44.9%	42.8%	2.1%
	Telemedicine activity	**With disabilities**	**Without disabilities**	**Gap**
Disability	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	37.0%	37.3%	-0.3%
	Researches health information online	38.7%	49.7%	-11.0%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	2.9%	7.5%	-4.6%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	35.1%	43.7%	-8.6%
	Telemedicine activity	**Minority**	**White alone**	**Gap**
Race	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	35.0%	38.2%	-3.2%
	Researches health information online	45.1%	49.9%	-4.9%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	8.8%	6.3%	2.5%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	33.5%	46.4%	-12.9%
	Telemedicine activity	**Rural**	**Metropolitan**	**Gap**
Rurality	Communicates with a health professional over the internet	26.2%	42.0%	-15.8%
	Researches health information online	33.9%	54.7%	-20.8%
	Uses an electronic health monitoring service	2.9%	8.7%	-5.7%
	Accesses health or insurance records online	31.9%	47.4%	-15.5%

3.2.2.4 Online security and privacy needs

Theft, fraud, phishing, and misinformation are all commonplace on the internet, and fully realizing digital opportunity in Alabama requires users to be safe from such online risks. In Alabama, 5.4 percent of all households that do not use the internet at home (and 7 percent of those belonging to a covered population) cited online security or privacy concerns as a reason.[280] In the past year, 15.5 percent of individuals in covered populations report having been the victim of an online security or privacy breach.[281] Therefore, ADECA has used data from the Current Population Survey and the NTIA Internet Use Survey to evaluate the extents to which various covered populations perceive and feel confident in their ability to disarm online security and privacy threats. The key findings are as follows:

[279] *Id.* Note: Data for incarcerated individuals and individuals with language barriers were not available.
[280] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, November 2021. Accessed August 17, 2023.
[281] *Id.*

1. Alabama residents are similarly concerned with online security and privacy threats when compared against the nation.

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

3. There are reasons to believe that members of covered populations are less aware of online security and privacy concerns when compared against non-covered populations, with this gap largest for low-income and rural households.

4. Members of covered populations do not appear meaningfully more dissuaded than non-covered populations to undertake various online activities as a result of security or privacy concerns.

Table 25: Main online security or privacy concerns in Alabama and the U.S.[282]

(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Identity theft	52.5%	50.7%	1.8%
Credit card fraud	45.5%	42.1%	3.4%
Third party tracking	26.2%	26.4%	-0.2%
Government tracking	21.8%	19.0%	2.8%
Online threats	26.2%	23.1%	3.1%
Other	15.5%	13.1%	2.4%

Individuals belonging to covered populations were uniformly less concerned about online security or privacy risks than those not in covered populations. However, the members of covered populations did not deviate strongly from Alabama's statewide responses, unlike those not belonging to covered populations. The increased concern over security and privacy among non-covered populations could be caused by increased awareness of extant risks, from which one might conclude that covered populations could benefit from additional educational programming. This seems particularly likely given that there is little evidence to suggest that covered populations are better equipped to protect themselves from these risks.

[282] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey Public Use Microdata, 2021. Accessed August 16, 2023.

Table 26: Main online security or privacy concerns in covered and non-covered populations[283]

(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Covered groups	Non-covered groups	Gap
Identity theft	49.5%	60.0%	-10.5%
Credit card fraud	44.0%	49.1%	-5.1%
Third party tracking	25.0%	29.1%	-4.1%
Government tracking	21.1%	23.6%	-2.5%
Online threats	24.9%	29.4%	-4.5%
Other	12.8%	22.6%	-9.8%

Among the covered populations, veterans and aging individuals tended to be the most concerned about these risks. Lower-income and rural individuals expressed the least concern over these issues. Similarly, while it is not inherently beneficial to increase concern around privacy and security, online security education may increase awareness of these concerns in a positive way, especially for lower-income households and individuals living in rural areas.

[283] *Id.*

Table 27: Main online security or privacy concerns in various covered populations[284]

	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	Low income	Higher-income	Gap
Income	Identity theft	40.1%	56.4%	-16.4%
	Credit card fraud	37.5%	48.0%	-10.5%
	Third party tracking	17.2%	29.0%	-11.8%
	Government tracking	16.1%	23.6%	-7.5%
	Online threats	16.7%	29.2%	-12.5%
	Other	7.5%	18.1%	-10.6%
	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	**Aging**	**Younger**	**Gap**
Age	Identity theft	55.3%	51.6%	3.7%
	Credit card fraud	46.8%	45.0%	1.8%
	Third party tracking	25.7%	26.3%	-0.7%
	Government tracking	23.1%	21.3%	1.8%
	Online threats	25.8%	26.4%	-0.6%
	Other	16.2%	15.3%	0.9%
	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	**Veterans**	**Non-veterans**	**Gap**
Veteran status	Identity theft	57.2%	52.1%	5.0%
	Credit card fraud	53.1%	44.4%	8.6%
	Third party tracking	35.7%	25.7%	10.1%
	Government tracking	28.4%	21.5%	6.9%
	Online threats	30.6%	25.7%	4.9%
	Other	19.2%	15.2%	4.0%
	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	**With disabilities**	**Without disabilities**	**Gap**
Disability	Identity theft	51.5%	52.6%	-1.2%
	Credit card fraud	46.0%	45.4%	0.5%
	Third party tracking	20.7%	26.8%	-6.1%
	Government tracking	22.4%	21.7%	0.7%
	Online threats	23.2%	26.6%	-3.3%
	Other	12.2%	15.9%	-3.7%
	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	**Minority**	**White alone**	**Gap**
Race	Identity theft	45.0%	55.4%	-10.4%
	Credit card fraud	42.7%	46.6%	-3.9%
	Third party tracking	25.7%	26.4%	-0.7%
	Government tracking	21.0%	22.1%	-1.1%
	Online threats	22.5%	27.7%	-5.2%
	Other	13.7%	16.3%	-2.5%
	(Non-exclusive) main online security or privacy concerns	**Rural**	**Metropolitan**	**Gap**
Rurality	Identity theft	48.0%	54.4%	-6.4%
	Credit card fraud	41.5%	47.2%	-5.6%
	Third party tracking	18.8%	29.3%	-10.4%
	Government tracking	19.1%	22.9%	-3.9%
	Online threats	23.4%	27.4%	-4.0%
	Other	6.7%	19.3%	-12.6%

[284] *Id.* Note: Data for incarcerated individuals and individuals with language barriers were not available.

It may be more meaningful for the identification of barriers to examine the impacts of concern rather than level of concern. An estimated 14.1 percent of Alabama residents chose not to buy goods or services online in the past year because of concerns regarding privacy or security. Similarly, 11.4 percent chose not to post photos or other information to social media for these reasons. Alabama residents appear less dissuaded from online activities because of security concerns than the rest of the nation. While the goal is for all individuals to feel safe and confident in their performance of online activities, it remains possible that these data are more suggestive of a lack of information or awareness rather than increased capacity for self-protection.

Table 28: Portion of individuals dissuaded from performing online activities by privacy or security concerns in Alabama and the U.S.[285]

Concerns about privacy or security stopped someone in your household from:	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Conducting financial transactions online	2.0%	3.2%	-1.2%
Buying goods or services online	14.1%	18.0%	-3.9%
Posting photos or other information to social media	11.4%	13.5%	-2.1%
Expressing an opinion on a contreversial or political issue online	9.1%	13.7%	-4.6%
Searching for infromation on a web search engine	8.5%	13.0%	-4.5%

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

Table 29: Portion of individuals dissuaded from performing online activities by privacy or security concerns in covered and non-covered populations[286]

Concerns about privacy or security stopped someone in your household from:	Covered groups	Non-covered groups	Gap
Conducting financial transactions online	1.9%	2.2%	-0.3%
Buying goods or services online	14.9%	12.1%	2.8%
Posting photos or other information to social media	10.5%	13.8%	-3.3%
Expressing an opinion on a contreversial or political issue online	8.1%	11.4%	-3.2%
Searching for infromation on a web search engine	7.7%	10.5%	-2.8%

3.2.2.5 Device adoption needs

Meaningful use of the internet requires the meaningful use of internet-enabled devices, such as desktop and laptop computers, tablets, and, in some instances, smartphones. While Alabama residents who do not use internet at home did not self-identify adequate computer device access as a barrier to their households' connectivity, other data suggest a computer device ownership gap among covered populations. Therefore, ADECA has used data from the American Community Survey to evaluate the extent to which Alabama residents as a whole, and various covered populations specifically, have access to computer devices in their homes. The key findings are as follows:

[285] *Id.*
[286] *Id.*

1. Alabama lags the nation in desktop or laptop access rates.
2. Device access rates are uniformly lower for members of covered populations compared to non-covered populations.
3. Low-income households are in the most urgent need for increased desktop or laptop computer access, and racial or ethnic minorities, aging individuals, individuals living with a disability, and English language learners also significantly lag their non-covered counterparts.

The State of Alabama performs similarly to the nation in computer device ownership of any kind, with 93.3 percent of individuals claiming to have access to a computer device of any kind in the house compared to 95 percent nationally. However, these devices are not uniformly capable. While tablets and smartphones are increasingly effective for many online tasks, they are still ultimately not adequate for full realization of digital opportunities. In Alabama, only 75.2 percent of individuals have access to a desktop or laptop in their home, which is 5.3 percentage points less than the national rate of 80.5 percent. Device adoption statistics for the state and nation are presented in Table 30 below:

Table 30: Device adoption rates in Alabama and the U.S.[287]

Computer in the house	Alabama	Nation	Gap
Computer device of any kind	93.3%	95.0%	-1.7%
Desktop or laptop	75.2%	80.5%	-5.3%
Tablet	62.8%	63.8%	-1.0%
Smartphone only	11.6%	9.1%	2.5%

As shown in Table 31, device ownership is reportedly highly stratified by membership in covered populations. For example, 98.7 percent of individuals not belonging to a covered populations have access to a computer device of any kind at home, while only 90.8 percent of individuals belonging to covered populations report the same access. This device gap grows when limiting the inquiry to desktop or laptop devices, to which members of covered populations are reportedly 19.4 percentage points less likely to have access at the home.

Additionally, 14.3 percent of members of covered populations (compared to 6 percent of non-covered populations) report only having access to a smartphone at home. While this is technically counted as a computer device of any kind, a smartphone alone is insufficient for a myriad of key online activities. These data suggest that device ownership is still a meaningful barrier to connectivity for members of covered populations in Alabama.

[287] *Id.*

Table 31: Device adoption rates in Alabama covered populations[288]

Computer in the house	Covered groups	Non-covered groups	Gap
Computer device of any kind	90.8%	98.7%	-8.0%
Desktop or laptop	68.9%	88.3%	-19.4%
Tablet	56.7%	75.8%	-19.1%
Smartphone only	14.3%	6.0%	8.4%

Among various covered populations, individuals living in low-income households display the most urgent needs for adequate computer devices. Low-income individuals underperformed every other covered population in ownership of computer devices of any kind, desktop or laptop computers, and tablet computers. Additionally, there was at least a 10-percentage-point gap in desktop or laptop access between members of covered and non-covered populations across race, age, disability status, and English language proficiency, as shown in Table 32.

[288] *Id.*

Table 32: Device adoption rates in various covered populations[289]

Income	**Computer in the house**	**Low income**	**Higher income**	**Gap**
	Computer device of any kind	84.6%	96.7%	-12.1%
	Desktop or laptop	56.1%	82.4%	-26.3%
	Tablet	47.2%	68.8%	-21.6%
	Smartphone only	19.1%	8.8%	10.3%
Race	**Computer in the house**	**Minority**	**White alone**	**Gap**
	Computer device of any kind	92.1%	94.0%	-1.9%
	Desktop or laptop	68.6%	78.7%	-10.0%
	Tablet	58.6%	65.1%	-6.5%
	Smartphone only	15.4%	9.6%	5.9%
Age	**Computer in the house**	**Aging**	**Younger**	**Gap**
	Computer device of any kind	86.9%	95.4%	-8.5%
	Desktop or laptop	65.3%	78.3%	-13.1%
	Tablet	50.0%	67.0%	-17.0%
	Smartphone only	14.4%	10.7%	3.6%
Disability	**Computer in the house**	**With disabilities**	**Without disabilities**	**Gap**
	Computer device of any kind	85.1%	95.0%	-9.9%
	Desktop or laptop	61.1%	78.0%	-16.9%
	Tablet	49.7%	65.5%	-15.8%
	Smartphone only	16.0%	10.8%	5.2%
English proficiency	**Computer in the house**	**English learner**	**English fluency**	**Gap**
	Computer device of any kind	93.3%	93.3%	-0.1%
	Desktop or laptop	60.3%	75.4%	-15.1%
	Tablet	56.2%	63.0%	-6.8%
	Smartphone only	21.9%	11.4%	10.5%
Veteran status	**Computer in the house**	**Veteran**	**Non-veteran**	**Gap**
	Computer device of any kind	91.5%	93.5%	-1.9%
	Desktop or laptop	75.3%	75.1%	0.2%
	Tablet	58.8%	63.1%	-4.3%
	Smartphone only	10.7%	11.7%	-1.0%

3.2.2.6 Online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services needs

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

[289] *Id.* Note: Data for incarcerated individuals and individuals with language barriers were not available.

In order for accessibility to be measured, a finite choice of websites and online resources must be selected. And for accessibility best practices to be actualized, web developers from each of those (assumedly) diverse sources must play key roles. In practice, measuring or coordinating holistic web accessibility is not realistic, but localities can ensure all online government resources and services are accessible to residents.

An audit of government websites would organize, document, and measure the accessibility of the various resources and services offered online. There are low-burden means by which state or local agencies can review individual websites via online accessibility calculators. These calculators examine source code for websites to check against the most recent WCAG 2.1[290] online accessibility standards. These standards include best practices for content perceivability, resource operability, information understandability, and tool robustness.

3.2.3 Broadband affordability

Perhaps the most widely known and used intervention to lower the cost of internet access is the ACP. The ACP subsidizes up to $30 per month (or $75 for Tribal applicants) for broadband for qualifying households and may include a one-time $100 subsidy toward buying a laptop or tablet. However, despite the benefit of the subsidy, the ACP is known to be chronically undersubscribed. In Alabama, an estimated 40 percent of eligible households have enrolled, a rate higher than the estimated national level of 35 percent, but still leaving significant opportunity for growth.

Table 33: ACP enrollment in Alabama and the U.S.[291]

	Alabama	Nation
Households enrolled	376,367	19,547,569
Estimated eligible households	937,000	55,266,900
Portion of estimated eligible households enrolled	40%	35%

Households can be determined to be eligible through many criteria, including if they earn up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level or participate in one of many federal or state support programs (e.g., National School Lunch Program). As a result, eligibility for the program is highly

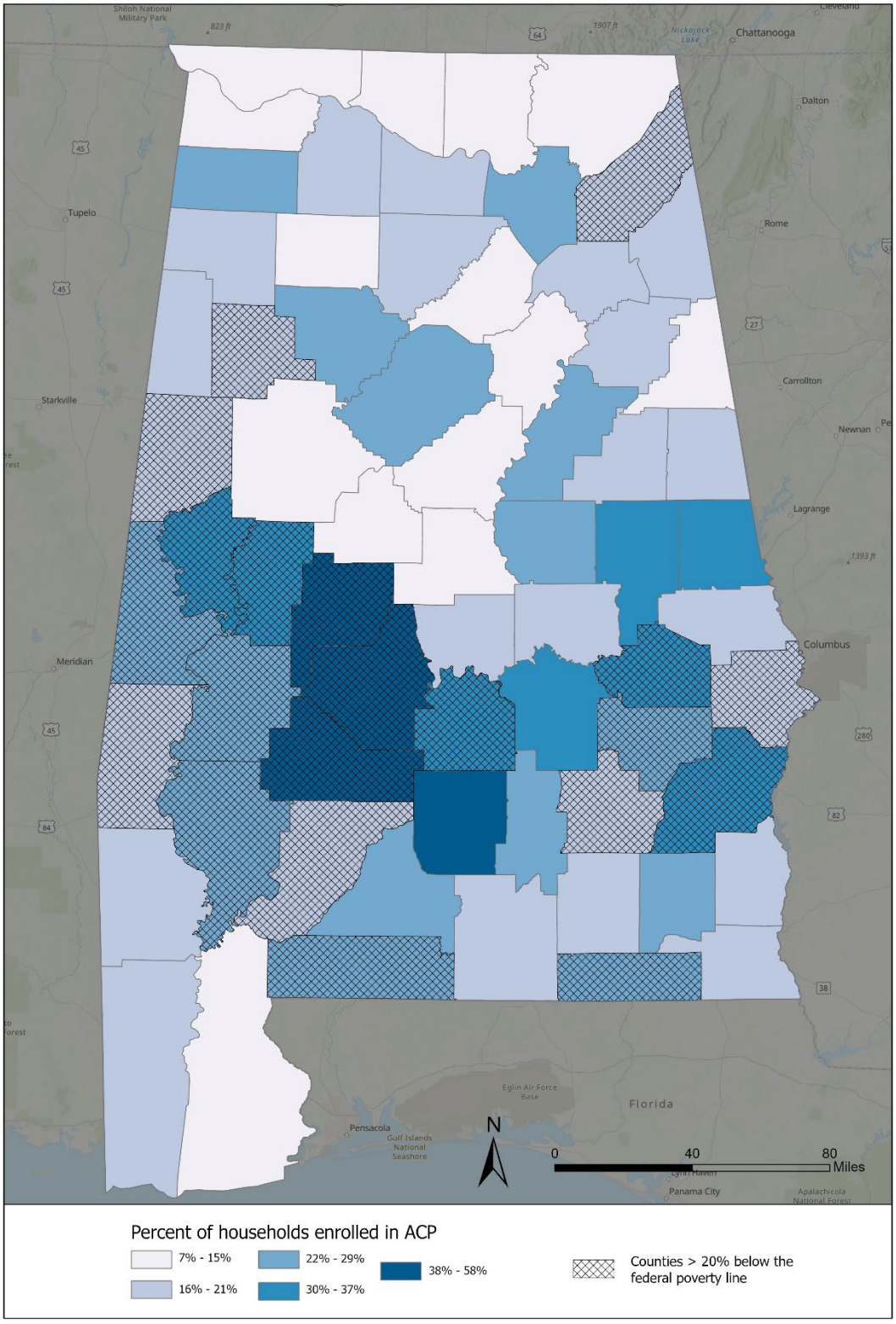
[290] W3C, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/. Accessed August 19, 2023.
[291] Enrollment counts from USAC's ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker, accurate as of August 14, 2023. https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/. Accessed August 17, 2023. Estimates of eligible households based on proprietary model that uses American Community Survey Public Use Microdata to estimate number of households qualifying for ACP via several of its eligibility criteria.

aligned with members of covered populations. An estimated 55 percent of individuals belonging to covered populations are eligible for the ACP.[292]

The percentage of ACP enrollment by county shows that participation is highest throughout the Black Belt region and, within this region, is highest in Wilcox, Dallas, and Perry counties (Figure 6).

[292] Enrollment counts from USAC's ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker, accurate as of August 14, 2023. https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/. Accessed August 17, 2023. Estimates of eligible households based on a proprietary model that uses American Community Survey Public Use Microdata to estimate number of households qualifying for ACP via several of its eligibility criteria.

Figure 6: ACP enrollment in Alabama by county



Basemap: ESRI World Topographic
Coordinate System: NAD1983 State Plane Alabama East

Created By: CTC Technology and Energy, 20230829
Data Sources: ESRI Atlas, U.S. Census Bureau, ACP: Household Subscribers, June 2023

4. Collaboration and partner engagement

This section presents ADECA's digital opportunity planning coordination and outreach strategy, including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement with representatives of each category of covered populations within the state and the full range of partners within the state.

4.1 Coordination and outreach strategy

ADECA's approach to collaborating with key constituencies and partners in the state has been thorough, extensive, inclusive, and transparent. The agency conducted a comprehensive and coordinated external engagement process in preparation of this Plan and for the BEAD Program Five-Year Action Plan—including identification of key current and potential partners and representative groups.

This outreach approach included:

- **In-person engagements in all 67 counties** for technical assistance purposes, leading to the delivery of county broadband and digital opportunity profiles
- **Partner organization engagement** through virtual workshops and questionnaires
- **Scientific phone survey of Alabama households** with regional and statewide findings
- **Ongoing meetings** with state agencies and community organizations that represent covered populations
- **A new public website**—Be Linked Alabama—featuring the 67 county profiles, the Alabama Broadband Map, and other community-level information for the public about ADECA's broadband deployment and digital opportunity efforts[293]

Much of this outreach was conducted leading up to the state's submission of the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan in August 2023 and is included in detail in that submission as well as in this Plan. Additional outreach to state agencies and community organization partners has continued and is highlighted in this Plan. For a list of organizations with which ADECA collaborated in developing the Plan, see Appendix B.

4.1.1 In-person technical assistance engagements at the county level leading to county profiles

ADECA took a three-fold approach to conducting outreach at the county level throughout the state: 1) initial engagements, 2) information gathering and follow-up if needed, and 3) delivery of publicly available county broadband and digital opportunity profiles that serve as informational

[293] "Supporting the State of Alabama's United Effort for All of its Residents to Be Linked," Be Linked Alabama website, https://broadband.alabama.gov/.

and strategic tools for local governments to forge partnerships to achieve their broadband deployment and digital opportunity policy goals.

4.1.1.1 Initial engagement

The key to ADECA's thorough and extensive outreach began with in-person meetings in every county in the state (67 engagements between November 2022 and May 2023), which allowed ADECA to present broadband deployment, digital opportunity, and funding information to leaders at the county and municipal levels. Even more importantly, this process enabled ADECA to hear from local leaders, local government staff, community-based and other nonprofit organizations, ISPs, and members of the public about barriers and obstacles they saw to broadband availability and digital opportunity within the area.

This model strengthened communications among each of the partner populations: between the state agency and local governments, between local governments and ISPs, and between community-based organizations and the government. In addition, it gave members of the public an opportunity to directly voice their concerns regarding the need for internet service and related programs.

Key highlights of these engagements include:

- **Background:** In 2020 and 2021, ADECA identified an urgent need for broadband planning to address gaps in broadband infrastructure and participation, the criticality of which was exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to allow communities to plan for grant opportunities. In 2021, ADECA received a U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration grant of $1 million to provide broadband technical assistance to counties and municipalities to aid their efforts to expand broadband infrastructure and services in their communities.[294]

  Ultimately, 10 counties participated in this initial round of engagements from December 2022 through late January 2023, including five Black Belt counties (Greene, Hale, Marengo, Pickens, and Sumter). As it leveraged BEAD and Digital Equity Act planning funding, ADECA streamlined this approach to conduct in-person engagements with the remaining 57 counties throughout the state between March and May 2023 (See Figure 7.) Over 568 organizations participated in these in-person sessions over a six-month period, with an average of 19 attendees per session.

- **Initial engagement preparation and process:** All engagements were well organized and well attended, a result of the thorough invitee lists and diligent invitation process. ADECA collaborated with county leaders to identify participants and coordinate logistics

[294] Alabama Community Broadband Technical Assistance Program, ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/alabama-community-broadband-technical-assistance-program/.

for the in-person engagement. The lengthy list of invitees included county and municipal elected officials and members of government, Anchor Institutions, local educational entities, nonprofit organizations, organizations that represent covered populations, civil rights organization, entities that carry out workforce development programs, agencies of the state responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities, public housing authorities, and partnerships or coalitions comprised of such entities.

On the premise that direct communication from local leaders would increase participation, ADECA worked with the local entities and statewide member organizations, such as the Association of County Commissions of Alabama and the Alabama League of Municipalities, to help raise awareness among the public and colleagues by sharing the invitation to (and promotional materials about) the meetings as they deemed appropriate. ADECA felt the direct communication from local organizations would increase participation. State and regional partners were also invited to attend the local meetings.

To help raise awareness for the meetings, ADECA provided messaging and materials to support print, local media, and social media channel distribution as well as using the ADECA website and listserv. To support distribution through local channels, ADECA provided meeting notice flyers, invitations, and social media blurbs to local leaders and organization leads. As part of its planning process, ADECA asked if special accommodations were needed for persons with language barriers or disabilities and made appropriate accommodations.

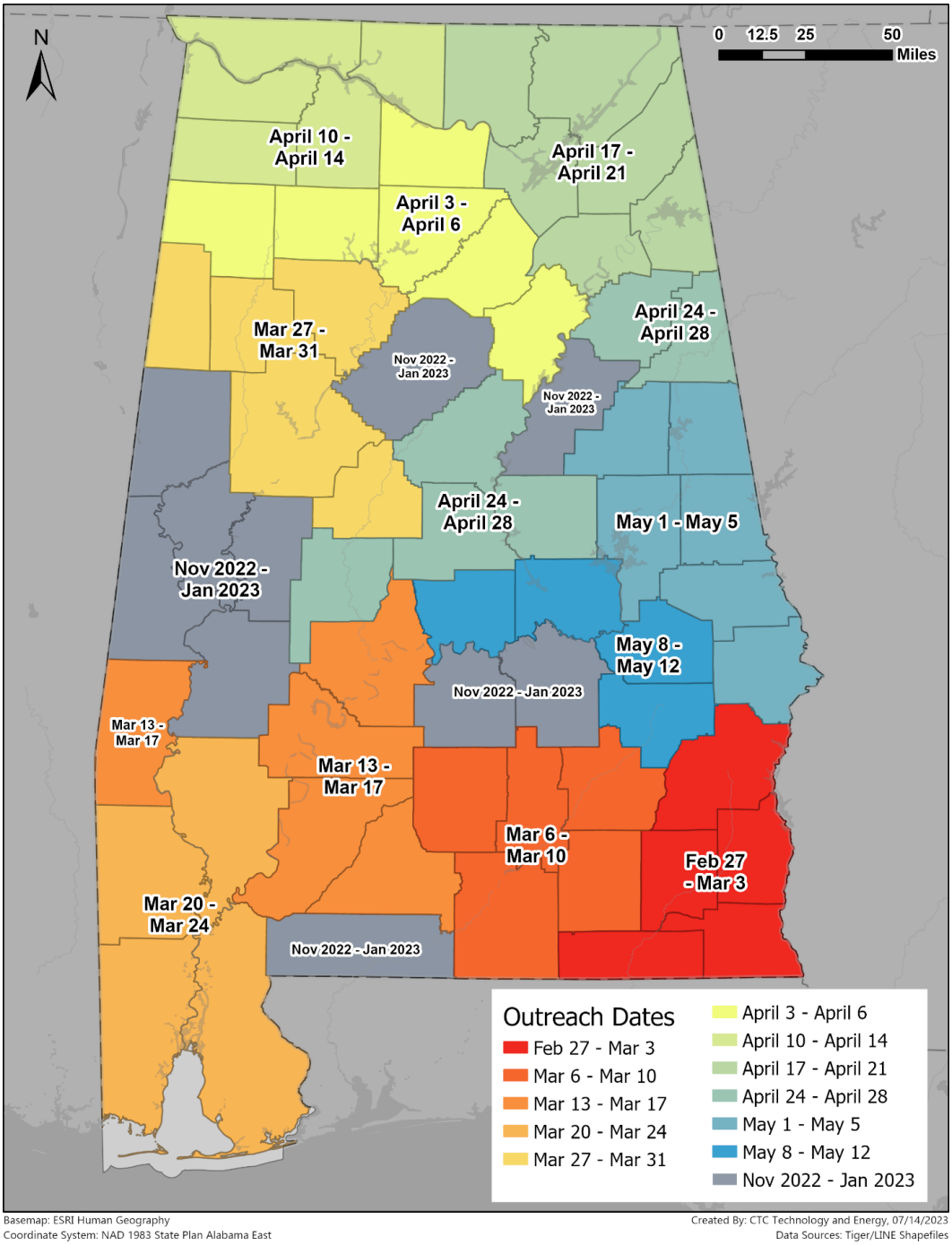
- **Technical assistance content:** The in-person session began with a review of broadband terminology and concepts that informed later discussion of broadband speed definitions and programmatic goals. ADECA then provided an overview of the technical assistance process; information about BEAD and Digital Equity Act programs as well as state broadband programs; programmatic timelines; funding and grant opportunities; and actions that leaders and community members could take, including by helping eligible community members sign up for the ACP and to conduct address-level challenges to the FCC's National Broadband Map.

  The meeting was also designed to understand barriers to broadband and to gather information about current broadband and digital opportunity programs in communities throughout the county. ADECA posted information about the public in-person meetings leading up to and after these events on its website.[295] This information included

[295] *Id.*

presentation slides, videos, handouts, and other information for and from these sessions.[296]

Figure 7: Alabama broadband technical assistance outreach to counties



[296] *Id.*; "Broadband Webinars and Workshops," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/broadband-webinars-and-workshops/.

4.1.1.2 Information gathering and follow-up

In this second phase, the ADECA team gathered and analyzed data from a range of state and national sources, including the ADECA resident phone survey on broadband and digital opportunity needs, the Alabama and FCC broadband maps, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, and other relevant datasets. The ADECA team gathered and analyzed data on broadband availability, federal ACP subsidy use, and broadband adoption in the county.

Analysis from region-based resident phone surveys provided insights into adoption by type of service (for example, any form of service, wireline to the home, and mobile data plan only), households with devices, and barriers and obstacles to use for covered populations. The team also reviewed input from the initial engagements and any additional meetings that ADECA conducted with community-based organizations, local and Tribal government leadership, and other entities during this period.

4.1.1.3 County broadband and digital opportunity profiles

ADECA's engagement process culminated in the delivery of a publicly available broadband and digital opportunity profile to each county, which serves as an informational and strategic tool that local leaders can use to achieve goals for broadband availability, adoption, and digital opportunity in their communities.

In addition to details on broadband deployment and availability in the county, information in the profile includes data regarding the current state of broadband adoption and opportunity in the county, including issues like affordability, access to devices, and digital skills. The profile also captures local perspectives and input shared by county partners on the current obstacles to connectivity and existing digital opportunity programs. For broadband availability, it presents a strategic framework for understanding how communities can partner with ISPs to mutual benefit to meet availability needs. For digital opportunity, it presents programmatic assets and resources for partnering with organizations to address digital opportunity needs. Finally, it describes upcoming multi-year broadband and digital opportunity efforts and how the county can contribute and participate in such efforts.

ADECA presented the executive summary of each county profile through a series of 67 virtual meetings conducted during July and August 2023. Full county profiles are available on the Be Linked Alabama website.[297]

4.1.2 Partner organization engagement

During spring 2023, ADECA conducted a series of virtual workshops with government agencies and Anchor Institutions, community-based organizations representing covered populations, and ISPs. These facilitated workshops captured knowledge from a range of engaged professionals throughout the state and included one session for ISPs and two each for government agencies

[297] Be Linked Alabama, Profiles, https://broadband.alabama.gov/profiles/.

and nonprofit community-based organizations. Participants included state and regional potential partners who may not have been able to attend the in-person county meetings. These engagements included breakout sessions for potential partners by area of focus. From these sessions, ADECA collected input on coverage gaps and digital opportunity needs, digital skills and workforce development programs currently in place, and how such programs could be improved with additional resources.

In addition to partner workshops, ADECA captured information through three questionnaires:

- **Alabama agency asset and programmatic inventory** – requested information about agency type, agency assets that could spur broadband deployment, agency broadband access and digital opportunity programs and covered populations served, the impact of broadband access upon the communities served, and agency workforce development programs.

- **Alabama community organization digital barriers and opportunities** – requested information about organization type, services to covered populations, types of programs offered, the impact of broadband access upon the communities served, barriers to meaning, the organization's own use and need for access to broadband, and workforce readiness and workforce development programs.

- **Alabama ISP engagement** – requested information about sources used for hiring workers for broadband service deployment, workforce development or apprenticeship programs, participation in the ACP and subsidized service offerings' speeds and costs, internet skills and adoption programs, collaboration with communities to close the digital divide, approaches to deploying broadband in areas most expensive to serve, continuity and disaster recovery plans, and barriers to crossing federal or Tribal lands.

The partner questionnaires can be found in Appendix F. ADECA posted information about these facilitated virtual sessions leading up to and after these events on its website.[298] This information included presentation slides, videos, handouts, and other information for and from these sessions.[299]

Digital opportunity resources that ADECA identified through its outreach that are available to the state's covered populations were incorporated in the state's asset inventory (see Table 3 and Appendix A: Asset inventory data – digital opportunity assets

[298] Alabama Community Broadband Technical Assistance Program, ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/alabama-community-broadband-technical-assistance-program/.
[299] "Broadband Webinars and Workshops," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/broadband-webinars-and-workshops/.

4.1.3 Resident phone survey

In parallel to outreach through in-person engagements, ADECA conducted nine regional phone surveys to inform this Plan and capture resident input across the state on a region-by-region basis. This approach informs needs and gaps analysis for the state's broadband and digital opportunity planning efforts with greater specificity than a single statewide survey.

The phone surveys collected data on the perceived reliability of Alabama residents' home internet, household monthly internet expenses, and perception of their digital skills, among other topics. Because of their larger populations, Jefferson and Montgomery counties were surveyed independently. Each survey collected a minimum of 400 responses, supporting estimation of true population proportions within ±2.5 percent.

ADECA conducted surveys over the phone to reach those without internet access. Calls were made from the morning through to the evening to capture input from those with various working hours. The results of the surveys are provided in Appendix E.

4.1.4 New public website

On August 8, 2023, Governor Ivey announced the launch of the Be Linked Alabama website, which provides a hub of Alabama internet expansion information and news.[300] In addition to other broadband-related data, the website contains: (a) all 67 county broadband and digital opportunity profiles;[301] (b) high-level information regarding broadband basics, common terminology, and ADECA's deployment and digital opportunity efforts;[302] (c) the Alabama Broadband Map, providing detailed broadband service data across the state and identifying unserved addresses;[303] and (d) an online tool allowing members of the public to run a speed test and take a related survey.[304]

The Be Linked Alabama website is designed to provide the public with comprehensive but easy to digest information regarding barriers to broadband deployment and digital opportunity as well as ADECA's efforts to overcome these barriers. The website also is designed to assist local communities that may lack resources and expertise for digital opportunity efforts by providing useful data regarding their areas' assets and needs.

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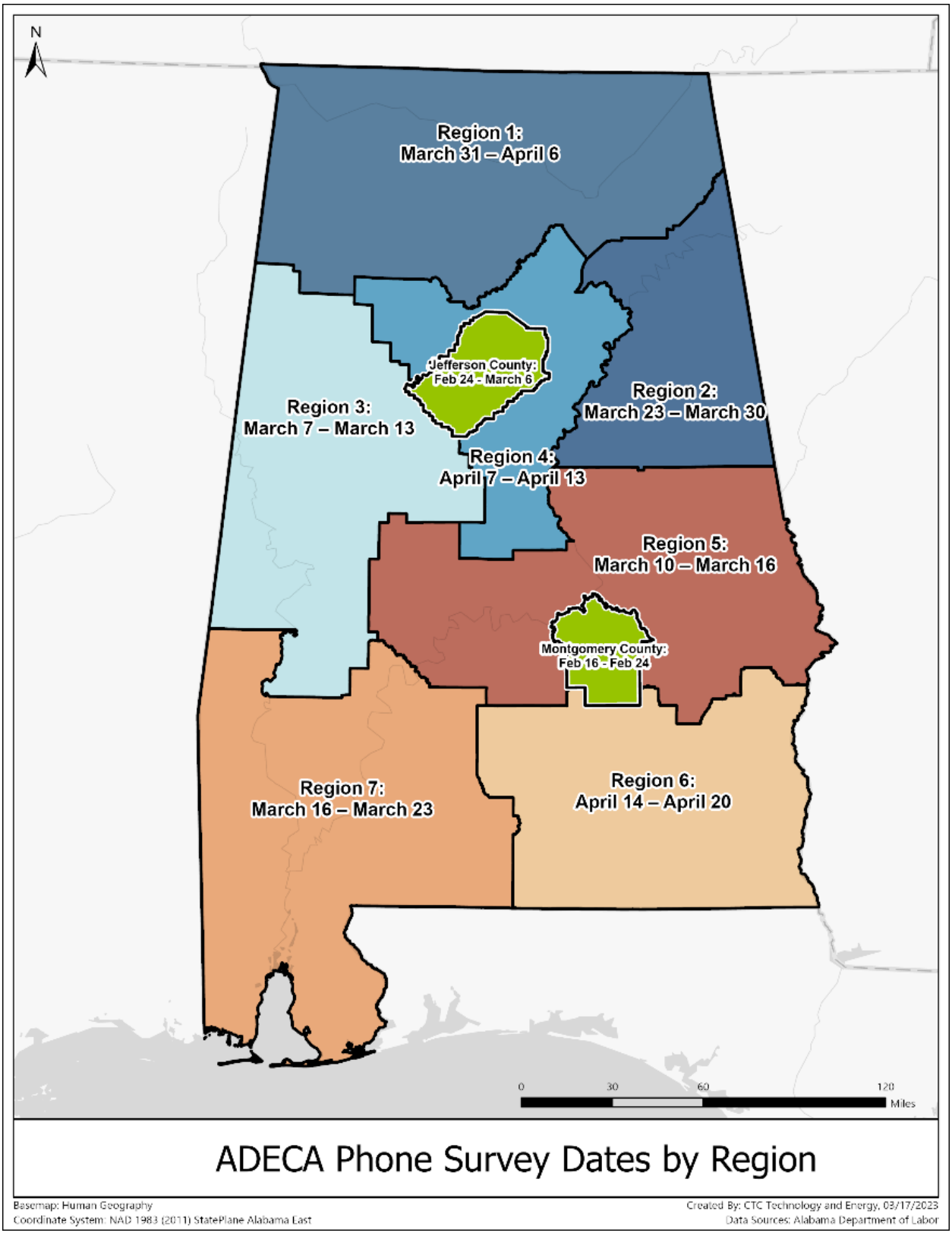
[300] The Office of Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, "Governor Ivey Announces New Statewide Brand for High-Speed Internet Expansion, Details Upcoming Programs to Support Expansion Projects," August 8, 2023, https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2023/08/governor-ivey-announces-new-statewide-brand-for-high-speed-internet-expansion-details-upcoming-programs-to-support-expansion-projects/.
[301] Be Linked Alabama, Profiles, https://broadband.alabama.gov/profiles/.
[302] Be Linked Alabama, About, https://broadband.alabama.gov/about/.
[303] Be Linked Alabama, Broadband Map, https://broadband.alabama.gov/broadband-maps/.
[304] Be Linked Alabama, Survey, https://broadband.alabama.gov/survey/.

Figure 8: ADECA resident survey dates by region



4.1.5 Public comment

The Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan was made available for public comment from October 24, 2023, to November 23, 2023, to gather feedback from partners and residents and promote transparency in the development of the Plan. ADECA posted a draft of the Plan on its website with an invitation to submit comments via an online form. ADECA monitored this online form for the duration of the comment period. ADECA directed those unable to access the online form to contact ADECA by email or by phone for instructions on additional methods of submitting comments.

To encourage broad awareness, participation, and feedback, ADECA conducted outreach about and promotion of the public comment period. ADECA notified partners and the public of the Plan through email outreach to all those on its mailing list, social media outreach, and postings on its website. Partners included organizations and state agencies that represent or serve covered populations, device distributors, internet service providers, and members of local governments and the public. ADECA also held a public webinar on November 20, 2023, regarding the Plan's contents and how to submit comments on the Plan.[305] The webinar was promoted on ADECA's website and through email notifications to invite participation.

ADECA carefully considered the feedback it received from a variety of commenters and incorporated this feedback into this Plan. Several entities offered to partner with ADECA, an encouraging result of the ongoing outreach and coordination process and were added to the appropriate asset inventory of the Plan. One commenter suggested that ADECA partner with extension services, regional planning agencies, and community development organizations as well as community colleges, and ADECA expanded its discussion of ongoing coordination with key partners in this Plan as a result.

Other commenters, such as Comcast, expressed appreciation for ADECA's outreach process and strong support for the ACP. Some commenters expressed concern regarding the needs of specific covered populations, such as aging individuals and incarcerated individuals. AARP, for example, expressed support for numerous aspects of the Plan and for the ACP. In addition, other commenters called for more detail regarding the baseline metrics and goals for digital opportunity for incarcerated individuals, which resulted in revisions to the Plan's measurable objectives and key performance indicators as well as the key barriers and obstacles for covered populations. The Plan also incorporates additional input from the Alabama Department of Corrections regarding digital opportunity issues in Sections 2-3 above.

One commenter commended ADECA for the inclusion of devices as a goal within the plan. It encouraged ADECA to consider the needs of multi-member households for enough devices to

[305] ADECA, "Broadband Webinars and Workshops," https://adeca.alabama.gov/broadband-webinars-and-workshops/. The webinar also included a discussion of ADECA's BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 1 and Volume 2, which were also made available for public comment.

allow for concurrent use and the need for large-screen computers over smartphones to ensure that the focus remains on providing individuals with tools necessary for digital access and participation. The commenter suggested inclusion of a strategy to increase capacity for refurbishing devices and encouraged investment in nonprofit computer refurbishers, both for devices and as a viable workforce development program. The Plan incorporates these comments and includes goals and strategies to expand access to broadband devices with adequate technical support.

Some commenters wrote to express concerns regarding broadband availability in their areas and ADECA anticipates addressing such concerns in the forthcoming BEAD challenge process detailed in ADECA's Initial Proposal Volume 1. One entity requested simple grant application processes for community organizations, an example of a comment that can be addressed later in the digital opportunity grantmaking process. Several commenters also expressed strong support for a robust middle-mile network construction program, a comment that can be best addressed in the BEAD process, and a good example of how the goals of the digital opportunity program and of the BEAD Program align with and support each other.

Some commenters provided recommendations for ADECA to consider as it develops and implements digital opportunity programs. One commenter emphasized the importance of taking into account applicable laws and policies for incarcerated individuals in the development and implementation of digital opportunity programs to meaningfully serve this population. In addition, AARP suggested that ADECA continue to expand its asset inventory and share this information with partners through a digital opportunity dashboard, which could also enable sharing best practices. The Internet Public Trust suggested additional outreach, such as regular calls, public forums on broadband mapping and FCC data collection, and capacity building training for community college areas and K-12 school health library networks who may apply for BEAD and Digital Equity funds. The Plan incorporates these comments and expands upon ADECA's planned ongoing coordination with key partners as a result.

More information regarding the comments received on the Plan – and ADECA's actions taken in response – can be found in the Record of Public Comments and Actions Taken submitted to NTIA with this Plan and in Appendix I: Changes to the Plan from public comment. ADECA looks forward to fruitful continuing engagement with the public and with key partners in implementing the Plan, as discussed in further detail below in Section 4.1.6.

4.1.6 Ongoing coordination with key partners

By participating in the county profile process, key partners contributed to the substance of this Plan and many took the opportunity to review the Plan during the public comment period and provide additional feedback. In addition to the outreach described above, ADECA has continued to engage Tribes, HBCUs/MSIs and other institutions of higher education, state agencies, and community organizations that represent covered populations to inform the development and implementation of this Plan and digital opportunity efforts.

As described above and in accordance with the NOFO, ADECA will continue to provide opportunities for public comment, collaboration, and ongoing engagement with each covered population category and key partners as part of its digital opportunity efforts. Potential strategies for ongoing coordination include:

- Gather data to establish KPIs for measurable objectives without sufficient data for covered populations (e.g., incarcerated individuals) (see Section 2.3.2)
- Convene key partners to facilitate achieving the state's measurable objectives and outcome areas outlined in this Plan
- Conduct ongoing check-ins with organizations that work with covered populations to review Plan goals, data, and objectives, and hear from organizations about needs and new data
- Include organizations on outreach for the Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program
- Include organizations on outreach for facilitating technical assistance for competitive grants
- Hold ongoing informational webinars to continue building digital opportunity capacity within Alabama

4.1.6.1 Tribal outreach

ADECA reached out to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians,[306] Alabama's only federally recognized Tribe,[307] to schedule a listening session on Poarch territory. In January 2023, ADECA invited the Tribal Leadership to participate in a county session being held close to Tribal land but did not receive a response. In June 2023, ADECA sent a Dear Tribal Leader letter requesting input and, in early September 2023, sent a follow-up letter to Tribal Leadership, but as of submission of this Plan, has not received a response. ADECA will continue to reach out to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to try to schedule a listening session to inform both the BEAD and Digital Equity Act funded programs.

ADECA also conducted virtual meetings with the state-recognized MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians, Southeastern Mvskoke Nation, and Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama.[308] These meetings provided further insight on digital opportunity barriers for Tribes. For example, the needs for broadband availability and digital opportunity programs are significant for members

[306] Poarch Band of Creek Indians, https://pci-nsn.gov/.
[307] "Map of Indian Lands in the United States," Bureau of Indian Affairs, https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/12_bia_regions.pdf.
[308] MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians, https://mowachoctawindians.com/; Southeastern Mvskoke Nation, https://southeasternmvskokenation.org/; Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, https://www.machistribe.net/.

of the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama in south-central Alabama (Crenshaw County). In correspondence to ADECA, Tribal leadership identified specific locations lacking broadband service, including the Tribal offices.[309] The correspondence stated that, in general, these areas are primarily inhabited by African American and American Indian minorities.[310] Regarding digital opportunity, community members expressed concern that many families without computers or laptops and those above 55 years of age have an extremely limited knowledge of the use of a computer.[311]

4.1.6.2 HBCUs, MSIs, and other institutions of higher education

ADECA has conducted meetings with many of the HBCUs and MSIs in the state in conjunction with the Student Freedom Initiative (SFI),[312] a national nonprofit that supports African American students. To date, SFI and ADECA have held four engagements at the following five HBCUs: Tuskegee University (June 21, 2023), Selma University (June 27, 2023), Stillman College (June 29, 2023), and Lawson State and Miles College (July 6, 2023).

ADECA used these meetings to gather additional information about barriers and obstacles in the community, provide additional information to the institution's community, and to inform the community about the ACP. Dr. Cynthia Warrick, president of Stillman College, told ADECA in the meeting at Stillman College that students avoid the dining hall if the Wi-Fi is down. She added that she hopes to share the benefits of a better broadband network with the community around the school.

SFI conducted additional outreach, analysis, and a resident survey to identify broadband needs and priorities for HBCUs and their surrounding communities, and provided ADECA with a briefing to inform this Plan. The full report is included in Appendix G: Broadband and digital equity community briefing – HBCU communities in the State of Alabama (Student Freedom Initiative).

In addition, ADECA met with representatives from Wallace Community College (Dothan and Sparks) and George Corley Wallace Community College (Selma) to understand the needs of students in these rural areas in southeast and southwest Alabama. Lack of home access to the internet (and poor quality of access if available), coupled with lack of available Anchor Institution locations with public computing facilities, are major obstacles to remote academic learning and workforce training opportunities—not just for jobs in the digital economy but also in more

[309] Email from Nancy Carnley, Vice Chief Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, to ADECA, August 25, 2023.
[310] *Id.*
[311] *Id.*
[312] Student Freedom Initiative, https://studentfreedominitiative.org/.

traditional trades, which increasingly rely on computer and online technologies. Students may live up to 40 miles from the community college campus, so transportation is another obstacle.[313]

4.1.6.3 Covered populations

In addition to county-level engagements, to which ADECA invited a wide range of partner agencies and organizations, ADECA has also met with relevant state agencies that work directly with covered populations, including the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA), the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS), the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), and the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC). Meetings are planned with the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR), the Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS), and the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles (ABPP) as of the writing of this Plan. In addition, ADECA has met with partner organizations that work directly with covered populations, including the Student Freedom Initiative, HICA, the Hispanic Federation, and the Elmore Bolling Initiative. Meetings are planned with the Alabama Literacy Alliance and the Alabama Literacy Association. More information on ADECA's collaboration and ongoing engagement with other state agencies can be found above in Section 2.

The engagements conducted for this Plan helped to identify barriers for covered populations for which sufficient data were not available from federal sources (documented in Table 7), as well as provide additional context for the state's analysis of federal data in Section 3.2. Similarly, sufficient data were not available to establish KPIs for the state's measurable objectives for some covered populations (see Section 2.3.2); through planned engagements, ADECA intends to gather additional data that can be used to set these KPIs.

Meetings and outreach that provided information on covered populations are summarized below.

Low-income households ("covered households")

Household income has been a throughline in ADECA's outreach, with organizations that serve other defined covered populations discussing barriers related to income (see Table 7). ADPH, for example, noted that for rural residents, lack of access to affordable and reliable broadband in turn creates barriers to developing digital skills. As of the writing of this Plan, ADECA has a meeting planned with DHR to gather additional information specific to low-income households in the state.

[313] Wallace Community College (Dothan) and George Corley Wallace Community College (Selma) in a meeting with ADECA, September 13, 2023.

Aging individuals

In a meeting held in October 2023, ADSS provided ADECA with a list of senior centers that have no or limited internet access. In addition, a representative of AARP Alabama submitted a public comment on this Plan that provides additional insight on barriers to digital opportunity faced by aging Alabamians. The representative noted the particular importance of high-speed internet to aging individuals in both rural and urban communities, as it supports safely aging in place by allowing residents to access telehealth services, maintain social connections, and participate in the workforce—but also noted that research shows older adults, particularly in rural areas, are less likely to have high-speed internet access or make full use of the capabilities of broadband.

AARP emphasizes, in alignment with its advocacy goals, the need for affordable and reliable access to internet services and devices supported by digital literacy training, with an emphasis on program sustainability. Aging individuals may need continued support, rather than a one-time training session. A long-term view is also important as covered populations are dynamic; residents join the aging population as they grow older, for example. AARP also emphasizes the ACP's central role in the sustainability of digital opportunity, noting the organization's continued work to encourage enrollment in the program.

The AARP representative concurs with the finding in this Plan that the affordability of services and devices is a key barrier to broadband adoption in the state, particularly for low-, fixed-, and middle-income households. They note that implementation strategies likely to resonate with older adults include emphasizing affordable service options as part of infrastructure deployment programs and focusing on digital skills for older adults. Telehealth access and online security and privacy are key areas of concern for the population they serve.

In an additional public comment, a representative of the Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers also noted that many children in the state are being raised by grandparents, who need support to develop digital skills to monitor their usage of the internet.

Incarcerated individuals

Lack of broadband connectivity to prison facilities and other facilities managed by ADOC presents a key barrier to digital opportunities for incarcerated individuals. While inmates do not have direct internet access, they do have managed access to a basic device and digital content, educational/workforce training, and telehealth as part of health services.[314]

Each inmate is issued a device that provides access to phone, messaging, educational content, and entertainment content. Content is delivered on a largely closed network, with external access managed through security operated by the provider, Securus Technologies. Educational and

[314] ADOC, in a meeting with ADECA, December 11, 2023.

workforce training is provided through the J. F. Ingram State Technical College, which has locations at many of the state's prisons, and the Alabama Prison Arts and Education Project (APAEP) in coordination with Auburn University, which provides inmates the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree. The program was established in 2017 at Staton Correctional Facility and was extended to Tutwiler Prison for Women in 2022. There are 57 students enrolled in the program. Overall, 5,950 incarcerated individuals were reached through the APAEP across 12 Alabama prisons.[315]

In addition to continued outreach with ADOC, ADECA plans to conduct outreach with DYS, ABPP, and organizations that work with justice-impacted individuals to understand more about the barriers and obstacles to digital opportunity faced by individuals in the juvenile justice system and formerly incarcerated individuals reentering society.

Veterans

As ADVA introduces a new online case management system, digitizes service forms, moves its process for dependent scholarship applications online, and takes other steps toward digitization, veterans' needs for access to broadband infrastructure at service centers and in homes, for computing devices to access services and programs including telehealth, and for digital skills training will continue to grow.

There is a need to improve veterans' access to broadband discount programs, such as the ACP, and workforce training and digital skills improvement programs that could expand employment opportunities beyond skills developed in the military.[316]

Individuals with disabilities

ADRS leadership stressed the need for reliable broadband in the home for the successful delivery of ADRS services (including telehealth, caseworker visits, and home rehabilitative care), adequate access to internet-enabled devices that accommodate for given disabilities, and training that enables individuals and family members to effectively access services online. Leadership stressed the importance of broadband for not only rehabilitative services, but also for vocational development and work-from-home opportunities in its vocational rehabilitation services program. It also noted that reliable in-home broadband will facilitate greater efficiency in care-giving timesheet management and rehabilitative oversight, as required by federal benefit programs.[317]

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[315] Alabama Prison Arts and Education Project, Auburn University, https://apaep.auburn.edu/.
[316] ADVA, in a meeting with ADECA, July 21, 2023.
[317] ADRS, in a meeting with ADECA, August 21, 2023.

Individuals with language barriers – including English language learners or those with low literacy

HICA, a nonprofit serving the Latino and Hispanic communities in Alabama, identified the need for outreach campaigns that are not limited to English and the need for computing devices and tools with language translation capabilities, not only for Spanish speakers but in other languages as well. These would help in internet adoption and access to health and workforce services.[318]

As of the writing of this Plan, ADECA has a meeting planned with the Alabama Public Library Service and is reaching out to literacy organizations to gather additional data on individuals in the state with low literacy.

Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority

The ADPH Office of Health Equity and Minority Health conducted a survey related to health access among members of racial and ethnic minorities. Key among the barriers indicated so far is limited access or lack of access to broadband.[319]

Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

ADPH provides access to telehealth services and works with federal rural health clinics in the delivery of these services for all covered populations, particularly to people living in rural areas. ADPH identified the state's 206 unincorporated communities, the Black Belt region, and other rural areas where there is a lack of broadband infrastructure. ADPH noted that, in these areas, even the Anchor Institution hosting facility for telehealth service can struggle with broadband capacity issues.[320]

When asked what services they would like to see grow in their community, 27.8 percent of respondents to ADPH's survey in incorporated Black Belt communities reported needing more internet services. When asked the top two needs in their communities, reliable internet and paved roads were ranked most highly in unincorporated communities at 25 percent each.

Potentially related in part to a lack of access, many residents within the Black Belt reported that the internet is not their primary source for some types of critical information. The majority of respondents primarily receive health information from doctors, nurses, and friends (81 percent, combined), with just 6.6 percent using the internet as their primary source (the fourth most common response). During an emergency, 67.7 percent of respondents rely on television or text

[318] HICA, in a meeting with ADECA, September 20, 2023.
[319] ADPH, in a meeting with ADECA, August 29, 2023.
[320] *Id.*

alerts as their main source of information from authorities; only 8.8 percent primarily use the internet.[321]

The Alabama State Department of Education noted that for K-12 students in rural areas throughout the state, lack of home access to the internet means reliance on cell service. In many areas, cell service is unreliable or not available, creating a barrier for students who must use online resources to complete homework assignments. Lack of access is also a barrier for student school-to-work training opportunities. In addition, student access to computing devices will become a growing issue as local school districts must update and replace current devices issued during the pandemic.[322]

For community college students in rural areas, lack of home access to the internet (and poor quality of access if available), coupled with lack of available Anchor Institution locations with public computing facilities, are major obstacles to remote learning opportunities. Students may live up to 40 miles from the community college campus.[323]

4.2 Collaboration to implement this Plan

As described above and in accordance with the NOFO, ADECA collaborated with key partners in the state in the development of this Plan and will continue to collaborate with such partners in order to achieve the measurable objectives for digital opportunity identified in the Plan. Comprehensive, continued engagement with partners will be key to the Plan's implementation, as discussed further in Section 5. In particular, implementation of the Plan anticipates engaging and/or partnering with: (a) workforce agencies such as state workforce agencies and workforce organizations; (b) labor organizations and community-based organizations; and (c) institutions of higher learning, including but not limited to four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, education and training providers, and educational service agencies.

A list of the organizations with which ADECA collaborated in developing the Plan is provided in Appendix B. Through its outreach, ADECA has identified relevant workforce development, training, and certification programs offered by higher education institutions and ISPs in the state, catalogued in detail in the asset inventory in Section 3.1 and the Alabama BEAD Five-Year Plan.

For example, the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has developed a fiber optics training course in a hybrid format through Wallace Community College (Dothan and Sparks) that is available to students systemwide. Communications Workers of America, a union, also assisted ADECA in planning for and participated in the county public meetings and has indicated that it is willing to partner with ISPs for training. The American Federation of Labor Congress of Industrial

[321] Survey results provided by ADPH Office of Health Equity and Minority Health to ADECA via email, November 29, 2023.
[322] Alabama State Department of Education, in a meeting with ADECA, September 14, 2023.
[323] Wallace Community College (Dothan) and George Corely Wallace Community College (Selma), in a meeting with ADECA, September 13, 2023.

Organizations similarly assisted ADECA in planning for and participated in the county public meetings. In addition, ISPs and higher education institutions provided information on their needs, goals, and interest in potential partnerships with ADECA around workforce development through the partner questionnaires.

As described in Section 2.2, this Plan is aligned with the efforts and priorities of state higher education and workforce agencies, including ACCS, the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation, the Alabama Workforce Development Board, the Alabama Workforce Council, Regional Workforce Councils, and AlabamaWorks.

ADECA has worked diligently to seek input and feedback from these partners and will continue to engage these organizations as it implements this Plan. For example, it may seek expertise from organizations representing covered populations to help build capacity on barrier reduction opportunities across the state by convening these partners, as noted in Section 5. ADECA's plans for its State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program will be informed by input from its partners, including state and local governments and nonprofits.

5. Implementation

This section of the Plan describes the implementation approach and potential future initiatives that relate to each of the key strategies of the Plan, as well as potential timelines.

Digital opportunity in Alabama will likely involve multiple initiatives and efforts associated with each strategy. ADECA looks forward in particular to the opportunity to use its future State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant to support and develop the digital opportunity strategies and activities proposed in this Plan, in partnership with the many local and regional entities that have participated in ADECA's community engagement work over the past year.

As discussed further in Section 4.2, ADECA's outreach has identified and engaged key partners in the state related to the potential implementation initiatives discussed below, including workforce agencies, labor organizations, community-based organizations, internet service providers, and institutions of higher learning. For example, ADECA will collaborate with the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and other workforce partners regarding digital workforce development (see Section 5.1.3). Key strategies for implementation include leveraging apprenticeships and on-the-job training programs, marketing to all types of prospective workers, and supporting local hiring efforts while encouraging successful training and recruitment programs such as those funded through ACCS Skills for Success and ACCS Innovation Center programs.[324] Community organizations are instrumental in communicating "on-ramp" opportunities among covered populations they serve and in implementing additional activities described below at the local level, including promoting ACP enrollment (see Section 5.1.2).

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

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

5.1 Implementation strategy and key activities

The following are potential strategies, initiatives, and timelines tied to each digital opportunity challenge described in the sections above.

These key challenges represent areas of gaps in state, local, and private efforts to address the barriers identified in this Plan. These stem from ADECA's extensive assessment of needs (Section 3.2), its collection of data on the current digital opportunity ecosystem through its asset inventory (Section 3.1), and its state agency and partner outreach (Section 2.2 and Section 4). Through its

[324] ACCS Innovation Center, https://innovation.accs.edu/.

assessment and outreach, ADECA has identified gaps in supporting broadband availability, affordability of broadband services and devices with adequate technical support, and digital skills; the strategies and activities in Sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3 below are designed to address these gaps. Furthermore, an underlying factor throughout is a lack of funding to meet the needs of covered populations and the need for greater local capacity to support these efforts. Accordingly, the strategies and activities in Section 5.1.4—and a key component of strategies across preceding sections—address growing local resources and partnerships between localities and community organizations.

5.1.1 Key challenge: Lack of broadband availability

The following proposed strategies and associated core activities and measurable objectives are designed to address the barriers for covered populations identified in Table 7 related to broadband availability.

Strategy 1: Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Execute BEAD Program	Extend last-mile broadband infrastructure throughout the state	2023 to 2030, evaluated biennially against broadband availability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.1	Improved broadband access to unserved and underserved locations, many in rural areas, impacts all covered populations
Execute Alabama Capital Projects Fund Program	Extend last-mile broadband infrastructure throughout the state	2023 to 2026 (applications currently under review), evaluated biennially against broadband availability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.1	Improved broadband access to unserved and underserved locations, many in rural areas, impacts all covered populations
Execute Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile Program	Extend middle-mile broadband infrastructure to Anchor Institutions with an identified need for service, while facilitating last-mile deployment in unserved areas	2023 to 2026 (applications currently under review), evaluated biennially against broadband availability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.1	Improved broadband access to Anchor Institutions impacts all covered populations by expanding access to devices, digital skills training, and workforce development
Execute Alabama Statewide Middle-Mile Network Grant Program	Extend middle-mile broadband infrastructure to serve as a unified statewide resource for ISPs to plan and deploy last-mile connectivity	Subgrant Agreement executed in February 2023; project completion scheduled for February 2026. Evaluated biennially against broadband availability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.1	Improved broadband access to Anchor Institutions impacts all covered populations by expanding access to devices, digital skills training, and workforce development

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Execute Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund	Extend last-mile broadband infrastructure throughout the state	Ongoing, utilizing state funding; evaluated biennially against broadband availability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.1	Improved broadband access to unserved and underserved locations, many in rural areas, impacts all covered populations

Strategy 2: Enable gigabit services at Anchor Institutions

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Execute Alabama Anchor Institution/Middle-Mile Program	Extend middle-mile broadband infrastructure to Anchor Institutions with an identified need for service, while facilitating last-mile deployment in unserved areas	2023 to 2026 (applications currently under review), evaluated biennially against broadband availability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.1	Improved broadband access to Anchor Institutions impacts all covered populations by expanding access to devices, digital skills training, and workforce development

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

The following proposed strategies and associated core activities and measurable objectives are designed to address the barriers for covered populations identified in Table 7 related to broadband adoption and device adoption.

Strategy 1: Increase ACP enrollment among eligible households

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Develop and distribute educational materials	Provide content and support for educational campaigns among organizations that focus on ACP as well as for localities, Anchor Institutions, and nonprofits that have not previously worked to extend ACP enrollment	Ongoing (was initiated in 2022), evaluated biennially against broadband affordability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.2	Increased awareness of ACP and other subsidy and low-cost service options impacts affordability and device access for low-income households and other qualifying covered populations

Strategy 2: Increase low-cost service offerings

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Require grantee low-cost offerings	Build requirements and enhanced scoring for affordable service offerings into all broadband infrastructure grant	2023 to 2025, with monitoring and enforcement thereafter; requirements already built into Alabama Statewide	Low-cost service options impact affordability and device access for low-income households and other

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
	programs	Middle-Mile Network Grant Program, Alabama Anchor Institution/ Middle-Mile Program, and Alabama Capital Projects Fund Program. Evaluated biennially against broadband affordability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.2	qualifying covered populations
Encourage ISP low-cost offerings	Work with ISPs throughout the state to encourage adoption and expansion of low-cost offerings for lower-income households	Ongoing (was initiated in 2020), evaluated biennially against broadband affordability measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.2	Low-cost service options impact affordability and device access for low-income households and other qualifying covered populations

Strategy 3: Expand access to computing devices with technical support

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Provide device and technical support program information	Provide guidance regarding best practices, expertise, and partnership opportunities to localities and nonprofits to develop and expand programs that provide free devices to lower-income households and associated technical support for those devices	2024 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against measurable objective goals for workable devices in Section 2.3.2.2	Increased awareness of device programs and support impacts affordability and device access for low-income households and other qualifying covered populations
Support ACP enrollment	Work with partners to support eligible households to purchase computing devices under the ACP	Ongoing (was initiated in 2022), evaluated biennially against measurable objective goals for workable devices in Section 2.3.2.2	Increased awareness and partnerships supporting enrollment in ACP and other subsidy and low-cost service options impacts affordability and device access for low-income households and other qualifying covered populations

Strategy 4: Develop data and informational resources to enable application of a digital opportunity lens to infrastructure and program decisions

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Provide map information	Add digital opportunity data to the Alabama Broadband Map	2024 and thereafter, updated biennially; activity indirectly supports success of measurable objectives goals related to ACP enrollment, affordable service, and workable devices in Section 2.3.2.2	Accurate maps and demographic information support broadband availability and affordability for all covered populations, especially rural and low-income
Provide asset information	Update the Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan Asset Inventory periodically so that communities have access to resources for identifying partners and best practices	2024 and thereafter, updated biennially; activity indirectly supports success of measurable objectives goals related to ACP enrollment, affordable service, and workable devices in Section 2.3.2.2	Accurate asset information supports state broadband availability and affordability efforts to all covered populations, especially rural and low-income
Develop and distribute education and informational resources	Work with collaborators to design and share data and informational resources promoting internet safety, ACP awareness, and device donation and refurbishment, and develop online resources on digital opportunity best practices for reference by partners statewide	2024 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against ACP enrollment, affordable service, and workable devices measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.2	Resources enable community-based organizations and other collaborating partners to expand awareness on ACP and other subsidy, device, and digital skills programs to all covered populations

5.1.3 Key challenge: Low-income households and aging individuals lack digital skills

The following proposed strategies and associated core activities and measurable objectives are designed to address the barriers for covered populations identified in Table 7 related to digital skills and online security.

Strategy 1: Enable digital skills development through training courses

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Enable partnerships	Connect localities with expert partners that have established training courses, curricula, and trained staff, working with a full range of partners that are engaged in digital opportunity efforts to enable partners to benefit from each other's expertise and lessons learned	2023 and thereafter (this effort is already underway), evaluated biennially against digital skills-related measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.3	Leveraging digital skills training expertise enables communities to address local needs of covered populations, while emphasizing low-income households and aging individuals across the state
Provide informational resources and guidance	Distribute relevant materials to share expertise and guidance so that communities have access to resources for identifying partners and best practices	2023 and thereafter (this effort is already underway), evaluated biennially against digital skills-related measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.3	Leveraging digital skills training resources enables communities to address local needs of covered populations, while emphasizing low-income households and aging individuals across the state
Support digital workforce development	Collaborate with workforce partners (e.g., Alabama Community College System) regarding curriculum, course training, and industry best practices for digital workforce development	2025 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against digital skills-related measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.3	Supports needs for digital workforce development skills for covered populations, with emphasis on low-income households, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, individuals with disabilities, individuals with language barriers, and people living in rural areas

Strategy 2: Expand opportunity to learn online safety and privacy

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Enable partnerships	Connect localities with expert partners that have established training courses, curricula, and trained staff, working with a full range of partners that are engaged in digital opportunity efforts to enable partners to benefit from each other's expertise and lessons learned	2023 and thereafter (this effort is already underway), evaluated biennially against online safety and privacy measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.3	Leveraging online safety and privacy training expertise enables communities to address local needs of covered populations, while emphasizing low-income households and aging individuals across the state
Provide informational resources and guidance	Distribute relevant materials to share expertise and guidance so that communities have access to resources for identifying partners and best practices	2023 and thereafter (this effort is already underway), evaluated biennially against online safety and privacy measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.3	Leveraging online safety and privacy training resources enables communities to address local needs of covered populations, while emphasizing low-income households and aging individuals across the state

Strategy 3: Expand accessibility of information

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Develop and distribute accessibility guidance	Provide guidance to state and local agencies regarding best practices for website design and maintenance that align with accessibility standards and that enable cost-effective use of critical support tools	2023 and thereafter (this effort is already underway), evaluated biennially against access to government services measurable objective goals in Section 2.3.2.3	Improved accessibility addresses barriers to all covered populations, especially individuals with disabilities, English learners and individuals with low literacy, and aging individuals

5.1.4 Key challenge: Local communities lack resources and expertise for digital opportunity efforts

The following proposed strategies and associated core activities and measurable objectives are designed to grow local capacity to address the barriers for covered populations identified in Table 7 related to broadband availability, broadband adoption, digital skills, online security, and device adoption.

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

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Convene partners	Build structures to enable partners to work together across the state and across different demographics to enable shared lessons and resources to support those who face the greatest barriers to digital opportunity, as well as to help organizations to leverage others' capabilities and help partners serving particular regions or specific covered populations to share best practices and digital opportunity expertise	2024 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against community resources measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.4	Developing and strengthening partnerships helps ensure best practices in addressing barriers faced by all covered populations for broadband affordability, device access, and digital skills development
Enable funders to connect with program experts	Convene a range of partners to enable organizations that run digital opportunity programs to request resources from various organizations, including private sector partners, ISPs, and philanthropy	2024 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against community resources measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.4	Developing and strengthening connections with program experts helps ensure best practices in addressing barriers faced by all covered populations for broadband affordability, device access, and digital skills development

Strategy 2: Support and develop local capacity

Localities and local community organizations are the lifeblood of work in digital opportunity. It is at the local level that community needs are best understood—and community members are best able to effect change. ADECA therefore seeks to support development at the local level of expertise and staffing to work on digital opportunity initiatives and to enable local communities to prioritize the efforts and goals that are best suited to their unique circumstances.

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Plan for local and/or regional Digital Opportunity Fellows	Plan for local and/or regional Digital Opportunity Fellows, hosted by local nonprofits, localities, or colleges, to enable development of local plans and initiatives	2024 to 2029, evaluated biennially against community resources measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.4	Fellows serve as a resource to communities, helping address barriers for broadband affordability, device access, and digital skills development to all covered populations, with emphasis on specific needs of the community served
Convene funders	Use ADECA's convening capabilities to plan annual meetings or webinars to connect local communities and organizations with philanthropy and other potential digital opportunity funding sources	2024 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against community resources measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.4	Developing and strengthening partnerships with funders helps ensure sustainability in efforts to address barriers faced by all covered populations for broadband affordability, device access, and digital skills development
Facilitate access to grant writing resources	Facilitate access to grant writing resources and technical assistance to localities, nonprofits, and Anchor Institutions that seek to compete for NTIA's Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program funds	2024 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against community resources measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.4	Resources and technical assistance will aid partner organizations seeking to provide services to all covered populations related to broadband affordability, device access, and digital skills development

Strategy 3: Sustain and grow the state's efforts in digital opportunity

Alabama's commitment to digital opportunity means a significant commitment of resources to sustain the initiatives contemplated in this Plan. To sustain these efforts over time, Alabama will require resources beyond what NTIA will provide under the State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant Program. ADECA will seek to develop strategies for continuing the work launched under this Plan by partnering with philanthropy and seeking other funding sources, and by tracking the impact of Alabama's digital opportunity efforts to quantify the business case for further investment in digital opportunity programs.

Activity	Description	Timeline	Barriers addressed
Infuse broadband and digital opportunity considerations into related areas	Develop materials to enable understanding of how to use digital opportunity as a lens when making program decisions and prioritizing investments	2024 and thereafter; activity indirectly supports success of measurable objectives goals related to community resources in Section 2.3.2.4	Resources enable community-based organizations and other collaborating partners to effectively ensure programs address needs of all covered populations
Convene nonprofit and philanthropy partners	Use ADECA's convening ability and outreach capabilities to encourage collaboration and communications among organizations that operate digital opportunity programs and philanthropic funders	2024 and thereafter, evaluated biennially against community resources measurable objectives goals in Section 2.3.2.4	Developing and strengthening partnerships with funders helps ensure sustainability in efforts to address barriers faced by all covered populations for broadband affordability, device access, and digital skills development
Collect, analyze, and publish relevant data to demonstrate changes in digital opportunity metrics and outcomes as part of updates to the Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan	Publish relevant data analytics related to barriers and obstacles to covered populations and review, evaluate, and update Plan goals in alignment with state priorities, measurable objectives, KPIs, and implementation activities as needed to guide nonprofits, ISPs, and philanthropy regarding potential impactful investments	2024 and thereafter, including as part of Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan updates in 2029; activity indirectly supports success of measurable objectives goals related to community resources in Section 2.3.2.4	Accurate data on covered populations will inform sound goal-setting, prioritization, and activities for ADECA in its digital opportunity efforts and will benefit partner organizations directly serving all covered populations

5.2 Timeline

This timeline of potential implementation activities is an estimate, contingent on the availability of state and federal government resources, and subject to change depending on conditions that could extend or escalate the state's ability to develop and sustain these initiatives.

Activities aligned with strategies underway in 2023:

- Increasing access to residential broadband, enable gigabit services at anchor institutions
- Increasing ACP enrollment and low-cost service offerings
- Enabling digital skills development
- Providing informational resources and expert guidance
- Expanding opportunities to learn online safety & privacy
- Expanding accessibility of information online

Activities aligned with strategies that begin in 2024:

- Developing data and informational resources for digital opportunity
- Building collaboration among state, local and nonprofit entities
- Supporting and developing local capacity
- Sustaining and growing the state's efforts in digital opportunity

Continuation of activities and evaluation of progress against measurable objectives and state outcomes for covered populations

Update Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan

Continuation of digital opportunity efforts per availability of funding

Figure 9: Digital opportunity implementation timeline

Strategy	Key activities	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Increase access to residential broadband infrastructure	Execute BEAD Program																																
	Execute Alabama Capital Projects Fund Program																																
	Execute Alabama Anchor Insitution/Middle-Mile Program																																
	Execute Alabama Statewide Middle-Mile Network Grant Program																																
	Execute Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund	Ongoing																															
Enable gigabit services at Anchor Institutions	Execute Alabama Anchor Insitution/Middle-Mile Program																																
Increase ACP enrollment among eligible households	Develop and distribute educational materials	Ongoing																															
Increase low-cost service offerings	Require grantee low-cost offerings																																
	Encourage ISP low-cost offerings	Ongoing																															
Expand access to computing devices with tech support	Provide device and technical support program information																																
	Support ACP enrollment	Ongoing																															
Develop data and informational resources to enable application of a digital opportunity lens to infrastructure and program decisions	Provide map information																																
	Provide asset information																																
	Develop and distribute education and informational resources																																
Enable digital skills development through training courses	Enable partnerships																																
	Provide informational resources and guidance																																
	Support digital workforce development																																
Expand opportunity to learn online safety and privacy	Enable partnerships																																
	Provide informational resources and guidance																																
Expand accessibility of information	Develop and distribute accessibility guidance																																
Build collaboration among state, local, and nonprofit entities	Convene partners																																
	Enable funders to connect with program experts																																
Support and develop local capacity	Plan for local and/or regional Digital Opportunity Fellows																																
	Convene funders																																
	Facilitate access to grant writing resources																																
Sustain and grow the state's efforts in digital opportunity	Infuse broadband and digital opportunity considerations into related areas																																
	Convene nonprofit and philanthropy partners																																
	Collect, analyze, and publish relevant data to demonstrate changes in metrics and outcomes as part of updates to the Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan																																

6. Conclusion

The State of Alabama has long identified broadband internet as the infrastructure of our era. Alabama recognizes that **the internet is a platform for economic and community development in the 21st century** just as electricity and phone service were in the 20th century.

In light of this recognition—and the state's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the digital world accrue to all Alabamians—Governor Ivey and the Alabama legislature have made considerable investments in broadband and digital opportunity for nearly a decade, including not only broadband infrastructure programs but also affordability initiatives such as ABC for Students and ACP support efforts.

The state's commitment arises from Alabama's recognition of the criticality of digital opportunity to economic opportunity in the 21st century. Meaningful access to the internet is an essential ingredient for thriving in the economy of our era and of the future. Digital opportunity enables economic opportunity and activity for Alabamians.

To meet the needs of our 21st century economy, **the State of Alabama envisions a connected, interconnected future**. To enable this interconnected future, Alabama's digital opportunity goals are developed from and expand upon key goals for achieving broadband connectivity stated in the Alabama Connectivity Plan adopted by the ADEA in December 2021.

The strategies, goals, and objectives outlined in this Plan focus on driving broadband deployment and access through the expansion of middle-mile and last-mile networks; addressing the needs of Alabamians in rural areas in the state; and addressing obstacles to broadband adoption throughout the state for all Alabamians. In implementing the Plan, ADECA will continue to emphasize the needs of covered populations and additional data-gathering for currently unserved groups (e.g., incarcerated individuals).

The state will achieve its vision of digital opportunity through the coordinated efforts of key constituencies and partners across Alabama—and through ongoing engagement and collaboration with partners working together toward shared goals.

Appendix A: Asset inventory data – digital opportunity assets

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

Table 34: Additional digital opportunity assets by covered population(s)

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)	Offers online classes through Senior Planet.[325]	X							
Alabama Goodwill Industries	Offers Northstar digital skills services: Assessments, Assessment certificates, Computer classes, Northstar Online Learning accounts for learning and practice.[326]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)	Represents more than 38,000 American Indian families who live in the state. Offers health and scholarship programs.[327]						X		
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)	501(c)3 non-profit organization created to develop, design, and implement a unified								X

[325] "Senior Planet from AARP," Senior Planet, https://seniorplanet.org/.
[326] Alabama Goodwill Industries, https://www.alabamagoodwill.org/; "Alabama Goodwill Industries," Northstar Digital Literacy, https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/locations/alabama-goodwill-industries-.
[327] "Overview / Staff," AIAC, https://aiac.alabama.gov/overview.aspx.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	approach for improving outcomes of children from birth to age five in Alabama.[328]								
Alabama State Department of Education	K-12 Course of Study curriculum for digital skills and computer science.[329]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alabama State Department of Labor	Offers Northstar training, Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act services, and cybersecurity training for employees; and free internet for public use.	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Ardmore Telephone Company	Offers digital skills training consisting of short videos, less than 3 minutes each, powered by Microsoft Digital Literacy.[330]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Area Agency on Aging – Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC), Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[331]	X							

[328] "About the Alabama Partnership for Children," APC, https://alabamapartnershipforchildren.org/about/.
[329] Ed Richardson, Interim State Superintendent of Education, "Alabama Course of Study: Digital Literacy and Computer Science," Alabama State Department of Education, May 14, 2019, https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Final-2018-Digital-Literacy-and-Computer-Science-COS-5-14-19.pdf.
[330] "Digital Literacy Training," Ardmore Telephone Company, https://ardmore.net/digital-literacy-training/.
[331] "Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC), Area Agency on Aging (AAA) (ATRC Aging)," ATRC Aging, https://www.atrcaging.com/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Area Agency on Aging – Central Alabama Aging Consortium	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[332]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[333]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – Lee-Russell Council of Governments	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[334]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[335]	X							

[332] Central Alabama Aging Consortium, https://centralalabamaaging.org/.
[333] "Area Agency on Aging of East Alabama," EARPDC, https://www.eastalabamaaging.org/.
[334] "Lee-Russell Council of Governments," https://business.opelikachamber.com/list/member/lee-russell-council-of-governments-1342.
[335] "About Us," M4A, https://m4a.org/about-us/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Area Agency on Aging – North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG)	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[336]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – North West Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG)	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[337]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – South Alabama Regional Planning Commission	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers; assists aging individuals in obtaining benefits.[338]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – South Central Alabama Development	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[339]	X							

[336] "Area Agency on Aging (AAA)," NARCOG, https://www.narcog.org/serving-people/area-agency-on-aging.
[337] "Department of Aging Services," NACOLG, https://www.nacolg.org/department-of-aging-services.
[338] "Area Agency on Aging," South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, https://agingsouthalabama.org/.
[339] "About the Area Agency on Aging," SCADC, https://scadc.net/aging/about-scadc/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Commission (SCADC)									
Area Agency on Aging – Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging (SARCOA)	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[340]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – United Way of Jefferson County	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[341]	X							
Area Agency on Aging – West Alabama Regional Commission	Provides computer skills classes at senior centers.[342]	X							
Barbour County Adult Education	Provides computer skills courses.[343]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Blackbelt and Central Alabama Housing (BBCAH)	Helps low-income families, veterans, and aging individuals in Wilcox County obtain housing, food, and health services; interested in building or obtaining housing for low-income families,	X		X				X	X

[340] "Who We Are," SARCOA, https://sarcoa.org/who-we-are/.
[341] United Way Area Agency on Aging of Jefferson County, https://www.uwaaa.org/.
[342] "Senior Activity Centers," Area Agency on Aging of West Alabama, https://www.westalabamaaging.org/senior-activity-centers.
[343] "Barbour County Adult Education," https://barbouradulted.weebly.com/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	veterans, and aging individuals in Wilcox County.[344]								
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)	Partnership between the Elmore Bolling Initiative and the South Central Alabama Broadband Cooperative District's GetWiredAlabama's initiative to advance digital equity and inclusion for the South-Central Alabama Black Belt region. Working to develop computing centers in each county to support development of digital skills.[345]	X				X	X	X	X
C.H.O.I.C.E. (Choosing to Help Others in Our Community Excel)	Digital navigator program, hotspot program, and broadband advocacy in Uniontown and vicinity.[346]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Calhoun County Schools	After-hour access to school network. Promotes and helps students find affordable internet.				X	X	X	X	X
Central Alabama Community College Adult Education Program	Northstar digital skills services: Assessments, Assessment certificates, Computer classes,	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

[344] BBCAH, https://www.bcah99.com/.
[345] "The Elmore Bolling Initiative Receives Planning Grant," The Elmore Bolling Initiative, https://bollinginitiative.org/bdeic.
[346] C.H.O.I.C.E., https://choiceuniontown.org/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	Northstar Online Learning accounts for learning and practice.[347]								
Coastal Alabama Community College – Baldwin County Adult Education	Northstar digital skills services: Assessments, Assessment certificates, Computer classes, Northstar Online Learning accounts for learning and practice.[348]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Coastal Alabama Community College – Escambia County Adult Education	Northstar digital skills services: Assessments, Assessment certificates, Computer classes, Northstar Online Learning accounts for learning and practice.[349]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Comcast Project UP	Partners with the Boys & Girls Club of West Alabama, Village of Promise, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Shoals as part of Project UP (includes providing Wi-Fi and digital skills training at partner locations).				X	X	X	X	X
Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama	GROW program provides, affordable housing, utility assistance, and family services and workforce development in Blount, Cherokee,	X			X	X	X	X	X

[347] "Adult Education," Central Alabama Community College, https://www.cacc.edu/academics/adult-education/; "Central Alabama Community College Adult Education Program," Northstar Digital Literacy, https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/locations/central-alabama-community-college-adult-education-program.
[348] "Adult Education," Coastal Alabama Community College, https://www.coastalalabama.edu/academics/adult-education/; "Coastal Alabama Community College – Baldwin County Adult Education," Northstar Digital Literacy, https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/locations/baldwin-county.
[349] "Adult Education," Coastal Alabama Community College, https://www.coastalalabama.edu/academics/adult-education/; "Coastal Alabama Community College – Escambia County Adult Education," Northstar Digital Literacy, https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/locations/escambia-county.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	DeKalb, Jackson, Marshall, St. Clair, and Jefferson Counties.								
Community Action Agency of Talladega, Clay, Randolph, Calhoun, and Cleburne Counties (TCRCC)	Support to help residents enroll in ACP and receive a free tablet in partnership with SWA Connect.	X			X	X	X	X	X
Community Foundation of Huntsville	Provides grants to community-based organizations, including digital opportunity programs in partnership with Google Fiber.[350]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Connect99	City of Birmingham awareness campaign to help people throughout all 99 neighborhoods of the city get ACP benefits.	X		X	X	X	X		X
Dallas County Schools	Digital skills programs for parents and aging individuals.	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Dovetail Landing	Various programs provide support, job training, and other services to veterans transitioning to peacetime with issues such as PTSD.			X					
Easterseals Alabama	National nonprofit provider of services for individuals with autism, developmental disabilities, physical and mental disabilities, and other special needs. Provides basic education and technology skills courses.	X			X	X			

[350] Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville, https://givehsv.org/about-us/ (Accessed October 23, 2023.)

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Family Guidance Center – Lowndes-Hayneville	No-cost computer skills classes from basic skills to the use of more intensive software; classes and open computer labs allow for both group instruction and self-paced learning.	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Family Guidance Center – Montgomery	No-cost computer skills classes from basic skills to the use of more intensive software; classes and open computer labs allow for both group instruction and self-paced learning.	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater and Academy	Offering a STEAM learning lab and technical theater subjects such as lighting and sound engineering.[351]								X
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative	Partnered with a local community college to host a "Protecting your Identity" workshop; partnered with the DeKalb E-Center and the Jackson County Impact Learning Center in the Rural LISC Digital Navigators Program. Hosted community streaming television workshops.							X	
First Stop	Offering a computer lab and digital skills classes to people experiencing homelessness in Huntsville.[352]								X
Florence-Lauderdale Public Library	Offers public computer access, computer classes, hotspots for checkout, and digital resources.	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

[351] Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater and Academy, https://www.fantasyplayhouse.org/. An awardee of the Google Digital Inclusion Fund in Huntsville.
[352] First Stop, https://firststop.org/. An awardee of the Google Digital Inclusion Fund in Huntsville.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners (GOAL)	Free digital skills classes in the Decatur, Huntsville, and Athens areas. Entry-level computer class designed to provide computer skills and training to compete in the job market.[353]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Goodwill Gulf Coast	Digital skills classes with beginner, upskill, and certification level courses available.[354]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Google Digital Inclusion Fund in Huntsville	Awarding funds to local digital opportunity groups.[355]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Housing Authority of Greene County	Afterschool and summer enrichment programs.						X	X	X
Huntsville Community Drumline	Teaching digital skills through music.[356]	X			X	X	X	X	X
Huntsville Learning Center	A volunteer-based organization offering a STEAM resource lab for children.[357]								X
Huntsville Madison County Library (HMCPL)	Has two workforce development centers, the Technology Training Center (TTC) at the Downtown Huntsville Library and the	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

[353] "Digital Literacy," GOAL, https://goalalabama.org/programs/digital-literacy/.
[354] "Digital Skills Classes," Goodwill Gulf Coast, https://www.gesgc.org/digitalskills/.
[355] Ann Kvach, Program Officer, Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville, "Guest Blog: Investing in digital inclusion in Huntsville," Google Blog, March 21, 2023, https://fiber.google.com/blog/2023/03/guest-blog-investing-in-digital.html.
[356] Huntsville Community Drumline, https://hcdrumline.org/. An awardee of the Google Digital Inclusion Fund in Huntsville.
[357] Huntsville Learning Center, https://www.hiclc.org/. An awardee of the Google Digital Inclusion Fund in Huntsville.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	Workforce Development Lab at the North Huntsville Library. HMCPL is committed to increasing digital skills in its community through one-on-one assistance and computer training classes and workshops.[358]								
J. F. Ingram State Technical College	Provides comprehensive education services to incarcerated adults to reduce recidivism and return responsible citizens to society.		X						
Lake Martin Area United Way	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[359]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Lauderdale County Board of Education	Common Sense Media Digital Citizenship supports digital skills and cybersecurity for children and youth 6-18.	X			X	X	X	X	X
Lowndes County Schools	Career Technical School provides devices and technical support, online accessibility, and workforce development training.			X	X	X	X	X	X
Luverne Public Library	Provides digital navigator classes.[360]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

[358] "Workforce Development and Computer Classes," HMCPL, https://www.hmcpl.org/workforce.
[359] Lake Martin Area United Way, https://www.unitedwaylakemartin.org/.
[360] Luverne Public Library, http://www.luvernepubliclibrary.com/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Mediacom	Mediacom offers to hold ACP workshops on community request. Offers ACP information in English, French, Spanish, and Farsi.[361]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG)	Offers digital skills classes at senior centers[362] and other locations to teach people how to access the internet on their phone, navigate the internet, reboot their modem, and other simple digital skills; can offer a digital skills program for elderly with partner providing a 10 percent match.	X						X	
Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC)	Northstar digital skills services: Assessments, Assessment certificates, Computer classes, Northstar Online Learning accounts for learning and practice.[363] Provides Ready to Work class to inmates.[364]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
The Pathfinder	Sober living facility offering career education and digital skills.[365]				X				

[361] "Affordable Connectivity Program," Mediacom, https://mediacomcable.com/acp/.
[362] "Area Agency on Aging (AAA)," NARCOG, https://www.narcog.org/serving-people/area-agency-on-aging.
[363] NACC, https://www.nacc.edu/; "Northeast Alabama Community College," Northstar Digital Literacy, https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/locations/northeast-alabama-community-college.
[364] "Northeast Alabama Community College Adult Education program partners with DeKalb County Sheriff's Office to offer Ready to Work class to inmates, DeKalb County Sheriff's Office, https://www.dekalbcountysheriff.org/press_view.php?id=613#:~:text=The%20DeKalb%20County%20Sheriff's%20office,Welden%20jumped%20on%20the%20idea.
[365] The Pathfinder, https://thepathfinderhsv.com/. An awardee of the Google Digital Inclusion Fund in Huntsville.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Prichard Housing Authority	Provides digital device programs and community and citizen education in digital connectivity.								X
Reid State – Central Alabama Community College – Monroeville	Northstar digital skills services: Assessments, Assessment certificates, Computer classes, Northstar Online Learning accounts for learning and practice.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Senior Center in Clio	Offers digital skills classes.	X						X	
Springville Senior Center	Develops and distributes accessible online content directed at populations with specific needs, such as aging individuals, low-income residents, those with low literacy, and those whose first language is not English.	X				X		X	X
Sumter County Opportunity	Head Start program covering transportation, nutrition, education, health, and more.[366]							X	X
Sylacauga Housing Authority	Looking into ways to provide low-cost broadband access to residents.							X	X
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)	TVA, which operates in northern counties in the state, has identified broadband and digital skills as a focus area for the organization through its "Connected Communities"							X	

[366] "Services," Sumter County Opportunity, Inc., http://sumtercountyopportunity.org/services.html; "Sumter County Opportunities Inc.," Mightycause, https://www.mightycause.com/organization/Sumter-County-Opportunity.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	initiative.[367] In 2022, TVA released a "Broadband Solutions Implementation Guide"[368] to support local governments and power companies within its service area in implementing connected community solutions and a "Broadband Funding Guide" that provides an overview of available state and federal funding.[369]								
The Gulf Coast Family Center	Strengthens families and prevents child abuse and neglect by providing free and low-cost education, training and support to parents and caregivers in Southwest Alabama Provides A-RESET program services enabling Food Stamp recipients to become more self-sufficient through participation in job search, training, education, and work experience activities.[370]					X	X	X	X
Troy University	Online education program offers adult education certificates.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

[367] "Connected Communities," TVA, https://www.tva.com/energy/technology-innovation/connected-communities.
[368] "Broadband Solutions Implementation Guide," TVA, https://www.tva.com/energy/technology-innovation/connected-communities/broadband-solutions-implementation-guide.
[369] "Broadband Funding Guide," TVA, https://tva-azr-eastus-cdn-ep-tvawcm-prd.azureedge.net/cdn-tvawcma/docs/default-source/energy/technology-innovation/connected-communities/broadband-funding-guide-final85ca3ac7-96cb-42d4-9be0-24aeb0e5401b.pdf?sfvrsn=9df58a9_5.
[370] "Strengthening Families Responsible Parenting Program," The Gulf Coast Family Center, https://familycentermobile.org/positive-parenting-classes/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
Tuscaloosa One Place (TOP)	Workforce development and digital skills. Utilizing TANF and A-RESET[371] funds, TOP provides in-house client services to assist with work readiness, resume building, supervised job search, and life skills. Its Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative promotes changes to policies, practices, and programs to reduce reliance on secure confinement, improve public safety, reduce racial disparities, save taxpayer dollars, and stimulate overall juvenile justice reforms.[372]		X			X			X
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)	Dedicated to respecting the rights of members and encouraging them to have an active role in choosing the types of activities they want to participate in while at the UCPWA Center.[373] United Cerebral Palsy helps individuals obtain assistive technology through its affiliate organizations.				X				
United Way of Central Alabama (UWCA)	Programs include Area Agency on Aging, financial stability, early childhood learning, veteran services, and access to community services.[374]	X		X	X	X	X		X

[371] A-RESET, https://www.unitedwaysofalabama.org/a-reset/.
[372] "Our Programs," TOP, https://www.tuscaloosaoneplace.org/what-we-do.
[373] "Programs," UCPWA, https://ucpwa.org/programs/.
[374] "Our Programs," UWCA, https://www.uwca.org/about/programs/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
United Way of Cullman County	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[375]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way of East Central Alabama	Northstar digital skills services: Assessments, Assessment certificates, Computer classes, Northstar Online Learning accounts for learning and practice; programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, digital skills, and access to essential services.[376]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way of Etowah County	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[377]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way of Lee County	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[378]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way of Marshall County	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[379]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

[375] "What We Do," United Way of Cullman County, https://www.uwaycc.org/what-we-do.
[376] United Way of East Central Alabama, https://www.uweca.org/; "United Way of East Central Alabama," Northstar Digital Literacy, https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/locations/united-way-of-east-central-alabama.
[377] "Directory of Agencies," United Way of Etowah County, https://www.uwoec.org/directory-agencies.
[378] "Our Agencies," United Way of Lee County, https://www.unitedwayofleecounty.com/our-agencies.
[379] "Our Partners," United Way of Marshall County, https://www.unitedwaymarshall.org/Our-Partners.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
United Way of Northwest Alabama	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, adult literacy, and access to essential services.[380]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way of Southwest Alabama	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[381]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way of West Alabama	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[382]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
United Way – Wiregrass	Programs include health, education, youth development, financial stability, and access to essential services.[383]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
University of Alabama – Office of Teaching Innovation and Digital Education	Various flexible and innovative education, technical assistance, and applied research programs.[384]	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
University of Alabama – Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)	Computer classes for aging individuals; residents of select retirement facilities and	X							

[380] "Community Partners and Programs," United Way of Northwest Alabama, https://www.uwnwal.org/community-partners-and-programs.
[381] "Partner Agencies," United Way of Southwest Alabama, https://uwswa.org/our-partners/partner-agencies/.
[382] "Our Partner Agencies," United Way of West Alabama, https://uwwa.org/our-partners/partner-agencies.
[383] "Our Partnering Agencies," Wiregrass United Way, https://www.wuw.org/our-partnering-agencies.
[384] "Teaching Innovation and Digital Education," The University of Alabama, https://tide.ua.edu/.

Asset name	Description	Aging	Incarcerated	Veterans	Disabilities	Language barrier	Racial/ethnic minority	Rural	Low-income
	housing complexes can sign up through the facility for computer and phone tutoring.[385]								
ZHBC Community Development	Basic computer skills class for aging individuals.	X							

[385] OLLI, The University of Alabama, https://olli.ua.edu/.

Appendix B: Organizations with which ADECA collaborated in developing this Plan

The following tables list the partners and others who provided input and insights for each county profile through a range of engagement mechanisms, including in-person meetings, follow-up calls, and completion of ADECA's broadband questionnaires.

Autauga County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama County Commission Association – Autauga County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Central Alabama Aging Consortium
Autauga County Board of Education
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Central Alabama Electric Coop dba Central Access
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
NTIA
United Ways of Alabama
Uniti Fiber
VOICES for Alabama's Children
ZHBC Community Development

Baldwin County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
AT&T
Baldwin County
Baldwin County Library Cooperative
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Brightspeed
City of Bay Minette
City of Daphne
City of Fairhope
City of Robertsdale
Coastal Alabama Community College – Baldwin County Adult Education
Comcast
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Agency of South Alabama (CAAOFSA)
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
C-Spire
Gulf Coast Rental
HighStream Fiber
Mediacom
Point Broadband
Riviera Utilities
Sain Associates
South Alabama Regional Planning Commission – Baldwin County
Town of Summerdale
United Ways of Alabama

Barbour County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)

Organization name
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging (SARCOA)
Barbour County Adult Education
Barbour County Commission
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Clayton
City of Eufaula
Comcast Project UP
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Eufaula City Council
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Pea River Electric Cooperative
Senior Center in Clio
Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC)
Southeast Alabama Works! (Region 6)
United Way Wiregrass
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Bibb County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama House of Representatives
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities
Alabama Lightwave
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Bibb County
Bibb County Chamber Of Commerce
Bibb County Commission
Bibb County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)
Bibb County Extension Office
Bibb County Sav-A-Life
Bibb County Sheriff's Department

Organization name
Bibb County Superintendent
Bibb County Tax Assessor
Bibb County Trade School
Bibb Medical Center
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Brent Police Department
Brent Utilities
Brent Volunteer Fire Department
Brent-Centreville Public Library
Brierfield Volunteer Fire Department
Cahaba Medical Care Foundation
Cedar Grove Volunteer Fire Department
Centreville Police Department
Centreville Press
Centreville Volunteer Fire Department
City of Brent
City of Centreville
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama
E911 Director
Eoline Volunteer Fire Department
Greenpond Volunteer Fire Department
Meridiam
Randolph Volunteer Fire Department
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of West Alabama
United Ways of Alabama
West Blocton Police Department
West Blocton Volunteer Fire Department
Woodstock Library

Blount County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)

Organization name
Alabama State Department of Education
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Blount County Commission
Blount County Economic Development Council (BCEDC)
Blount County Schools
Charter (Spectrum)
Comcast
Comcast Project UP
Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama (CAANEAL)
Cullman Electric Cooperative
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
GoNetspeed
Literacy Council of Central Alabama
Oneonta Public Library
Town of Cleveland
Town of Hayden
United Way of Central Alabama (UWCA)
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Windstream

Bullock County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama County Commission Association – Bullock County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC)
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)

Organization name
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Bullock County Department of Human Resources
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Town of Midway
Union Springs Telephone Company
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Butler County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama County Commission Association – Butler County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC)
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Butler County
Butler County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)
Camellia Communications / Hayneville Telephone Company
City of Greenville
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Hayneville Telephone Company
Southeast Alabama Works! (Region 6)
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Calhoun County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama County Commission Association – Calhoun County
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Calhoun County, Ohatchee
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Cable ONE (Sparklight)
Calhoun County
Calhoun County Commission
Calhoun County Department of Human Resources
Calhoun County Schools
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Anniston
City of Jacksonville
Community Action Association of Alabama TCRCC
Coosa Valley Electric Cooperative
East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Gadsden State Community College (an HBCU)
Jacksonville Public Library
Micaville Technical Services
Municipal Technology Services
Sain Associates
United Way of East Central Alabama
Utility Design Partners
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Chambers County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama County Commission Association – Chambers County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)

Organization name
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Chambers County, Five Points
Alabama League of Municipalities – Chambers County, Valley
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Auburn Housing Authority – Lee County
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Challenge Manufacturing
Chambers County
Chambers County Development Authority (CCDA)
Circle of Care Center for Families
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Fredonia
JBR Road
Point Broadband
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Cherokee County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama County Commission Association
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Cherokee County, Centre
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Centre Lions Club
Charter (Spectrum)
Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
Cherokee County Commission
Cherokee County Health Department
Cherokee County Public Library
Cherokee County School District
Comcast
Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama

Organization name
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
Internet Public Trust
J.F. Drake State and Community and Technical College
TDS Telecom
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Warren Ranch
Weiss Internet (Fort Code)

Chilton County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASA)
Area Agency on Aging – Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Blackbelt & Central Alabama Housing
Central Alabama Electric Coop dba Central Access
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Clanton
City of Thorsby
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
United Way of Central Alabama (UWCA)
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Choctaw County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC)
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Choctaw Board of Education
Choctaw County Sheriff's Office
City of Butler
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. – Digital Navigators
County of Choctaw
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Georgia-Pacific
Millry Telephone Company
Pine Belt Communications
TDS Telecom
Town of Lisman
Town of Pennington
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of Southwest Alabama
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Clarke County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)

Organization name
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC)
AT&T
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Jackson
Clarke County Board of Education
Clarke County Commission
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Mediacom
TDS Telecom
Thomasville Public Library
Town of Grove Hill
United Way of Southwest Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
White Smith Memorial Library

Clay County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama County Commission Association – Clay County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Ashland City Council
Ashland Housing Authority
Ashland Housing Authority – Clay County
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)

Organization name
City of Ashland
Clay County Board of Education
Clay County Commission
Clay County Department of Human Resources
Clay County Economic Development Council
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama TCRCC
Coosa Valley Electric Cooperative
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Cleburne County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama County Commission Association – Cleburne County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Heflin
City of Ranburne
Cleburne County Department of Human Resources
Community Action Association of Alabama TCRCC
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Lucile L. Morgan Public Library
United Way of East Central Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Coffee County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging (SARCOA)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Enterprise
Coffee County Commission
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Covington Electric Cooperative
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe
Troy Cablevision
United Way Wiregrass
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Colbert County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama House of Representatives
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)

Organization name
Alabama League of Municipalities – Colbert County, Sheffield
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
Colbert County Commission
Colbert County Extension Service
Comcast
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Cyber Broadband
Easter Seals Alabama
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Greater Shoals Broadband Cooperative District
Helen Keller Public Library
Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments – Colbert County
Northwest Shoals Community College
NTIA
Office of U.S. Congressman Robert Aderholt
Sheffield Utilities
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
United Way of Northwest Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Conecuh County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC)
AT&T

Organization name
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Evergreen
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Conecuh County
Conecuh County Economic Development
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
e-footprints
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Evergreen Chamber of Commerce
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Mediacom
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Coosa County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Central Alabama Electric Coop dba Central Access
Charter (Spectrum)
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Coosa County
Coosa County Department of Human Resources
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Lake Martin Area United Way
NTIA

Organization name
VOICES for Alabama's Children
ZHBC Community Development

Covington County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Buzz Broadband (Covington Electric Cooperative)
City of Andalusia
City of Florala
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
Covington County Commission
Covington Electric Cooperative
C-Spire
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Housing Authority City of Opp
Mediacom
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Crenshaw County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System

Organization name
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC)
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Buzz Broadband (Covington Electric Cooperative)
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
Crenshaw County Commission
Crenshaw County Department of Human Resources
Crenshaw County Economic & Industrial Development
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Helicon Baptist Church
Luverne City Council
Luverne Public Library
Mon-Cre Telephone Co-op Inc
Town of Brantley
Troy Cablevision
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Cullman County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Cullman County, Berlin
Alabama League of Municipalities – Cullman County, Colony
Alabama League of Municipalities – Cullman County, Dodge City
Alabama League of Municipalities – Cullman County, Good Hope
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG)
AT&T

Organization name
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Cullman
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Cullman Electric Cooperative
Cullman Tribune
Cyber Broadband
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
GoNetspeed
North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG)
Omnipoint Digital Literacy Training
Sprout Fiber / Cullman Electric Cooperative
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
United Way of Cullman County
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Dale County

Organization name
100 Black Men Greater Montgomery Area Inc
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Daleville
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
C-Spire
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
GoNetspeed
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Mary Berry Brown Memorial Library
Newton City Council
Ozark City Council
Ozark Dale County Library
Ozark Housing Community
Pea River Electric Cooperative
Town of Grimes

Organization name
Town of Pinckard
United Way Wiregrass
VOICES for Alabama's Children
WOW!

Dallas County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission – Dallas County
Area Agency on Aging – Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC)
AT&T
Blackbelt and Central Alabama Housing (BBCAH)
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Camellia Communications / Hayneville Telephone Company
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. – Digital Navigators
Dallas County Schools
District Broadband
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
GetWiredAlabama
Omnipoint Digital Literacy Training
Selma University
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Waggoner Engineering
Wallace Community College Selma

DeKalb County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities

Organization name
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities
Alabama League of Municipalities – DeKalb County, Hammondville
Alabama League of Municipalities – DeKalb County, Henagar
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama (CAANEAL)
DeKalb County Commission
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
Fort Payne Chamber of Commerce
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Northeast Alabama Community College (NACC)
Thrive Regional Broadband Alliance
Thrive Regional Partnership
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Elmore County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama County Commission Association – Elmore County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Elmore County, Eclectic

Organization name
Alabama League of Municipalities – Elmore County, Millbrook
Alabama League of Municipalities – Elmore County, Wetumpka
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Central Alabama Aging Consortium
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Elmore County Economic Development Authority
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
NTIA
Omnipoint Digital Literacy Training
United Ways of Alabama
Uniti Fiber
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Windstream

Escambia County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – South Alabama Regional Planning Commission
AT&T
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Brewton Chamber of Commerce
Brewton Housing Authority
City of Atmore
City of Brewton
City of Flomaton
Coastal Alabama Community College – Escambia County Adult Education
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
D.W. McMillan Memorial Hospital
Escambia Career Readiness Center
Escambia County Board of Education
Escambia County Commission
Escambia County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

Organization name
Escambia County Schools
GetWiredAlabama
Mediacom
Provalus
Tucson Atlantic Consulting
United Ways of Alabama
Uniti Fiber
West Escambia Utilities

Etowah County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Etowah County, Gadsden
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Big Canoe Volunteer Fire Department
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Black Creek Fire and Rescue
Charter (Spectrum)
Comcast
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Etico, Inc.
Etowah County Commission
Etowah County Schools
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
Gadsden City Schools
Gadsden-Etowah Industrial Development Authority
GoNetspeed
Greater Gadsden Housing Authority
Magneco/Metrel
Union 3 Baptist Church
United Way of Etowah County
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Fayette County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama House of Representatives
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama ONE
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
AT&T
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
C3 of Northwest Alabama (Northwest Alabama EDA)
City of Fayette
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. – Digital Navigators
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Fayette County
Fayette Housing Authority – Fayette County
Tombigbee Electric Cooperative/Freedom Fiber
Town of Berry
Town of Glen Allen
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of West Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Franklin County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Red Bay
Communications Workers of America

Organization name
Cyber Broadband
Easter Seals Alabama
Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
Franklin County Commission
Franklin County Department of Human Resources
Franklin County Economic Development Authority
Franklin County Public Schools
Franklin County Times
Franklin County Water Service Authority
Greater Shoals Broadband Cooperative District
Northwest Shoals Community College
Phil Campbell Housing Authority
Russellville Housing Authority
Sunshine Mills
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
Tombigbee Electric Cooperative/Freedom Fiber
Town of Phil Campbell
Town of Vina
United Way of Northwest Alabama
Valley State Bank
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Wood Thompson Insurance Service

Geneva County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging (SARCOA)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Geneva
City of Hartford
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)

Organization name
Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Geneva Office
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Geneva County
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Rapid Wireless
South East Wireless
Southeast Alabama Community Action Partnership (SEACAP)
United Way Wiregrass
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Greene County

Organization name
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Civil Rights Freedom Museum, Inc of SCLC
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama Public Service Commission
AT&T
Calix
City of Eutaw
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama
Eagle Internet Services
Eutaw Area Chamber of Commerce
Eutaw Housing Authority
Greene Co. Independent
Greene County Commission
Greene County Highway Dept.
Greene County Housing Authority
Greene County Industrial Development Authority
Greene County School Board
Greene Track Inc.
Meridiam
SideLinc Properties
Starlite Consulting
Town of Boligee
United Way of West Alabama
Victory Gardens and Cafe
VOICES for Alabama's Children
West Alabama Regional Commission
WMA Group

Hale County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – West Alabama Regional Commission
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Greensboro
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. – Digital Navigators
EF Broadband
Greensboro City Council
Hale County Board of Education
Hale County Chamber of Commerce
Hale County Commission
Hale County School District
Moundville City Council
Moundville Telephone Company, Inc
The Elmore Bolling Initiative
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of West Alabama
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
West Alabama Regional Commission – Greene County

Henry County

Organization name
AARP
Abbeville Memorial Library
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama House of Representatives
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)

Organization name
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Abbeville
City of Headland
Comcast Project UP
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Congressman Barry Moore
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Henry County
Henry County Board of Education
Henry County Economic Development Authority
Henry County Sheriff
Henry County, Engineering
Pea River Electric Cooperative
United Way Wiregrass
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Houston County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging (SARCOA)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Dothan
Town of Rehobeth
Comcast Project UP
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)

Organization name
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Houston County Board of Education
Houston County Commission
Southeast Alabama Community Action Partnership (SEACAP)
Taylor City Council
Troy Cablevision
United Way Wiregrass
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
WOW!

Jackson County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama County Commission Association
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Pickens County, Palmetto
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama (CAANEAL)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
Jackson County Commission
Jackson County Economic Development Authority
Jackson County Legislative Office
Jackson County Public Transit
Jackson County Sanitation Department
Jefferson County Council on Aging
Scottsboro Electric Power Board
Scottsboro Public Library
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
Thrive Regional Broadband Alliance
Thrive Regional Partnership
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Jefferson County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – United Way of Jefferson County
Ascension St. Vincent's
Birmingham City Council
Birmingham Public Library
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Cancer Awareness Network
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
City of Bessemer
City of Birmingham
City of Birmingham's Connect 99 program
City of Center Point
City of Fairfield
City of Irondale
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Family Guidance Center (FGC) – Birmingham
Fairfield City Council
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Housing Authority of the Birmingham District
Jefferson County Commission
Lit Communities
North Shelby Library
O'Neal Library
Tarrant City Council
United Ways of Alabama
Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Lamar County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama County Commission Association

Organization name
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama House of Representatives – Lamar County
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – West Alabama Regional Commission Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
City of Sulligent
City of Vernon
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. – Digital Navigators
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Lamar County
Lamar County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)
Lamar County Sheriff's Office
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of West Alabama
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Lauderdale County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Florence
Comcast
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Easter Seals Alabama
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Florence Electricity Department
Florence-Lauderdale Public Library
Greater Shoals Broadband Cooperative District

Organization name
Lauderdale County Board of Education
Lauderdale County Commission
Lauderdale County Department of Human Resources
Lauderdale County School System
Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments – Lauderdale County
NTIA
Office of U.S. Congressman Dale Strong
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
United Way of Northwest Alabama
University of North Alabama
University of North Alabama Workforce Center
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Lawrence County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA)
Cyber Broadband
Easter Seals Alabama
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
FlashFiber
Lawrence County Department of Human Resources
North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG)
Office of U.S. Congressman Robert Aderholt
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
Town of Courtland
United Way of Northwest Alabama
University of North Alabama Workforce Center

Organization name
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Lee County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Lee-Russell Council of Governments
Auburn Housing Authority – Lee County
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Childcare Resource Center
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
CTV BEAM (RM Greene)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Lee County
Lee County Department of Human Resources
Lee-Russell Council of Governments – Lee County
Point Broadband
United Way of Lee County
VOICES for Alabama's Children
WOW!

Limestone County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors

Organization name
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Limestone County, Lester
Alabama League of Municipalities – Limestone County, Mooresville
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
AT&T
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Bridgeforth Farms
Charter (Spectrum)
Comcast Project UP
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Partnership of Huntsville/Madison & Limestone
Community Partnership Huntsville/Madison and Limestone Counties
Greater Opportunities through Adult Learning (GOAL)
Greater Shoals Broadband Cooperative District
JBS Solutions
Limestone County Economic Development Authority
Limestone County Commission
Limestone Department Human Resources
Limestone NAACP
Limestone County Public Schools
McDonald's
Morell Engineering
Office of U.S. Congressman Dale Strong
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
United Ways of Alabama
WKT/Ardmore Telephone Company Incorporated

Lowndes County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Area Agency on Aging – South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC)
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Camellia Communications / Hayneville Telephone Company
Communities Unlimited
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Congresswoman Terri Sewell

Organization name
Family Guidance Center – Lowndes-Hayneville
GetWiredAlabama
Hayneville Middle School
Hayneville Telephone Company
JMF Solutions/Wavefly
Lowndes County Commission
Lowndes County Public Schools
Lowndes County Schools
Lowndes Middle School
Omnipoint Digital Literacy Training
Organized Community Action Program
The Elmore Bolling Initiative
The Lowndes Signal
Town of Gordonville
Town of Mosses
United Ways of Alabama

Marion County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama House of Representatives
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Boston Housing Authority – Marion County
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
City of Hamilton
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Easter Seals Alabama

Organization name
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Tombigbee Electric Cooperative/Freedom Fiber
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Macon County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama County Commission Association – Macon County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama NAACP
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC)
AT&T
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Tuskegee
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Dixie Electric Cooperative
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Macon County Tuskegee Public Library
Morgan County Economic Development Association (MCEDA)
Point Broadband
SCL Foundation Inc.
The Elmore Bolling Initiative
Tuskegee University
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Madison County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama A&M University

Organization name
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Madison County, Gurley
Alabama League of Municipalities – Madison County, Triana
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Comcast Project UP
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA)
Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville
Community Partnership Huntsville/Madison and Limestone Counties
Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater and Academy
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
First Stop
GoNetspeed
Google Digital Inclusion Fund in Huntsville
Greater Opportunities through Adult Learning (GOAL)
Huntsville Community Drumline
Huntsville Inner City Learning Center
Huntsville Madison County Library
Huntsville Utilities
J.F. Drake State and Community and Technical College
Madison County Commission
Pathfinder, The
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments – Madison County
United Ways of Alabama

Marengo County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Black Belt Community Foundation

Organization name
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Calix
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
City of Birmingham / FUSE Corps
City of Demopolis
City of Geiger
Collins Communications
Community Action Agency of South Alabama (CAAOFSA)
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Demopolis CATV
Demopolis Times
Eagle Internet Services
Marengo County Commission
Omnipoint Digital Literacy Training
Perry County Commission
The Elmore Bolling Initiative
The Leader
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of West Alabama
U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville

Marshall County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Marshall County, Arab
Alabama League of Municipalities – Marshall County, Guntersville
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Albertville Public Library
Arab Public Library
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama (CAANEAL)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)

Organization name
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
GoNetspeed
GoNetspeed OTELCO, Inc
Marshall County Commission
Marshall County Legislative Office
Marshall-DeKalb Electric Cooperative
New Hope Telephone Cooperative, Inc
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
United Way of Marshall County
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Mobile County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
AT&T
Ben May Main Library
Bishop State Community College
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Brightspeed
City of Chickasaw
City of Citronelle
City of Mobile
City of Prichard
City of Saraland
Comcast
Comcast Project UP
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
Housing Authority of the City of Prichard
Mediacom
Mobile Community Action
Mobile County Commission
Mobile County Legislative Delegation
Mobile Housing Authority – Mobile County
Penelope House
Prichard Housing Authority

Organization name
United Way of Southwest Alabama

Monroe County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Beatrice City Council
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Calix
City of Monroeville
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Conexus Communications
Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Fast Wireless
ITC Holding Company
Mediacom
Monroe County
Monroe County Public Library
Reid State – CACC Monroeville
Town of Beatrice
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Waggoner Engineering

Montgomery County

Organization name
AT&T
AARP Alabama
Alabama Power Company
ALDOT
APLS
AUBix, LLC

Organization name
Baptist Health
Blyth & White Consultancy
Capitol Heights Civic Association
CARPDC
Charter Communications
City of Montgomery
Communities Unlimited
Elmore County Economic Development Authority
First Missionary Baptist Church
I85 Cyber Corridor IBEW-443
JMF Solutions, Inc.
City of Livingston
Mercy House/MAP
Montgomery City-County Public Library
Montgomery Community Action Committee & CDC, Inc.
Montgomery Fire Rescue
Montgomery Job Corps Center
New Walk of Life Church
Sara Byard Consulting
Sharpoint LLC
The Elmore Bolling Initiative
Town of Pike Road
United Way of West Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Weil Wise Tract Neighborhood Association

Morgan County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
AT&T
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Decatur
City of Hartselle
City of Priceville
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA)
Cullman Electric Cooperative

Organization name
Cyber Broadband
Decatur Utilities
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
FlashFiber
GoNetspeed
Greater Opportunities through Adult Learning (GOAL)
Highspeed County Internet (HCI)
Morgan County Economic Development Association (MCEDA)
North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG)
Sprout Fiber / Cullman Electric Cooperative
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Perry County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Perry County, Marion
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
C.H.O.I.C.E. (Choosing to Help Others in Our Community Excel)
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. – Digital Navigators
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Main Street Marion
Marion Military Institute (MMI)
Meridiam
Omnipoint Digital Literacy Training
Perry County Department of Human Resources
Sowing Seeds of Hope
St. Wilfrids
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)

Organization name
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Pickens County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Disability Leadership Coalition
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Legislature
Area Agency on Aging – West Alabama Regional Commission
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
Charter (Spectrum)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
GetWiredAlabama
GoNetspeed
Historic Pickensville Rosenwald School Community Center & Museum
Petty Ball Association/CDC Inc
Pickens Board of Education
Pickens County
Pickens County Commission
Pickens County Community Action Committee
Pickens County Cooperative Library System
Pickens County Industrial Development Board
Pickens County Schools
Pickensville Community Center & Museum
The Pickensville Rosenwald School
Town of Carrollton
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of West Alabama
Vyve Broadband/Northland Communications
West Alabama Regional Commission – Pickens County
Whatley Health Services

Pike County

Organization name
AARP

Organization name
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC)
AT&T
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Pike County Commission
Pike County Department of Human Resources
Southeast Alabama Rural Health Associates
Southeastern Alabama Rural Health Associates
Troy Cablevision
Troy City Council
Troy Housing Authority – Pike County
Troy University
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Randolph County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama County Commission Association – Randolph County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)

Organization name
Alabama League of Municipalities – Randolph County, Wadley
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
BorderHawk
City of Roanoke
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama TCRCC
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Point Broadband
Randolph County Commission
Randolph County Department of Human Resources
Randolph County Economic Development Authority (RCEDA)
United Way of East Central Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Russell County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Housing & Redevelopment Authorities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama County Commission Association – Russell County
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama League of Municipalities – Russell County, Hurtsboro
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Lee-Russell Council of Governments

Organization name
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
CTV BEAM (RM Greene)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Shelby County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Montevallo
City of Westover
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Coosa Valley Electric Cooperative
C-Spire
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
GoNetspeed
Innovations America LLC
Literacy Council of Central Alabama
NTIA
Sain Associates
Shelby County
Uniti Fiber
United Way of Central Alabama (UWCA)
VOICES for Alabama's Children

St. Clair County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Baldwin County Schools
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Cable ONE (Sparklight)
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Moody
City of Moody Fire Department
City of Pell City
City of Pell City Library
Comcast
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Coosa Valley Electric Cooperative
County Office / Office of the Sheriff of St. Clair County
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Literacy Council of Central Alabama
Pell City Housing Authority
Ragland Housing Authority
Ragland Telephone Company
St. Clair Board of Education
St. Clair County Commission
United Way of Central Alabama (UWCA)
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Windstream

Sumter County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education

Organization name
AltaPointe Health
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Calix
City of Geiger
City of Livingston
City of York
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama
Investar Bank National Association
Sumter County Commission
Sumter County Concerned Citizens
Sumter County Schools
Town of Cuba
Town of Epes
Town of Gainesville
Town of Geiger
United Way of West Alabama
University of West Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
ZHBC Community Development Corporation

Talladega County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Extension – Talladega County
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute Deaf and Blind – E.H. Gentry Campus
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Armstrong – Osborne Public Library
AT&T
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Boys & Girls Club
Central Alabama Community College Adult Education Program
City of Talladega
Community Action Association of Alabama TCRCC
Coosa Valley Electric Cooperative

Organization name
Dovetail Landing
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Foresite Group
Sylacauga Housing Authority
Talladega City Schools
Talladega County Commission
The Presbyterian Home for Children
Town of Munford
Town of Talladega Springs
United Way of North Talladega County
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Tallapoosa County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Health Women, Infants and Children
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Charter (Spectrum)
City of Alexander City
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
GoNetspeed
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
HDD Broadband
Lake Martin Area United Way
Tallapoosa County Department of Human Resources
Tallapoosa County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Tuscaloosa County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Senate – Tuscaloosa County
Area Agency on Aging – West Alabama Regional Commission
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama
City of Lake View
City of Northport
City of Tuscaloosa
Comcast Project UP
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc.
Farmers Telecommunications Cooperative
Shelton State Community College
Stillman College
TALA Professional Services
Tuscaloosa County
Tuscaloosa One Place
Tuscaloosa Public Library
Tuscaloosa-based Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. (CSPWAL)
United Cerebral Palsy of West Alabama (UCPWA)
United Way of West Alabama
University of Alabama – Office of Teaching Innovation and Digital Education
University of Alabama – Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
West Alabama Regional Commission – Pickens County

Walker County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors

Organization name
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)
AT&T
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
City of Cordova
City of Jasper
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Jasper Area Family Services Center
Jasper Housing Authority – Walker County
Literacy Council of Central Alabama
Tombigbee Electric Cooperative/Freedom Fiber
United Way of Central Alabama (UWCA)
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Walker Area Community Foundation
Walker County

Washington County

Organization name
AT&T
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Area Agencies on Aging
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)

Organization name
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc.
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Governor's Office of Volunteer Services
Millry Telephone Company
Mobile Community Action
Town of Chatom
United Way of Southwest Alabama
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Washington County Commission
Washington County Hospital and Nursing Home
Washington County Public Library
Washington County Sheriff's Office

Wilcox County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
Alabama Hospital Association
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Alabama State Department of Labor
Area Agency on Aging – Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC)
Association of Public Safety Communications Officials
Blackbelt and Central Alabama Housing (BBCAH)
Black Belt Community Foundation
Black Belt Digital Equity and Inclusion Coalition (BDEIC)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
City of Camden
Communications Workers of America
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Dallas County Family Resource Center
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
J. Paul Jones Hospital
Mediacom

Organization name
Town of Yellow Bluff
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Winston County

Organization name
AARP
Alabama Alliance for Students With Disabilities
Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC)
Alabama Career Center System
Alabama Chapter of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO)
Alabama Community College System
Alabama Conference of Black Mayors
Alabama Department of Human Resources
Alabama House of Representatives
Alabama Indian Affairs Commission (AIAC)
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
Alabama State Department of Education
Area Agency on Aging – Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG)
Black Churches 4 Digital Equity
Catholic Social Services of West Alabama
City of Haleyville
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)
Cullman Electric Cooperative
Easter Seals Alabama
Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Haleyville Area Chamber of Commerce
Industrial Development Agency
Lowe Mobley Lowe & LeDuke, Attorneys at Law
Sprout Fiber / Cullman Electric Cooperative
Tombigbee Electric Cooperative/Freedom Fiber
Town of Natural Bridge
United Ways of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Winston County

Appendix C: Needs assessment discussion

The state's comprehensive partner outreach program included extensive efforts to identify the needs of covered populations, which ADECA reported in its Alabama Statewide Digital Opportunity Plan Performance Report in April 2023. Outreach and data collection efforts included questionnaires, mapping efforts, desk research, and meetings with key state and local partners to develop broadband strategic plans and objectives; current and ongoing outreach and engagement with key partners during county-level meetings; and data collection through end user surveys with ongoing analysis of results.

ADECA's BEAD Five-Year Action Plan included initial summaries of findings from this outreach. Analysis in this Plan expands upon these initial findings. Additional information regarding the needs and gaps identified through the state's engagement efforts are included in Appendix D.

Covered population needs assessment

Engagement and survey efforts indicate that Alabama's digital opportunity needs encompass access to affordable broadband services, increased enrollment in broadband service subsidy programs, device access, and digital skills training. For example, a representative of the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) told ADECA in one of the on-site county engagement meetings conducted in preparation of this Plan that its members cannot rely on library-based internet access alone. Aging individuals have needs beyond affordability. Those needs include access, adoption, reliability, skills, inclusion, and technology—issues that require digital skills training or digital navigators, not just the provision of broadband internet.

ADECA has undertaken research and analysis to understand the challenges Alabama residents face in using broadband, particularly lower-income Alabamians. In November 2021, ADECA's project team surveyed low-income households in all geographic regions of Alabama to help assess the use of broadband and enrollment in internet subsidy programs among low-income households. The survey was designed to gather feedback and insights on the use of internet services, plus awareness and use of subsidy programs, by low-income households.[386]

The results of the survey, along with data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources, exhibit Alabama residents' current adoption and use of internet services and low-income subsidy programs. The survey found that internet service subscription is high, as 88 percent of low-income households surveyed by ADECA have some form of service, including home internet or mobile connections. However, as noted previously, the leading barrier to service was found to be cost.

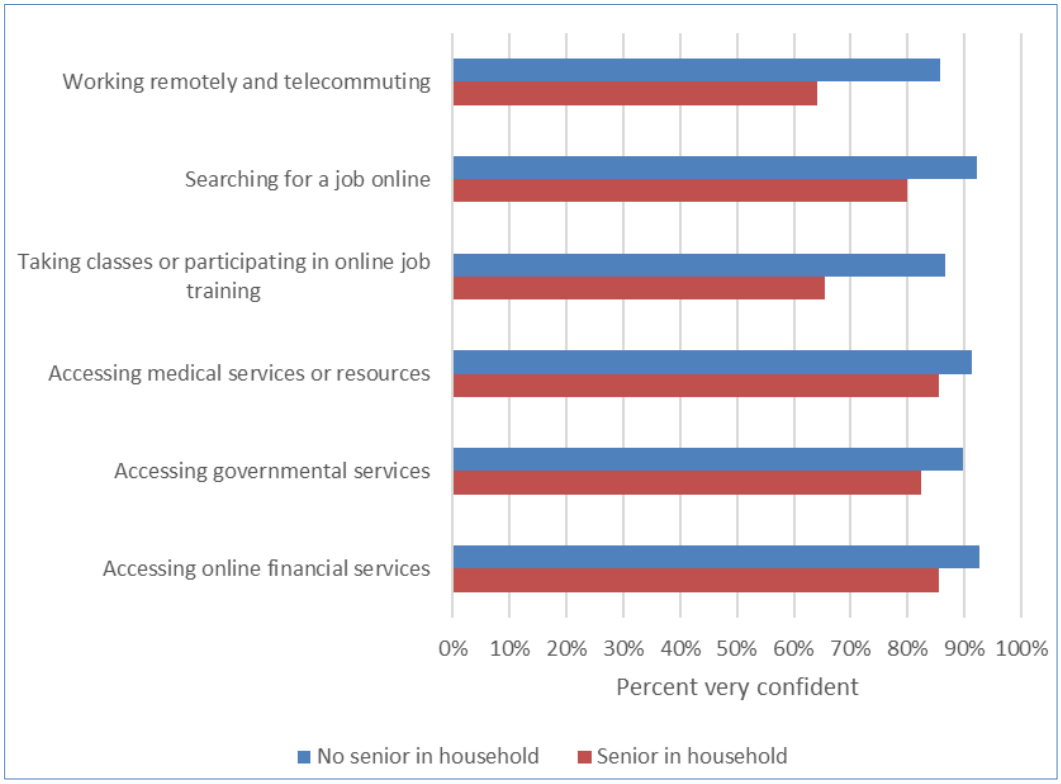
As also noted previously, Alabama ranked high among peer states for its residents' use of the FCC's EBB and ACP programs, indicating a gap in broadband service affordability. This ranking

[386] "The Alabama Connectivity Plan," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/Alabama-Connectivity-Plan.pdf, p.23, n.13.

may be a result of the state's leading efforts to engage eligible families through the ABC for Students program.[387]

In 2023, Alabama added to these findings when it conducted the series of regional phone surveys. The surveys show that, in most regions, a substantial number of aging individuals need basic digital skills training. Households with an aging individual were consistently less confident in performing tasks such as working remotely, taking an online class, accessing medical services, accessing government services, and accessing online financial services. Aging individuals were also less confident regarding the following tasks: "I can use and adjust privacy settings," "I can identify false or misleading information," and "I can recognize and avoid online fraud." Those aged 18 to 29 were far more confident regarding these basic internet safety tasks than aging individuals.[388]

Figure 10: Confidence level in using the internet – aging individual in household compared to no aging individual in household (Region 7 – Southwest Alabama)



Gaps in digital skills are a national problem and, as described above, an issue for many covered populations in Alabama. ADECA will take steps to address this issue. The first step is to identify

[387] *Id.* at p.29-32.

[388] As illustrative examples, in Region 5, among aging individuals, 28 percent lacked confidence in their ability to adjust privacy settings, compared to 3 percent of those aged 18 to 29. In Region 2, nine percent of aging individuals lacked confidence in their ability to recognize and avoid online fraud, compared to zero percent of those aged 18 to 29.

successful existing digital skills programs and, in addition, to identify organizations that could potentially offer new digital skills programs. ADECA's ongoing outreach has identified organizations and ADECA will continue to seek out additional organizations. Additional information regarding available digital opportunity assets, including those related to digital skills, can be found in Section 3 and Appendix A of this Plan.

The regional residential surveys conducted in preparation for this Plan identified a significant minority of Alabama residents who lack confidence in performing basic tasks online. Some lack confidence in sending and receiving emails.[389] More lack confidence in slightly more complex tasks, such as adjusting the privacy settings on social media services.[390]

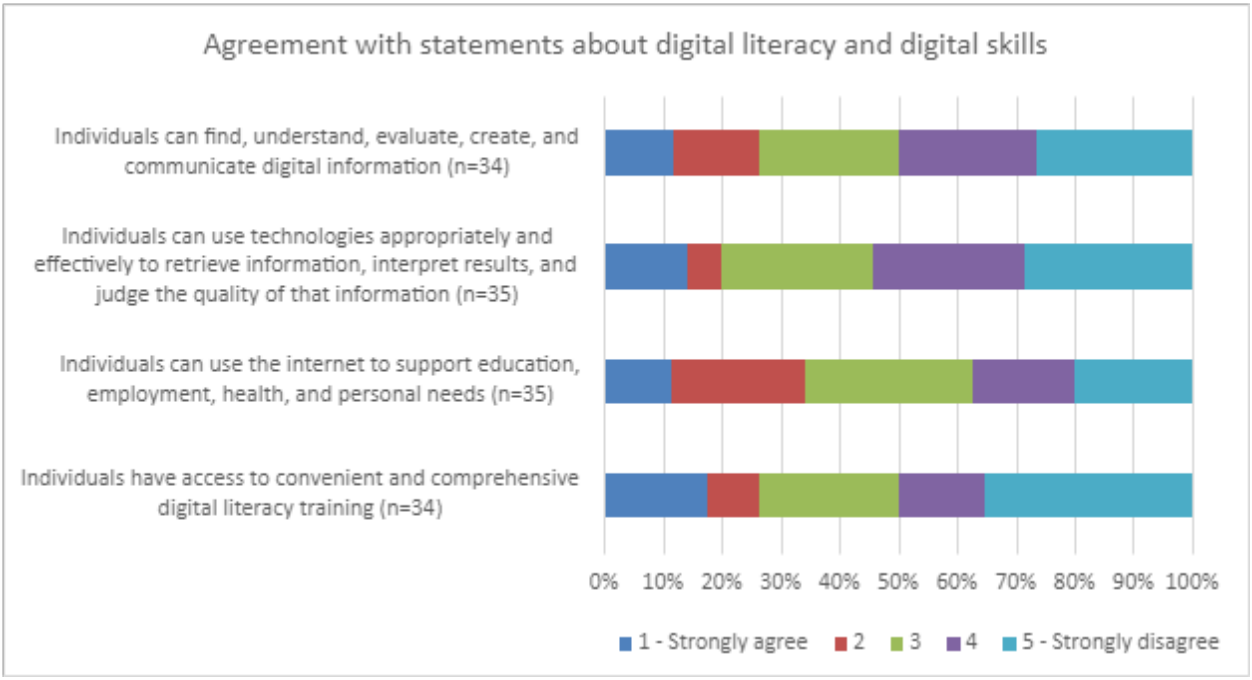
In a Spring 2023 questionnaire to community-based organizations as part of ADECA's broadband planning outreach (see Appendix F), representatives of these organizations indicated that at least 50 percent of the individuals they serve struggle to understand and communicate digital information, over 50 percent cannot effectively retrieve and judge the quality of information, and 50 percent do not have access to convenient and comprehensive digital skills training to improve their skills.[391]

[389] In the Montgomery region, for example, 15 percent of respondents were "Slightly confident" or "Not confident" in their ability to use the internet to send and receive emails, as were 11 percent of respondents in Region 4.

[390] In Region 2, 24 percent of respondents did not agree that they could use and adjust settings in social media. In Region 6, 25 percent of respondents did not agree that they could use and adjust settings in social media. However, it should be noted that experts have warned for years about the difficulty of locating and using social media settings. For example, an article on Facebook settings by Consumer Reports notes, "Facebook has 22 pages of settings, and many privacy controls aren't on the page labeled 'Privacy.'" Thomas Germain, "How to Use Facebook Privacy Settings," Consumer Reports, July 31, 2022, https://www.consumerreports.org/privacy/facebook-privacy-settings-a1775535782/.

[391] ADECA, "Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire," Appendix F.

Figure 11: Digital skills



Local action also has highlighted additional issues. For example, the Digital Inclusion Fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville held a virtual community conversation on Digital Inclusion in April 2021 and posted the notes and list of participants online.[392] Among the issues highlighted was the fact that, regarding digital skills, many people do not know what knowledge they lack: "you don't know what you don't know."[393]

Today, most jobs require digital skills, and this shift can impact entire communities that see major employers begin to require highly skilled workers. Jobs that now require digital skills include construction supervisors, police officers, and teachers.[394] "[G]aps in access to digital skills engender disparate access to the nation's best-paying, most desirable jobs and industries. Such gaps can spawn troublesome divides among not just people, but also places," according to a

[392] "Virtual Community Conversation on Digital Inclusion," Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville, April 22, 2021, https://givehsv.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/REPORT-DIF-Community-Conversation-2021-no-page-.pdf (accessed October 21, 2023). Participants were aware of the additional benefits of broadband. For example, they were eager to have a strategic plan to be prepared for future disasters from a pandemic to a tornado.
[393] *Id.*
[394] Linda Poon, *Bloomberg*, "As Jobs Go Digital, Who Gets Left Behind?" February 9, 2023, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-09/most-us-jobs-now-demand-digital-skills-as-workplaces-transform.

recent report from The Brookings Institution.[395] This Plan will address those place-based disparities, supporting digital opportunity across Alabama.

Alabama acknowledges digital opportunity needs. The Alabama legislature has stated "[t]he continued lack of advanced communication capabilities, broadband facilities, and services in rural and underserved areas deprives citizens residing in these areas from access to opportunities such that the state needs to take action to correct and eliminate these discrepancies."[396]

Broadband adoption

Even where broadband infrastructure and services are available, they may not be adopted by all members of the community. A complex combination of factors—including affordability, device access, digital skills, and language barriers—can inhibit use of broadband for internet access services, to the detriment of both economic and community development.

In a statewide questionnaire conducted by ADECA for this Plan, community organizations serving covered populations highlighted broadband access as a barrier.[397] In particular, 45 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that the households they serve have access to "some type" of internet service; 69 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that available service is high-speed, reliable, and sufficient for households' needs; and 63 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that available service is affordable. Respondents made comments such as, the majority of the residents cannot afford the internet, and the cost is unreasonably high for low-income families.

Respondents highlighted a lack of competition between providers: 60 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that households could choose between more than one option for high-speed, reliable, and affordable service, and in some remote areas, the only choice may be costly satellite service. Respondents made comments that their patrons live in such rural areas that satellite is their only option.

Many households also lack sufficient devices. Almost half of the questionnaire respondents (47 percent) disagreed or strongly disagreed that there are computers in the households of the populations they serve, with just over one-quarter strongly disagreeing. Individuals that do have a computer at home may have difficulty maintaining or repairing their device: 71 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed—with 50 percent strongly disagreeing—that the households they serve could troubleshoot computer issues, and 71 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could afford to repair a device. Organizations overwhelmingly cited cost as a barrier to home computer ownership among the communities they serve. Respondents, who

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[395] Mark Muro and Sifan Liu, "As the digitalization of work expands, place-based solutions can bridge the gaps," February 7, 2023, https://www.brookings.edu/research/as-the-digitalization-of-work-expands-place-based-solutions-can-bridge-the-gaps/.
[396] Ala. Code § 37-16-2(a)(4), https://casetext.com/statute/code-of-alabama/title-37-public-utilities-and-public-transportation/chapter-16-broadband-using-electric-easements-accessibility-act/section-37-16-2-legislative-findings.
[397] ADECA, "Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire," Appendix F.

indicated that the majority of the individuals they work with live in low-income households and most are Hispanic/Latinx, also noted that many have little to no access to broadband resources or computers/similar devices because those resources are so costly and instead rely solely on their phones.

Some questionnaire respondents also noted that, in rural areas without residential internet service, individuals may not see the need to own a computer at home—but may have to travel a significant distance to a library to access one.

Lack of regular access to the internet and sufficient computing devices can lead to little opportunity to gain and practice digital skills, according to questionnaire respondents, the majority of whom highlighted digital skills as an issue. As shown in Figure 11 on page 211, only about one-quarter (26.5 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that the individuals they serve can find and evaluate information online, with half disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

To gain additional insight into broadband needs at the local level, the nonprofit Student Freedom Initiative (SFI) conducted an analysis in 2023 of the communities surrounding the 14 HBCUs in the state,[398] in which 63 percent of residents are Black, 17 percent live with a disability, and households are twice as likely to have an income within 200 percent of the federal poverty line.[399] SFI found that, while these areas are relatively well-served (89 to 99 percent of locations have access to 100/20 Mbps service), many residents do not subscribe to service: 25 to 54 percent of residents do not have a broadband subscription, with nine of 14 communities showing non-subscription rates over 40 percent.[400] A notable portion of households, ranging from 8 to 23 percent, rely on a cellular data plan to access the internet.[401]

In a survey conducted by SFI in five of these communities,[402] residents expressed dissatisfaction with their current service—only about 40 percent indicated they were satisfied—and the majority (68 percent) said service is not affordable.[403]

The survey also highlighted access to devices as an obstacle to internet use: one in five respondents do not have a working home computer and about 80 percent indicated that they

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[398] "Broadband and digital equity community briefing – HBCU communities in the State of Alabama," prepared by SFI and submitted to ADECA, August 7, 2023.
[399] *Id.*
[400] *Id.*
[401] *Id.*
[402] Communities surveyed include those surrounding Lawson State Community College in Birmingham, AL; Miles College in Fairfield, AL; Selma University in Selma, AL; Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL; and Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, AL.
[403] "Broadband and digital equity community briefing – HBCU communities in the State of Alabama," prepared by SFI and submitted to ADECA, August 7, 2023, Appendix G.

could not conveniently access a public computer close to their home or workplace that is free to use.[404]

Broadband affordability

Broadband affordability is an issue for Alabama residents. According to a survey conducted for the Alabama Connectivity Plan, approximately 20 percent of Alabama households did not subscribe to broadband services, among the highest numbers in the Southeast region.[405] The most cited reason in the survey for not subscribing was cost. As a corollary, the survey also found that awareness of federal subsidy programs was relatively low (though higher than in many neighboring states). This suggests that a considerable opportunity exists to increase use of broadband among Alabama households through outreach programs that help low-income families to connect through new federal subsidy programs—to the benefit of the households, the state's public policy goals, and the ISPs that are paid by the federal government to serve those families.

ADECA supports ACP enrollment[406] and plans to support partners that provide ACP enrollment because it recognizes the challenges that affordability presents to residents. Repeated studies have shown that for low-income households, the leading barrier to service is cost.

In the regional phone surveys conducted with Alabama residents by ADECA in 2023 in preparation for this Plan, households' reported willingness to pay for broadband correlated with income.[407] Lower-income households are more likely to subscribe to introductory plans costing $39 per month or less,[408] and less likely to pay $100 or more for internet service.[409] Affordability remains an issue for all residents of Alabama, but it is more acute at lower incomes.

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[404] *Id.*
[405] "The Alabama Connectivity Plan," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/Alabama-Connectivity-Plan.pdf, p.3.
[406] "Affordable Connectivity Program," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/affordable-connectivity-program/.
[407] For example, in Region 1, 22 percent of households earning $100,000 or more per year were willing to pay $100 or more per month for high-speed, reliable broadband internet, compared to four percent of households earning less than $50,000 per year. Similarly, in Region 5, 57 percent of households earning less than $50,000 were willing to pay no more than $59 per month, compared to 34 percent of households earning $100,000 or more.
[408] As an illustrative example, in Region 3, 24 percent of households with an income below $50,000 were paying $39 per month or less for internet service, while only five percent of households with an income of $100,000 or more were paying $39 per month or less.
[409] As an illustrative example, in Region 4, 17 percent of households with an income below $50,000 were paying $100 or more for internet service, while 41 percent of households with an income of $100,000 or more were paying $100 or more.

The price of computers is likely also a factor, as households earning less would be less likely to replace a lost computer within a day, according to the same phone surveys.[410] The surveys show that lower-income households are more likely to have no computer at home.[411]

During its outreach, ADECA has identified organizations that are willing and able to conduct activities to increase awareness of subsidies like the ACP. There is a clear need for this education. ADECA's 2021 survey of low-income households revealed that more than three-fourths (78 percent) of those who had not applied for a subsidy program said they were not aware of the programs.[412]

A survey conducted by the Student Freedom Initiative in five communities in the state with low rates of broadband adoption reinforces the need for greater outreach (see Appendix G).[413] In the communities surveyed, over four in ten residents do not have an internet subscription, and a high percentage (40 to 55 percent) of households have an income below 200 percent of the federal poverty line and thus are potentially eligible for the ACP. 86 percent of respondents said that service is unaffordable; however, just 11 percent were participating in the ACP, and 39 percent were not aware of the program.

The Alabama Connectivity Plan also recommended the development of joint initiatives between ADECA and ISPs to create programs to support low-income subscribers.[414]

[410] In Region 7, 47 percent of households earning $100,000 or more per year would be able to replace a computer within a day, compared to 26 percent of households earning less than $50,000 per year. In the Montgomery Region, 71 percent of households earning $100,000 or more per year would be able to replace a computer within a day, compared to 26 percent of households earning less than $50,000 per year.
[411] As illustrative examples, in Region 6, only six percent of households with an income of $100,000 or more lacked a computer, while 28 percent of households with an income below $50,000 lacked a computer. In Jefferson County, eight percent of households with an income of $100,000 or more lacked a computer, while 36 percent of households with an income below $50,000 lacked a computer.
[412] "The Alabama Connectivity Plan," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/Alabama-Connectivity-Plan.pdf.
[413] "Broadband and digital equity community briefing – HBCU communities in the State of Alabama," prepared by SFI and submitted to ADECA, August 7, 2023.
[414] "The Alabama Connectivity Plan," ADECA, https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/Alabama-Connectivity-Plan.pdf.

Appendix D: Needs and gaps identified through engagement

The following table details a sample of the needs and gaps identified by participants in ADECA's outreach and engagement sessions. These are in addition to the needs and gaps identified in Section 3.2 of this Plan.

Table 35: Additional needs and gaps identified through partner engagement

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband Deployment	25/3 Mbps is not enough for business. Business 1 Gbps service would cost $1200+ per month at one location in the county.
Broadband Deployment	6 Mbps internet is not enough to stream, run a security camera or get a Ring doorbell. "We are not offered what the people in the cities are offered."
Broadband Deployment	A lot of students lack access to the internet and have had to travel to access internet to complete assignments, do homework, etc.
Broadband Deployment	A mayor said, "I would like to see everyone who wants broadband get it. People are begging for it. It's on Facebook all the time: my internet is awful, how is yours?"
Broadband Deployment	A representative of Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) said that poor cell service hampers internet outreach.
Broadband Deployment	A representative of DHR warned that it still has to use paper applications to provide benefits to applicants as many lack internet service. If they had internet service, they would be able to better access benefits and possibly work from home.
Broadband Deployment	A representative of the local housing authority said that internet slows down at peak times so that residents cannot send or receive email.
Broadband Deployment	A representative of the local school system said, "We ordered enough hotspots for everyone who said they didn't have internet. But then families lied about not having it so they could also get free hotspots. So, we had to order more. Had to apply additional settings to devices so students could only use it for educational purposes. So, it definitely slows down at the high traffic times. But if still fails, we go back to paper and pen."
Broadband Deployment	A resident said that some local ISPs lose service after rain or high winds.
Broadband Deployment	A resident working on their master's degree said that the internet has deteriorated, which is a serious problem during a timed quiz. Sometimes they have to go somewhere else to do online classes.
Broadband Deployment	An ISP said that, in areas where ISPs have not built in the past, the support of local government could help with negotiations with power companies for pole access, and directly via access to rights of way, to lower projected costs, resulting in a viable business model.
Broadband Deployment	AT&T would like a more efficient permitting process.
Broadband Deployment	Attendees concerned that Alabama's map overstates speeds in Wilcox County, particularly those offered by Frontier.
Broadband Deployment	Black Creek Fire Department does not even have 25/3 Mbps service, which is an issue for public safety. "I call it the Bermuda Triangle (Black Creek). We have nothing."

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband Deployment	Black Creek is in a cell phone dead spot and it's hurting education and safety.
Broadband Deployment	Broadband providers may serve one house but not the neighboring house.
Broadband Deployment	Caregiver wants to work at her mother's house but cannot because no internet service at mother's house.
Broadband Deployment	Cell broadband not good enough for education from home, whether high school or college.
Broadband Deployment	CERM, an engineering company, recommends that the state improve permitting to bring in ISPs for public-private partnerships. Work with libraries and churches to get the word out about new networks. Build a website so that someone can find out about progress and "when I am getting it."
Broadband Deployment	Cleburne County DHR representative: Low-income residents who have no internet and poor cell phone service are unable to do basic things such as obtain government services, and their kids have trouble with schoolwork. Said that she herself completed degree online while raising three sons and would not have been possible if had to go to a campus.
Broadband Deployment	Commissioners said that broadband is inadequate where they live. One said that they have 10/1 DSL, and another said that they cannot run a speed test. Yet another commissioner said that cellular hotspots are inadequate for school children who try to use them to do homework. Others complained about the speeds offered by Gigafy and HughesNet.
Broadband Deployment	Community is concerned about kids having to go to school parking lots to find hotspots to do schoolwork.
Broadband Deployment	Complaints about actual speeds vs. advertised speeds offered by TDS.
Broadband Deployment	Concern about older in-building wiring not being capable of supporting gigabit speeds.
Broadband Deployment	Coosa County DHR representative: lack of internet access prevented or slowed residents' access to services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students had trouble accessing homework.
Broadband Deployment	Council on Aging: Some senior centers in the county also don't have internet, or even cell service.
Broadband Deployment	Council president: my goal is to make sure we get better access for kids, whether in high school or at home for summer while in college.
Broadband Deployment	County Commissioner: Elementary school has bad cell service and about half of students cannot even use a cellular hotspot to do homework.
Broadband Deployment	County Extension coordinator: When Covid hit, we had to take 100 years of community education and do it digitally and we still have to do some things digitally. Our biggest issue now is that we want to go cashless, but parents need to go online. We have computers at the office and they're welcome to come and use it – our system is not as friendly on the phone. You have to turn the phone sideways sometimes.
Broadband Deployment	CWA, a telecommunications union, is concerned that non-union out of town labor will not meet safety standards.

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband Deployment	CWA: networks in the area (and state as a whole) appear to have been installed by unskilled labor with many code violations.
Broadband Deployment	Daughter came home from Tuscaloosa and wanted to take exams online but had to go to work with me to do it.
Broadband Deployment	DHR service workers can lose internet access while making site visits – have to take notes and then go to the office to enter the notes into the system.
Broadband Deployment	DHR: Not having service makes it more difficult for clients to apply for jobs, get food assistance, etc.
Broadband Deployment	Educator would like to do side jobs but cannot. Sister is environmental engineer and is on a job site and needs better internet access.
Broadband Deployment	Elderly clients do not want to drive to the VA clinic in Dothan only to be seen by a doctor in Atlanta. Many lack internet at home and the ability to travel to the clinic.
Broadband Deployment	Elected official said that constituents "can see the cable from their porch," but cannot get service.
Broadband Deployment	Elected official: We don't want Bullock County to become the "have-nots." We want to be on par with Montgomery Co. or Lee Co. We don't want to be second-class citizens.
Broadband Deployment	Etowah County Schools: "We have tons of students that don't have internet access" – were able to provide Chromebooks, but many students were unable to use them.
Broadband Deployment	Etowah County Sheriff (lives in Gallup) said that dead spots impact public safety.
Broadband Deployment	Gadsden City Schools need broadband for students.
Broadband Deployment	Greene County Democrat is an online newspaper, but most people can't access it.
Broadband Deployment	Greene County Industrial Development Authority concerned about available broadband speeds and access.
Broadband Deployment	Hoke's Bluff: Children suffered in school when they couldn't do any of the work during Covid. I have to go camp at the falls to watch Netflix.
Broadband Deployment	Hospitals need reliable internet. In Wilcox County, the main hospital subscribes to all three providers to avoid being taking offline by an outage at one ISP.
Broadband Deployment	Households have started to use internet for tele-dental appointments for general hygiene check-ins but households with spotty/no internet struggle to get care.
Broadband Deployment	I am an underserved customer. I'm so underserved, I feel unserved, on rural Starlink.
Broadband Deployment	I don't have internet, but we don't qualify for grant programs because we're too close to homes that have internet. Forty other homes on our road. I have two children and when Covid hit, I moved to Texas for internet and left my husband here to do his job.
Broadband Deployment	I have terrible internet. Hughes. Zero cell phone coverage. I'm in trouble with my wife. She wants to move to town, and I don't.
Broadband Deployment	I live in the middle of nowhere. I have a hotspot and it ain't too hot. I live on a dirt road, and I go to church on a dirt road.

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband Deployment	I think there's going to be lot of pockets in the county that are served, and others that are not.
Broadband Deployment	I work in IT and my daughter goes to school. Sometimes I disconnect everything in the house just to get enough bandwidth to do voice or video. I cannot do both. Today, I'm using my T-Mobile hotspot, which is not great. I hang it from the shower head in the bathroom to get service. So, help us, please.
Broadband Deployment	I'm one of the fortunate ones. I have fiber to the door from TEC. It's a night and day difference. But I'm here to support my community.
Broadband Deployment	I'm two houses away from where y'all are putting in service. I'm here representing my neighbors and my daughters, one in high school and one in college. We don't have service. I'm here for my wife who works for the Alabama Court System, the Fifth Judicial Circuit – she cannot file things from home.
Broadband Deployment	If, as is frequently the case in older buildings that are multi-tenant, there is infrastructure to the building but not service to tenants, might make those locations unserved for purposes of state planning.
Broadband Deployment	In Atmore, many complaints about quality and reliability of internet service.
Broadband Deployment	In Flomaton, complaint about data caps limiting access to internet and phone service.
Broadband Deployment	Internet service is not capable of supporting a resident's remote learning to the point where the resident must go to a coffee shop to complete assignments. The resident's provider is Brightspeed.
Broadband Deployment	Internet service is not capable of supporting resident's video streaming. The resident's provider is Brightspeed.
Broadband Deployment	ISP asked that municipalities consider pilot projects in the local housing authority. A local business such as a bank might fund it for $10K and it might be done quickly.
Broadband Deployment	ISP requested help with easement acquisitions from local municipalities
Broadband Deployment	ISP would like access to plat maps for new developments to plan or bid for broadband delivery before construction begins.
Broadband Deployment	ISPs are not using skilled local labor to construct networks.
Broadband Deployment	Jackson Steele Elementary set up Wi-Fi buses during the pandemic but needs a better solution. Even on rainy days, the internet goes down.
Broadband Deployment	Lack of awareness of broadband options.
Broadband Deployment	Local person said that the Alabama map overstated local broadband availability.
Broadband Deployment	Majority of attendees at an outreach session said they had internet service but less than half said that the service was adequate.
Broadband Deployment	Many lack broadband, according to Community Action Agency.
Broadband Deployment	Many people are relying on wireless technology.
Broadband Deployment	Many people do not have service even 2 miles from US 280.
Broadband Deployment	Mayor of Westover said that fiber passes through his community without delivering broadband to residents.
Broadband Deployment	Mayor: Courtland owns their own electric company and it's hard to find lineman who want to work for a small company. We are trying to

Issue category	Description of issue
	bring people into our town to see how much we care and to see the need for broadband.
Broadband Deployment	Mayor: I have very good internet that I pay a lot for. I have a home-based business that I have to have dedicated business service for, but there's a real lack in the rest of the town. As a general rule, our town is poorly served. I'm here for my constituents and as a consumer as well.
Broadband Deployment	Mayor: This is a growing area. People are moving in right outside city limits, some of them. One called after purchasing an expensive house and said that real estate people ought to be required by law to tell you about internet service. Has a business and two in college system and tried everything and he cannot get any internet service.
Broadband Deployment	Mayor: We have a lot of low-income individuals and families in Sheffield. We would love more information about the unserved areas. ADECA response: shows map, explains next steps for improving map data.
Broadband Deployment	Mediacom would like county and city zoning to provide notice of new construction to ISPs.
Broadband Deployment	Member of public with no service: "The children are hurting on our road." "CenturyLink says they're serving us, and that is a total joke. There used to be an office there, and now it's closed and a technician comes all the way from Oneonta."
Broadband Deployment	Member of public: Is any work going to be done in the un/underserved part on the other side of the river? Power goes out often, which is a hazard for aging communities. Who can I reach out to about this?
Broadband Deployment	Member of the public cannot rely on internet to be able to attend Zoom meetings. Don't have reliable internet and it's ridiculous. Help, please!
Broadband Deployment	Morgan County Economic Development said that broadband does not currently enable all resident to work from home.
Broadband Deployment	My wife does want me to move to a home that has internet. Broadband is very much needed. It is as important as water and power.
Broadband Deployment	No service in rural areas because ISPs cannot justify expenditures.
Broadband Deployment	Numerous roads in the county have just a few families and ISPs cannot find ROI to serve them.
Broadband Deployment	One person in the area said that their home internet is worse than dialup and video streaming is "out of the question."
Broadband Deployment	One person suggested standard should be 1 Gbps not 100/100.
Broadband Deployment	One resident was quoted $23,000 to extend internet service to their home.
Broadband Deployment	Parts of Pike County are an "internet desert."
Broadband Deployment	People attempting to relocate to the area could not get broadband, which put their relocation on hold.
Broadband Deployment	Probate judge said that a lack of internet hampers economic development and that areas of sparse population density hamper broadband deployment.
Broadband Deployment	Public concerned that awarded areas won't receive service. Asked about timelines.
Broadband Deployment	Public concerned that existing service may leave when new service is being built.

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband Deployment	Public concerned that existing service may leave. ADECA answer: we are not funding overbuild of broadband.
Broadband Deployment	Public safety chief: We need broadband. Dead spots all over this area. We had a really difficult time during the pandemic when the kids were having to do schoolwork online. Broadband will help people communicate. It will allow people to visit doctors without going to the office. It will help people of all ages.
Broadband Deployment	Resident complained about quality of service, saying that wife called earlier to say that the internet is down.
Broadband Deployment	Resident is concerned about Alabama's ability to build a suitable workforce in the area to build the networks right the first time.
Broadband Deployment	Resident is concerned with ISPs' ability to coordinate with each other during deployments, wants them to share information that would benefit the group.
Broadband Deployment	Resident said that, during Covid when children were doing homework on computers, people on social media were posting places in the community with Wi-Fi and we had kids sitting in McDonald's and church parking lots just to get connected.
Broadband Deployment	Resident says that they have only one provider "who will come out here."
Broadband Deployment	Resident: We've called ISPs asking when service will be available. ISPs say call back in a few months. When we call back, they say it is still not available and to call back in another few months.
Broadband Deployment	Residents are concerned ISPs will not be capable of coordinating efficiently so as not to waste effort and public funds.
Broadband Deployment	Residents complain about lack of broadband availability.
Broadband Deployment	Residents complained about having only having one provider and the difficulty faced with trying to speak with the provider.
Broadband Deployment	Residents concerned that, without a public broadband utilities commission-type entity, there will not be a way to require ISPs to honor community priorities.
Broadband Deployment	Residents expressed a need for broadband, especially in the southern part of the county.
Broadband Deployment	Residents said that many areas lack broadband and were skeptical about obtaining adequate service in rural areas. They were frustrated that there is long haul fiber that passes through the county without providing broadband to county residents.
Broadband Deployment	Residents struggle with online job applications and online housing applications due to limited digital skills or device access. Filling out an apartment rental application took 2 days due to issue.
Broadband Deployment	Rural churches lack the bandwidth to stream services.
Broadband Deployment	School had to hand out paper homework packets during remote learning because students lacked internet service. Then the school had to collect the paper homework packets.
Broadband Deployment	School is working to supply devices to children, but that does not help if they lack internet access at home. Has online math and English curriculum but it's hard for students without connection.

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband Deployment	School principal said that on a recent test, the internet went down and the school got red flagged by the state as potentially cheating.
Broadband Deployment	Schools are not able to go virtual very well because of lack of broadband availability and affordability.
Broadband Deployment	Some apartment buildings not allowing Tombigbee, an ISP, access to internal wiring.
Broadband Deployment	Some new subdivisions do not have internet at all.
Broadband Deployment	Sometimes when you sell a house, buyer cannot get even copper internet because company is not selling copper internet anymore.
Broadband Deployment	Southeast Alabama Rural Health Associates says patients are unable to access forms for intake, and unable to schedule appointments online.
Broadband Deployment	Sparsely populated areas do not make a compelling business case for ISP expansion.
Broadband Deployment	Speeds too slow for business and adequate speeds too costly ($1200+ for 1 Gbps).
Broadband Deployment	Time to repair: Mayor: What about response time to emergency when fiber is cut? Example: - We had a power outage with 23,000 + people out of electricity and the utility companies came and got power back on in 1-3 days. - Fiber cut on highway 72 and all of Lauderdale County Schools were out of internet for 1 week, and there was not the same sense of urgency. 8,000 students from 8AM-3PM without internet for one week—unacceptable.
Broadband Deployment	Two un/underserved communities in the county – North End of Long Island Valley and Macedonia.
Broadband Deployment	Two weeks ago on Friday night we had storms, and I live here in the city, Spectrum is my provider. We had no internet, no Verizon cell service, no TV. Places in town could not take payment, were back to writing checks and taking cash. It was all day long – midnight until 6:30 PM (next night). Working in technology as I do – a weak link in technology [makes me worried]. I understand that you have acts of God that happen – but… [other person] I don't expect infrastructure to be perfect, but a storm should not take it out. [other person] Where's the cutover? We have this problem with all ISPs. My parents' landline is AT&T and is out more than it's on. ADECA: A big part of why we are funding middle-mile is to create redundancies. ISPs have started working with other ISPs to back each other up.
Broadband Deployment	Unserved locations exist in the county.
Broadband Deployment	Very rural areas may have 4+ miles between households. Am I going to see broadband?
Broadband Deployment	When it's a remote learning day, we know students won't be able to complete assignments that day. Even with a mobile hotspot, it may not feed the data fast enough for them to adequately learn.
Broadband adoption	Poor reliability (Frontier) may be attributed to all ISPs; but Monroe County Library has free Wi-Fi – and at least five providers.
Broadband adoption	Some elderly people have PC hardware that is so old, it does not support the latest browsers and, as a result, cannot access content.

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband affordability	A resident asked, "What if you don't have a device to even sign up for ACP subsidy?"
Broadband affordability	ADECA: Some people who are eligible for ACP don't have access to internet and we do not have data regarding the number who are eligible for ACP but don't have access.
Broadband affordability	Affordability is a huge issue for all of us, not just low-income families.
Broadband affordability	Affordability is an issue for residents.
Broadband affordability	Can small churches be treated as residential rather than enterprise under ACP?
Broadband affordability	City of Gadsden Housing Authority: Affordability is the biggest thing.
Broadband affordability	E-Rate program does not allow the school district to switch one student's service to another student when one student leaves the district. Instead, the school district has to cancel one student's service and activate the others.
Broadband affordability	Greene County Industrial Development Authority concerned about broadband affordability.
Broadband affordability	High amount of free and reduced lunch households with children in Autauga County.
Broadband affordability	In poor counties such as Bibb, ACP will drive broadband affordability.
Broadband affordability	ISP: Customers on ACP lose access due to transfer outs – say Q Link gives them a cellphone and takes their broadband discount and they did not realize it or they did realize it and they were trying to get two discounts – we lose a full month's funding with zero notice – we bill in advance – a month goes by without funds – risk that subscriber owes money. You can only transfer once a month. So if they transfer out in February, cannot come back in March. So they lose a month for a cell phone that they never receive. May get kicked out of the program if don't keep info up to date, especially email address. If they don't reapply in 30 days, have to go through enrollment process again with USAC.
Broadband affordability	Lack of awareness among residents about ACP.
Broadband affordability	Long drops are often too expensive for homeowners in rural areas to afford.
Broadband affordability	Member of county government said that the price for internet they were quoted was $600, which is too high.
Broadband affordability	People can work from home in Hamilton now, and broadband has made that possible. Some people are still having a problem with affordability, however ($50/mo.). "We want everybody to be able to have it."
Broadband affordability	People who cannot afford to drive may not be able to access free internet offered via public Wi-Fi.
Broadband affordability	Public concerned about price if only one service provider.
Broadband affordability	Public concerned about price if there is to be only one service provider.
Broadband affordability	Remote tech worker is obtaining 35 Mbps / 4 Mbps and paying $175 per month for ViaSat. Any service call is $175 fee, but support is fantastic.
Broadband affordability	Resident concerned about broadband affordability.

Issue category	Description of issue
Broadband affordability	Resident is concerned people struggle to afford internet because of the lack of quality jobs in the area.
Broadband affordability	Residents are concerned about future service affordability after subsidy programs run out.
Broadband affordability	Residents complain about affordability.
Broadband affordability	Residents complain of lack of affordable broadband.
Broadband affordability	Residents in a multi-tenant dwelling in town can't afford internet even though it's available.
Broadband affordability	Residents were not aware of ACP.
Broadband affordability	Slamming of subsidies – some people lose the broadband benefit every three months to unscrupulous operators.
Broadband affordability	Some attendees did not know about the ACP program.
Broadband affordability	The elderly want to learn how to use the internet and how to stream so that they can stop paying $200 per month for internet. Local people cannot afford $200 per month cable TV bill.
Broadband affordability	Two small WISPs do not participate in ACP because overhead is too high.
Broadband access	Cell broadband not good enough for education from home, whether high school or college.
Broadband access	Community had to set up Wi-Fi in parks for kids whose families could not afford internet during lockdown.
Broadband access	Need program to lend computers and laptops.
Broadband access	Residents are concerned in-building wiring won't be capable of handling high-speed internet even if it's available in the area.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	A representative of DHR said that for those without internet access, a lack of transportation is a barrier to enrollment and document submission.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	A representative of the local school system said that it had Google Chromebooks that were damaged but that the students were not to blame because they lacked training.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	AARP: Lack of digital skills is an obstacle.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Alabama DHR: A large percentage of case work is non-parent caretakers, for example, grandparents helping grandchildren. 70+ year olds trying to help elementary children with online schoolwork. So really this is a digital skills problem.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Community Action says many of our elderly clientele don’t have digital skills.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Elderly residents have difficulty accessing online documents.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	ISP said there is a need for techs that can design networks, also for techs that can answer customer questions about cameras, phones, PCs, devices connected to the internet.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Jackson Steele Elementary says parents need better digital skills.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Lack of digital skills among the elderly.

Issue category	Description of issue
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Mayor: Our library in Courtland tries to help people of all ages—there are even 20, 30, and 40-year-olds in our community who have no digital skills.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Need for digital skills classes for seniors.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Need programs to provide digital skills.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	One key part of digital skills is just knowing how to close browser tabs!
Digital opportunity = digital skills	One senior center is only back to half attendance since Covid, and no longer offers a digital skills class.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	People who have not adopted internet have cybersecurity fears and lack digital skills – they do not know "how to make computers meaningful in their lives."
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Regarding telehealth, folks don't have digital skills to take advantage of internet even if they have it.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Resident notes that people in the community don't have the digital skills to appreciate how much they could benefit from the internet.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Resident said they "don't know technology."
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Resident says there is a lack of digital skills and a lack of knowledge about the ACP program.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Resident would like to see computer classes for elderly people to learn how to use computers. Saw it done in Ozark County and said that it was fantastic to see the people that came to participate and to learn. Perhaps it could be offered by the library if funding were made available.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Residents say that some lack digital skills.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Seniors lack digital skills.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Seniors struggle to access documents online that are necessary for proving eligibility for entitlements.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Seniors who have caretaking responsibilities for grandchildren need help getting the kids broadband access for school.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	Some people don't want smartphones.
Digital opportunity = digital skills	SSI recipients and elderly people need special outreach effort to ensure that they are aware of digital skills and affordability services to them.

Appendix E: Residential broadband and digital opportunity needs assessment survey

The results presented in this section are based on analysis of information provided by 3,654 residents of Alabama across nine regions, from an estimated 1,908,836 households. Results are representative of the set of households with a confidence interval of ±1.6 percent at the aggregate level.

The survey responses were entered into SPSS[415] software and the entries were coded and labeled. SPSS databases were formatted, cleaned, and verified prior to the data analysis. The survey data was evaluated using techniques in SPSS, including frequency tables, cross-tabulations, and means functions. Statistically significant differences between subgroups of response categories are highlighted and discussed where relevant.

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

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

[415] IMB, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, http://www-01.ibm.com/software/analytics/spss/.

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

Figure 12: Percent of households that receive home internet service

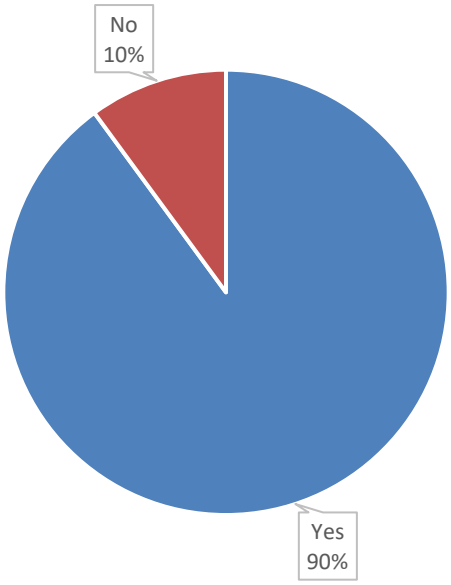


Figure 13: Percent of households that receive home internet service by region

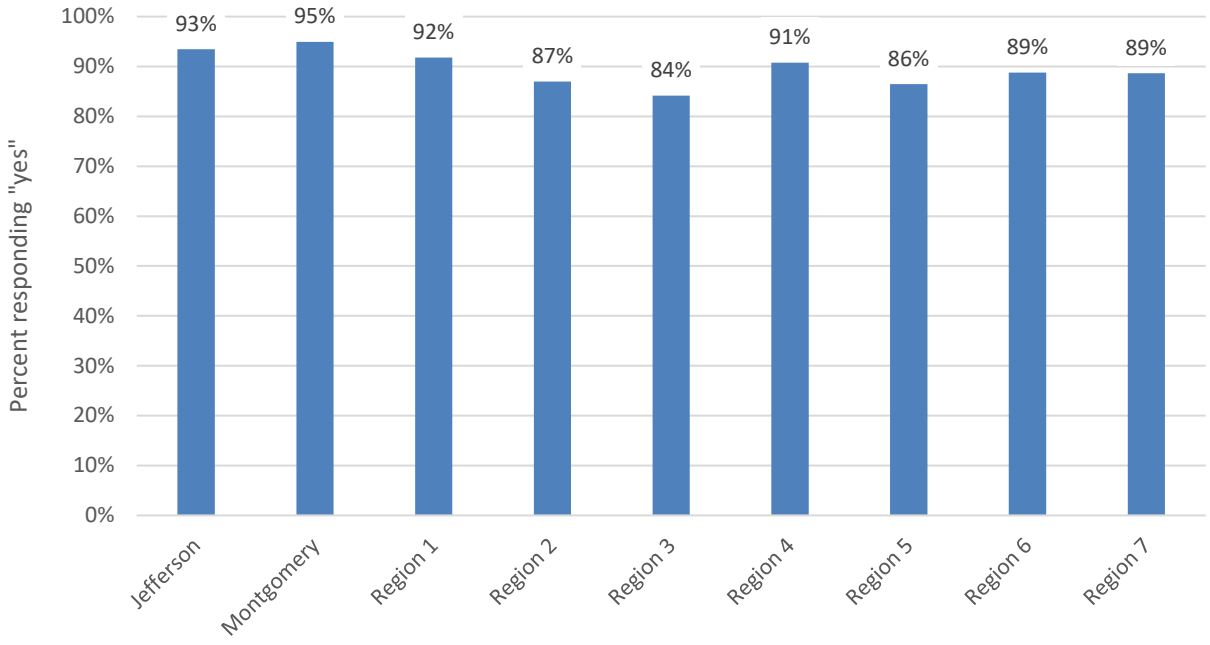


Figure 14: Percent of at-risk households that receive home internet service

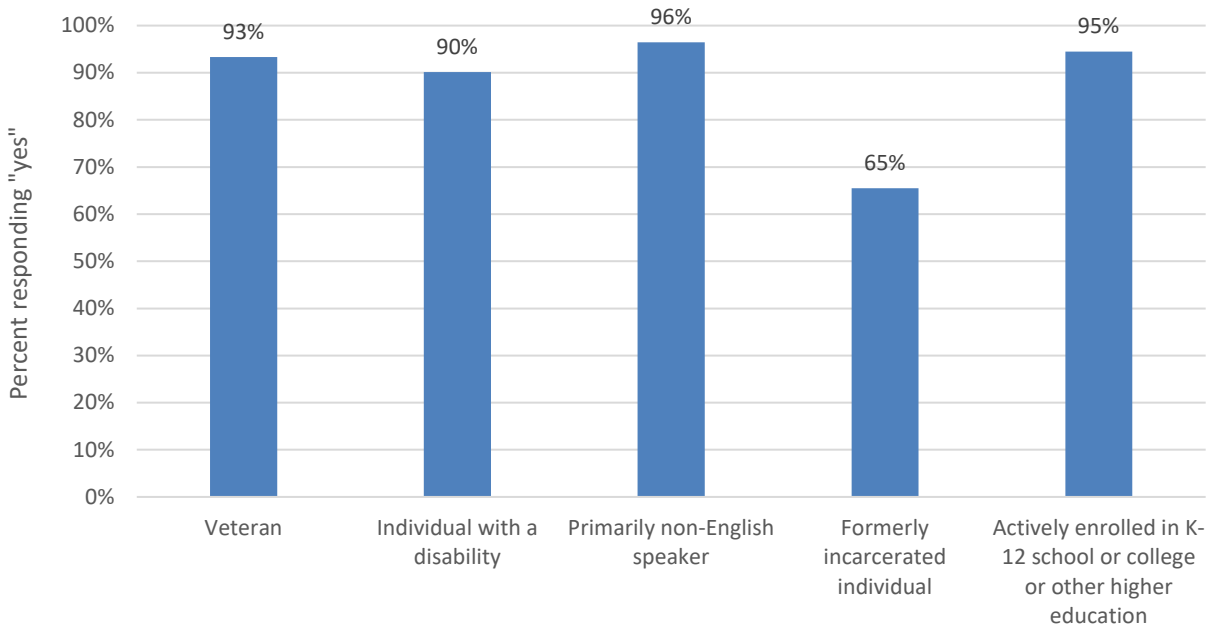


Figure 15: Percent of households that receive home internet service by household income

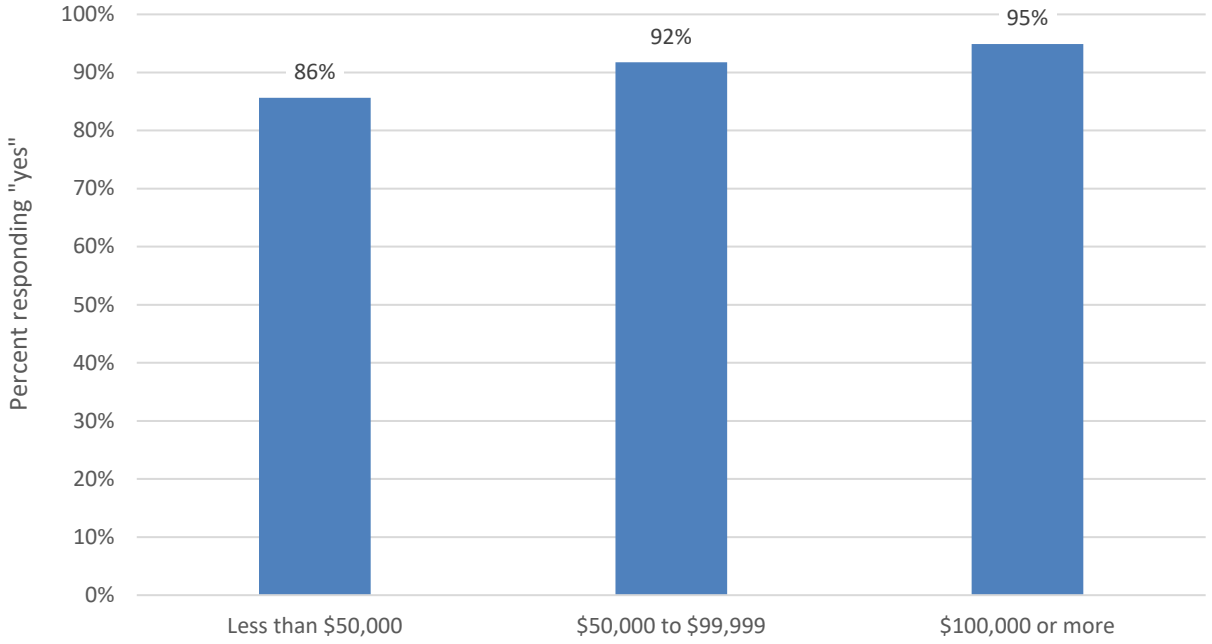


Figure 16: Percent of households that receive home internet service by race/ethnicity

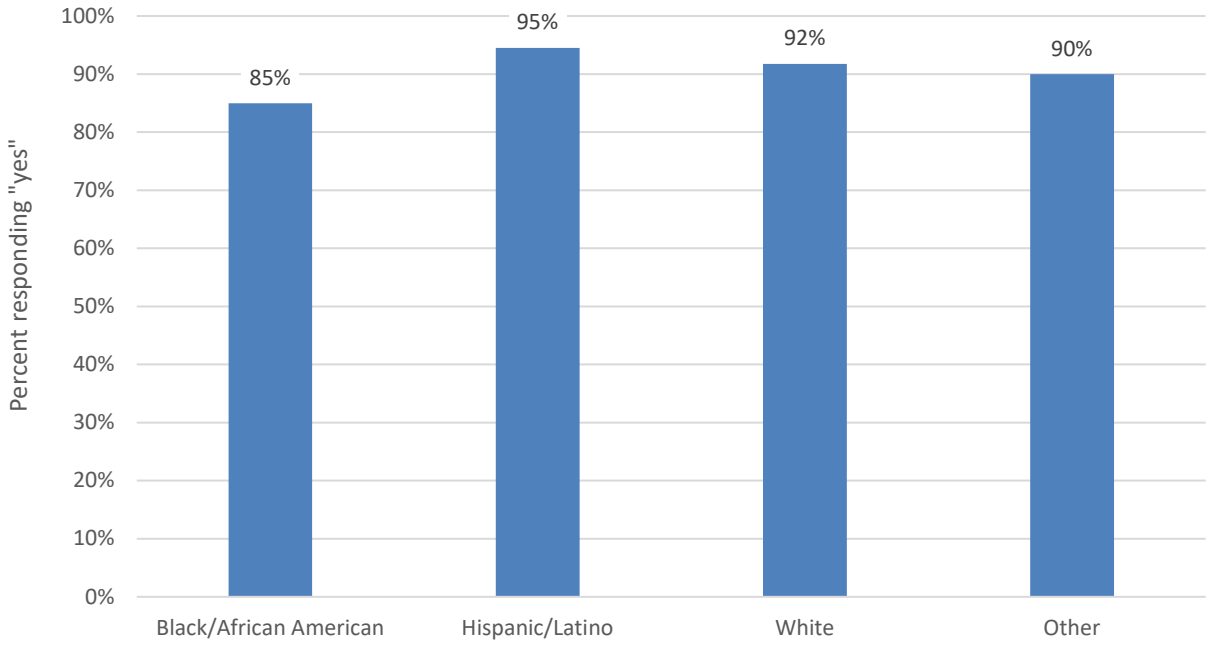


Figure 17: Percent of households that receive home internet service by student in household

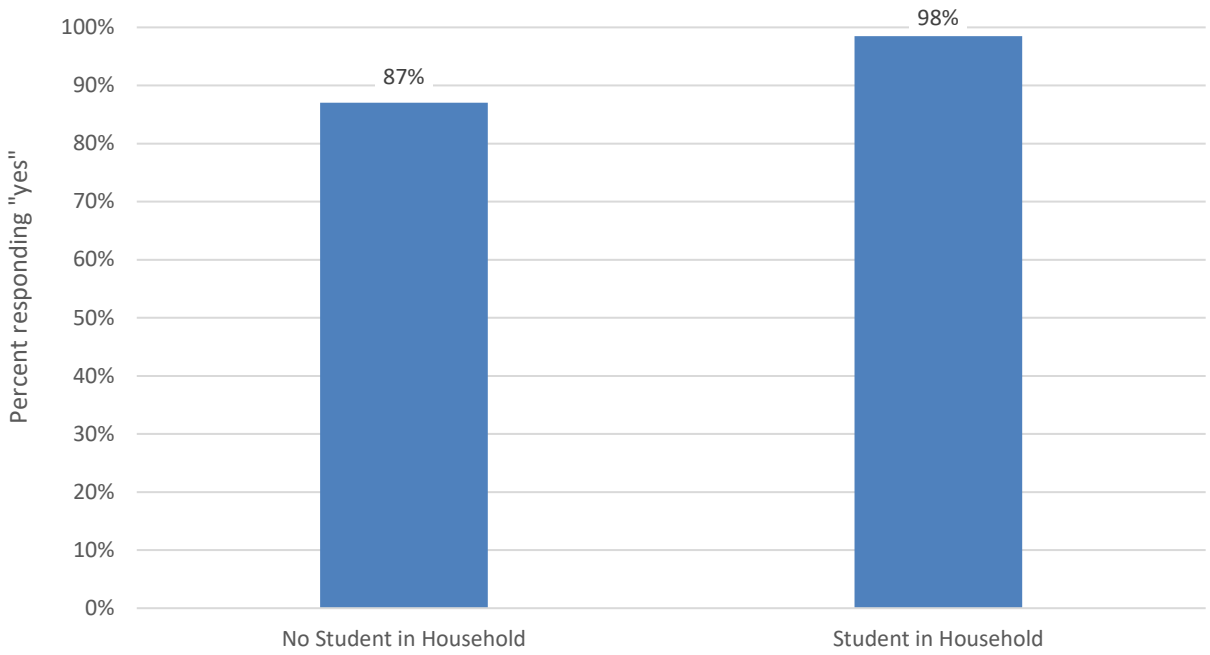


Figure 18: Percent of households that receive home internet service by household size

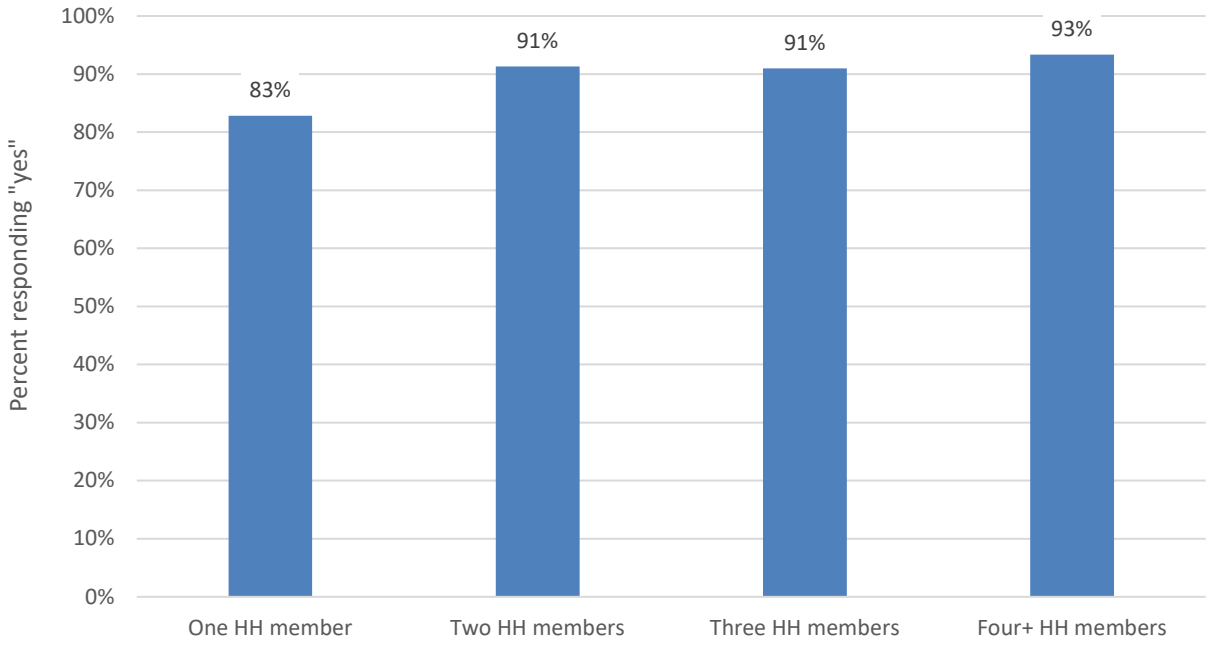


Figure 19: Percent of households that receive home internet service by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

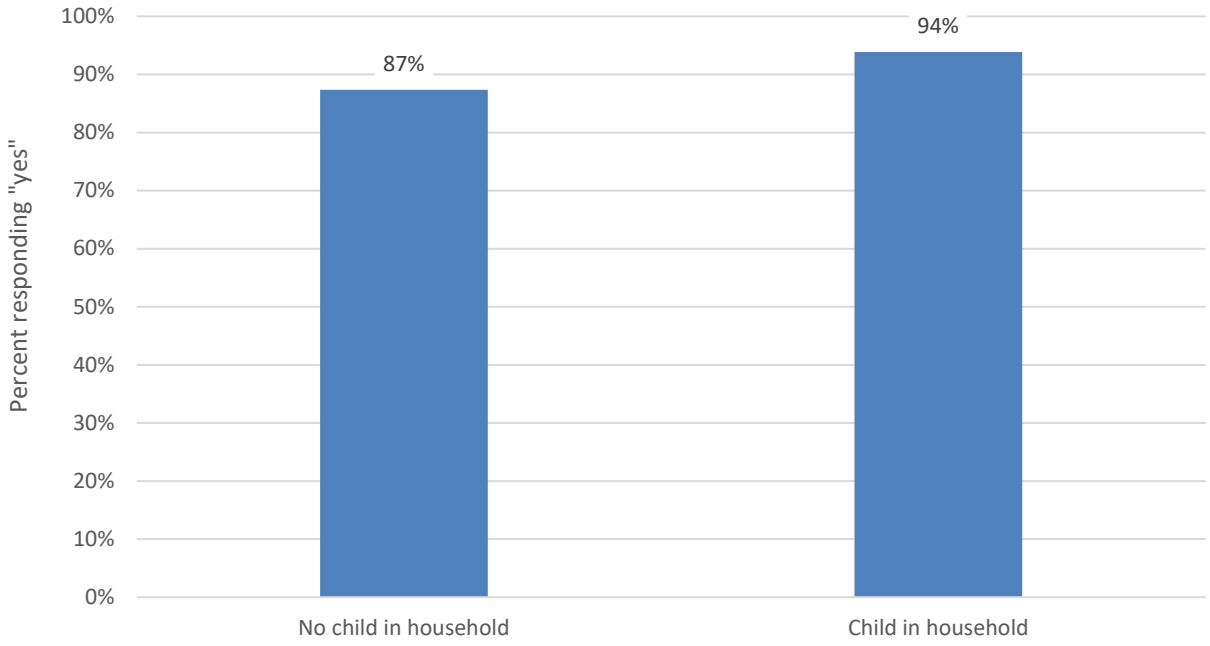


Figure 20: Percent of households that receive home internet service by aging individuals in household

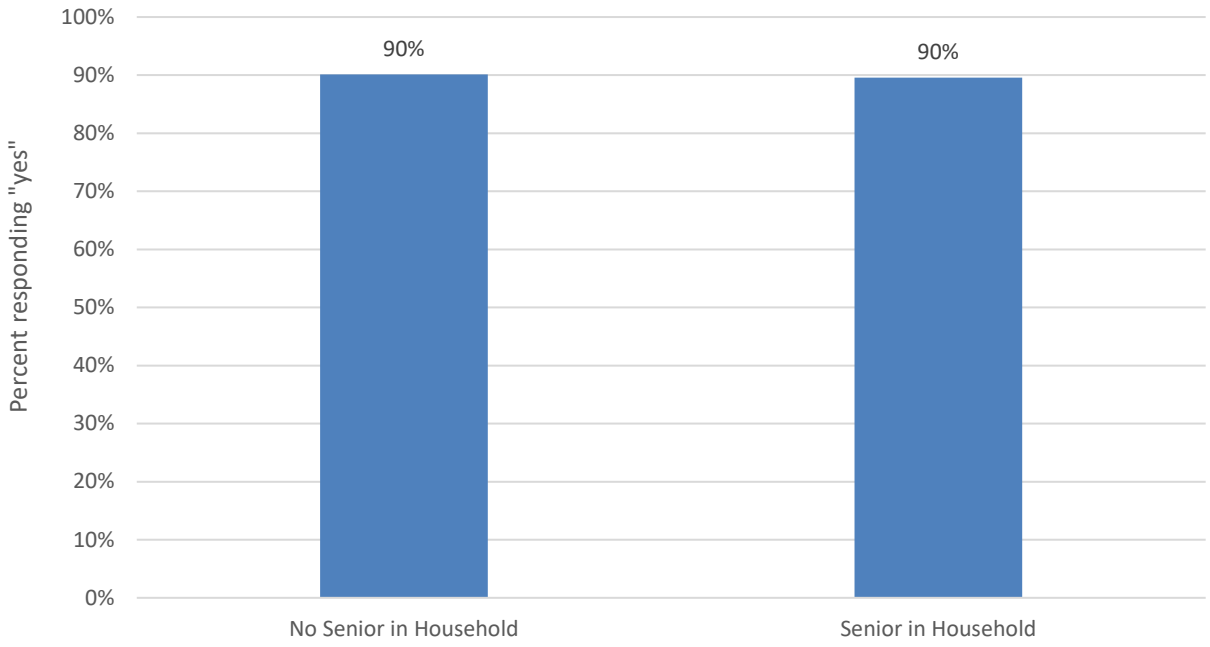
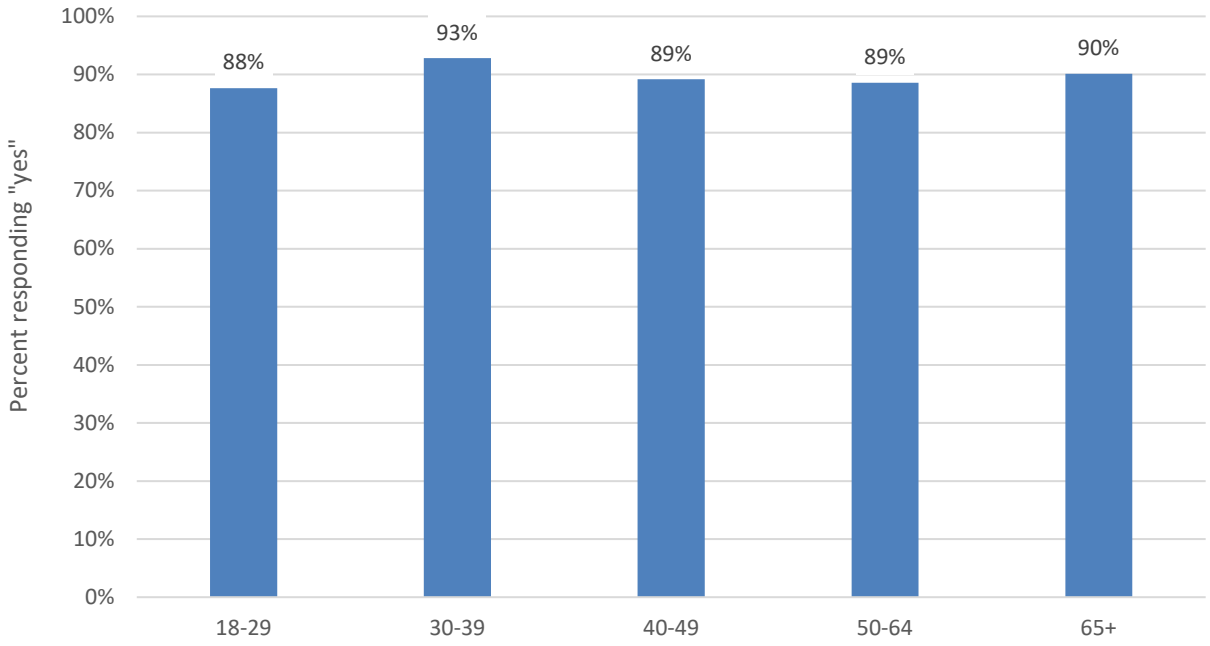


Figure 21: Percent of households that receive home internet service by respondent age



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

Figure 22: Percent of households that purchase home internet service

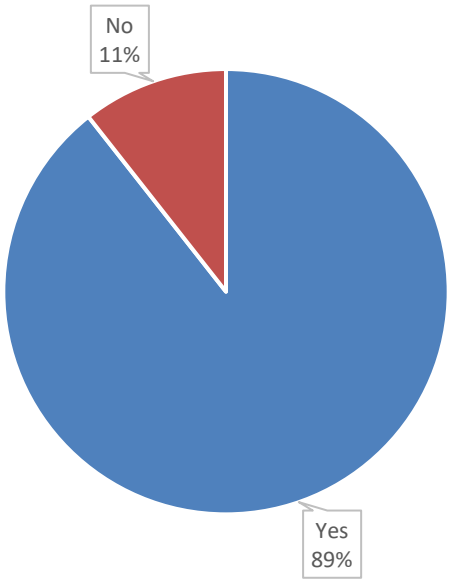


Figure 23: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by region

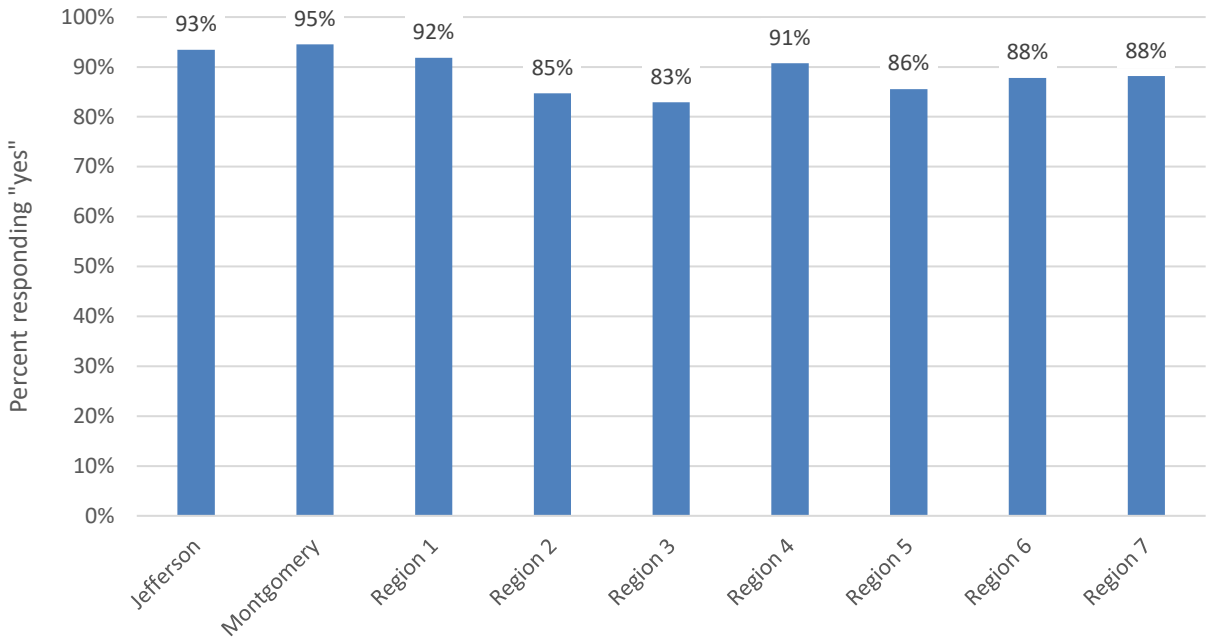


Figure 24: Percent of at-risk households that purchase home internet service

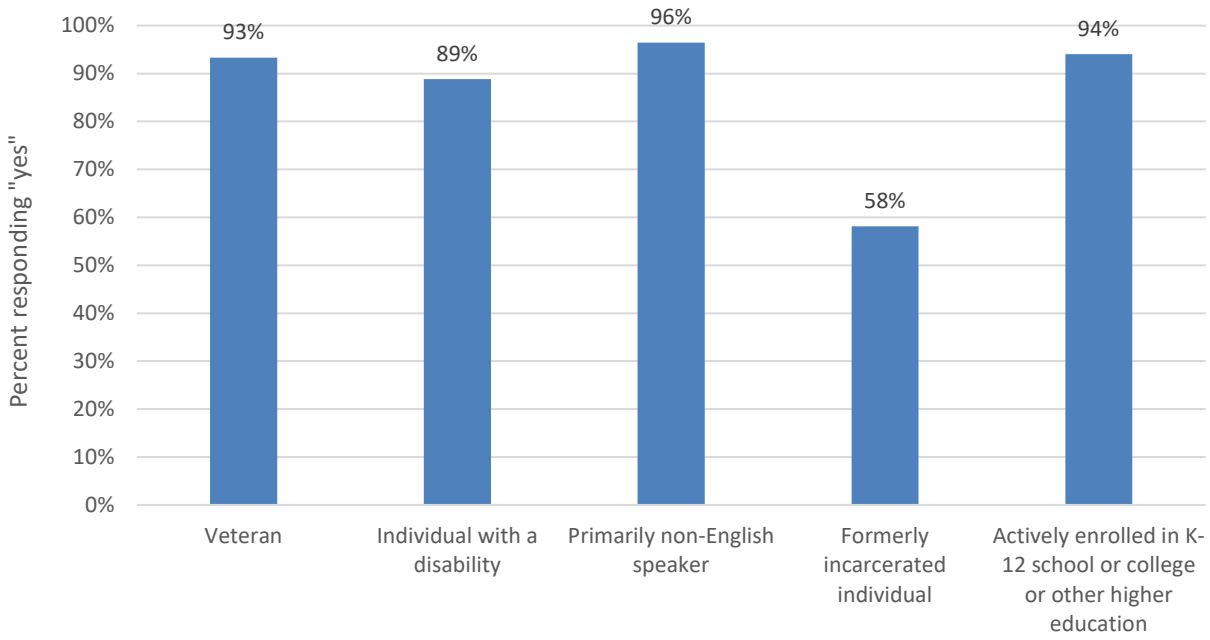


Figure 25: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by household income

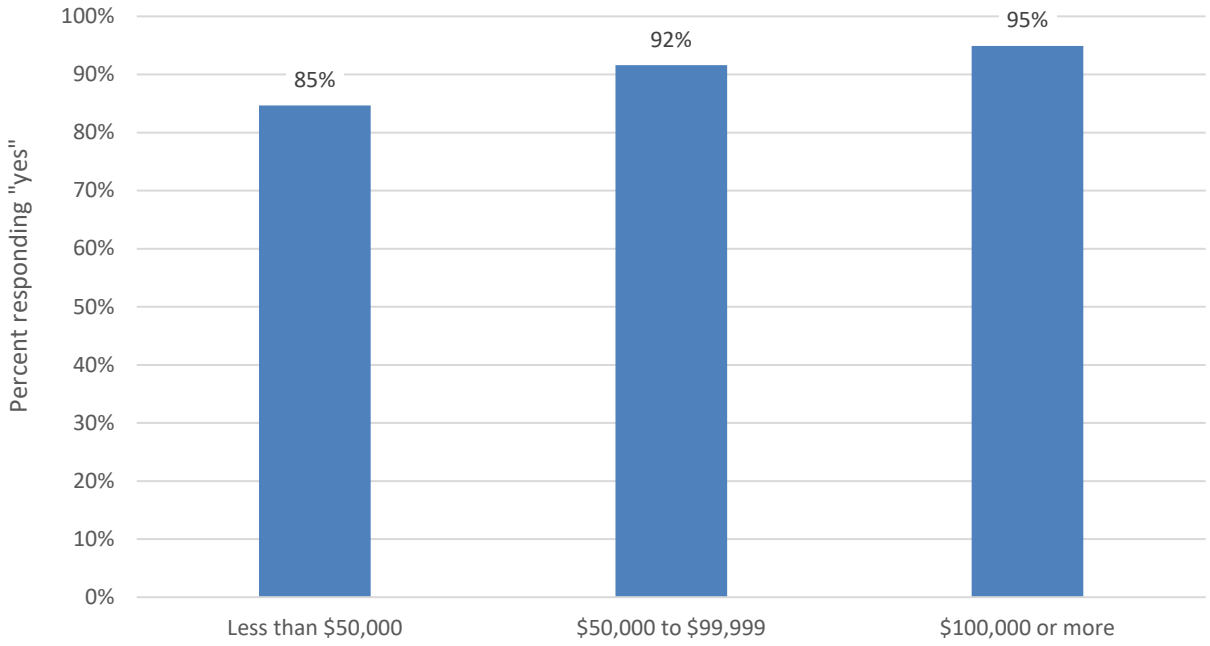


Figure 26: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by race/ethnicity

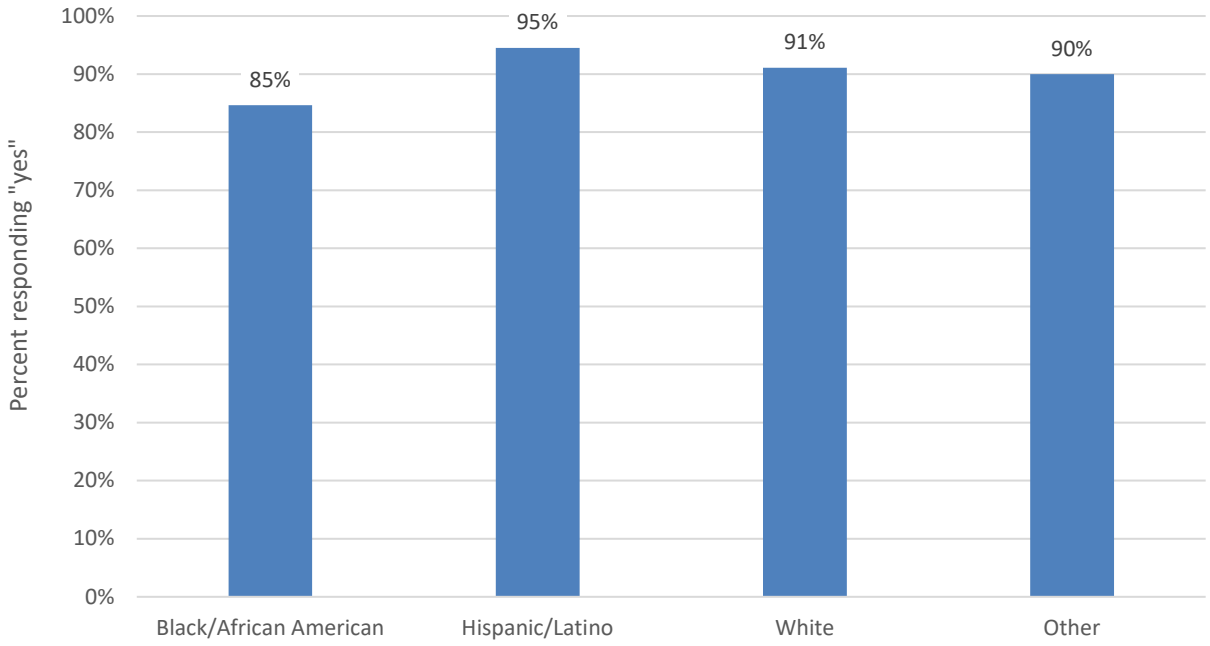


Figure 27: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by student in household

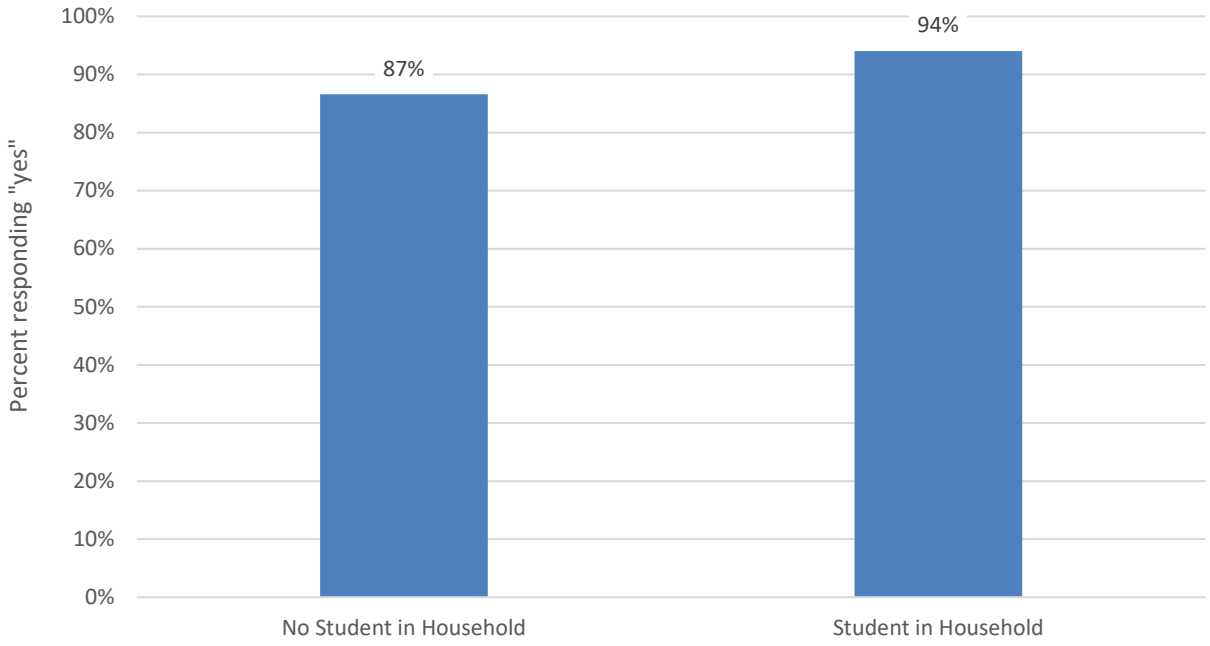


Figure 28: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by household size

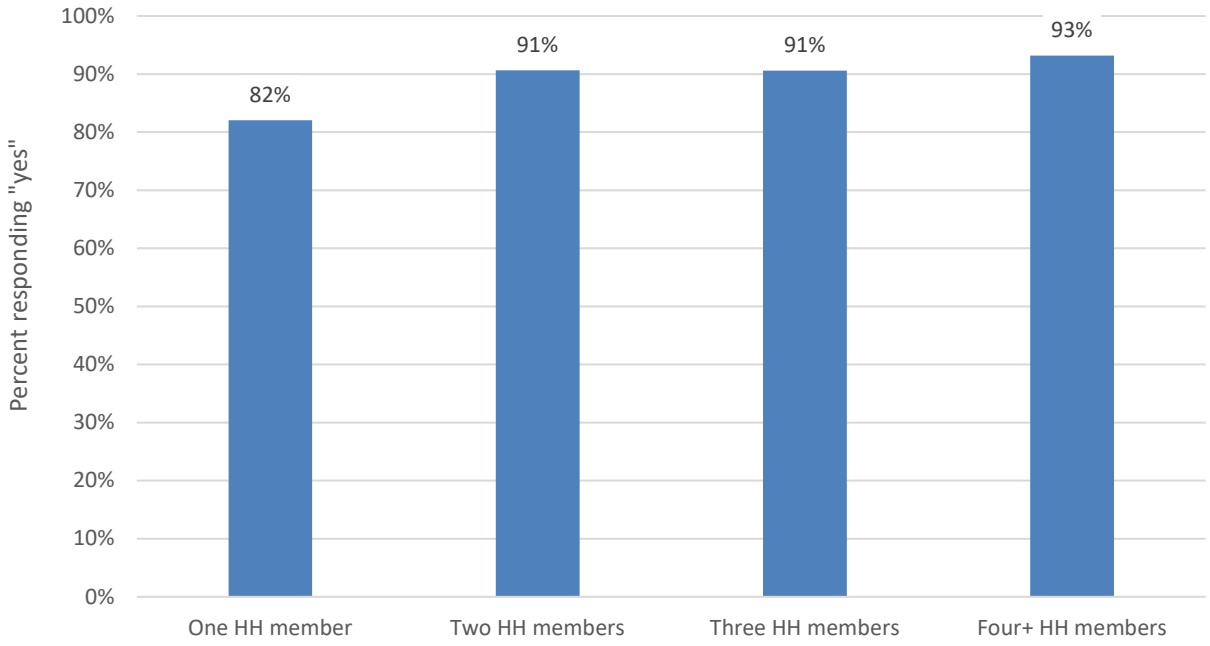


Figure 29: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

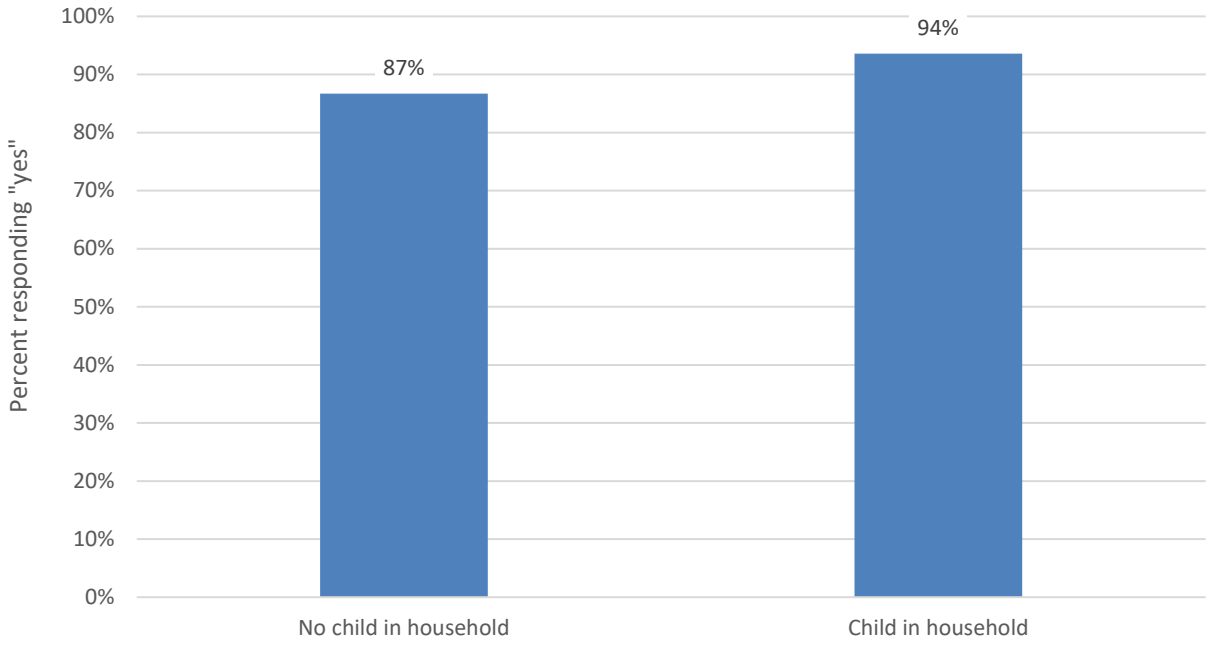


Figure 30: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by aging individuals in household

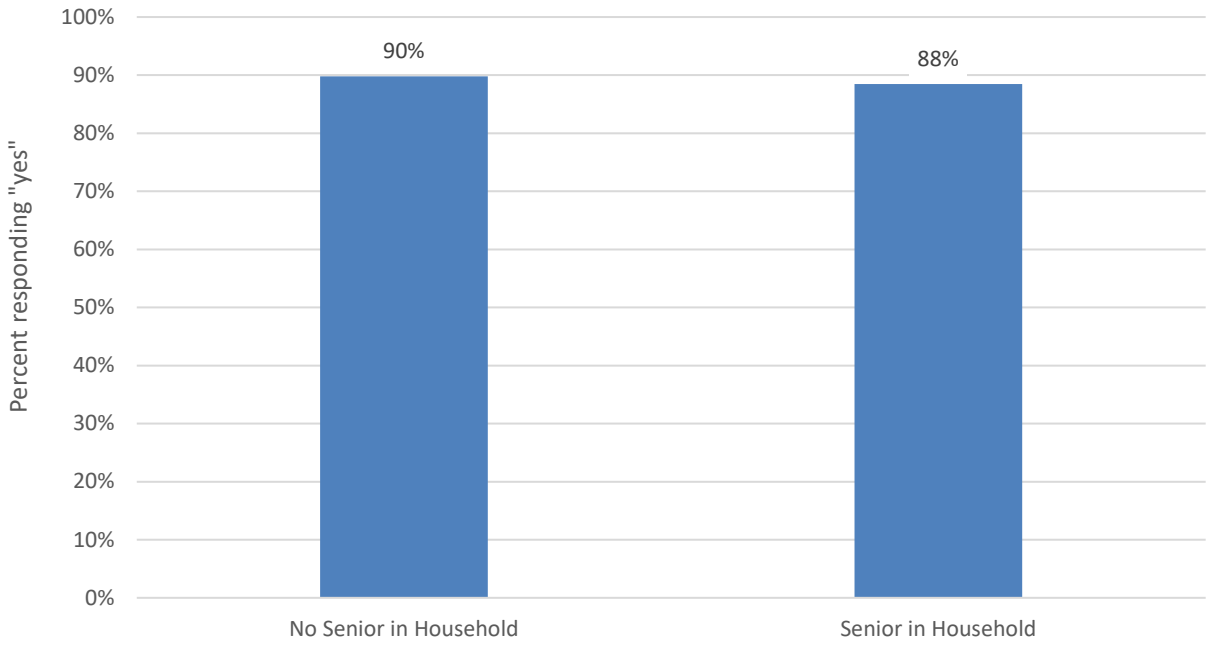
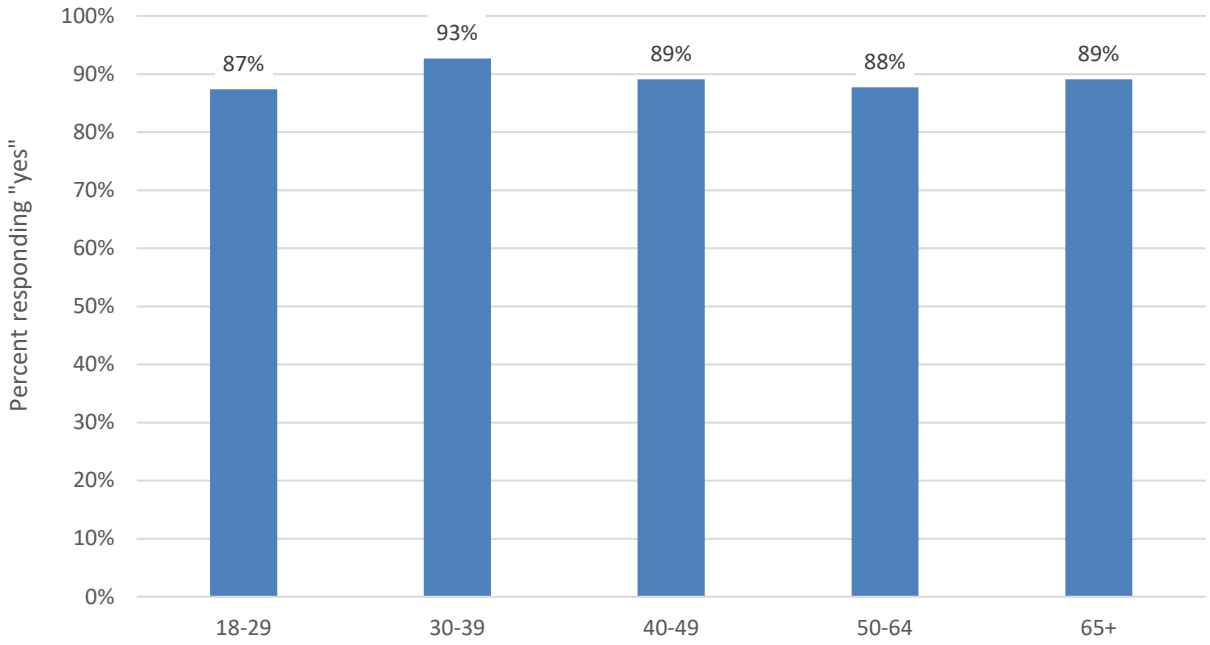
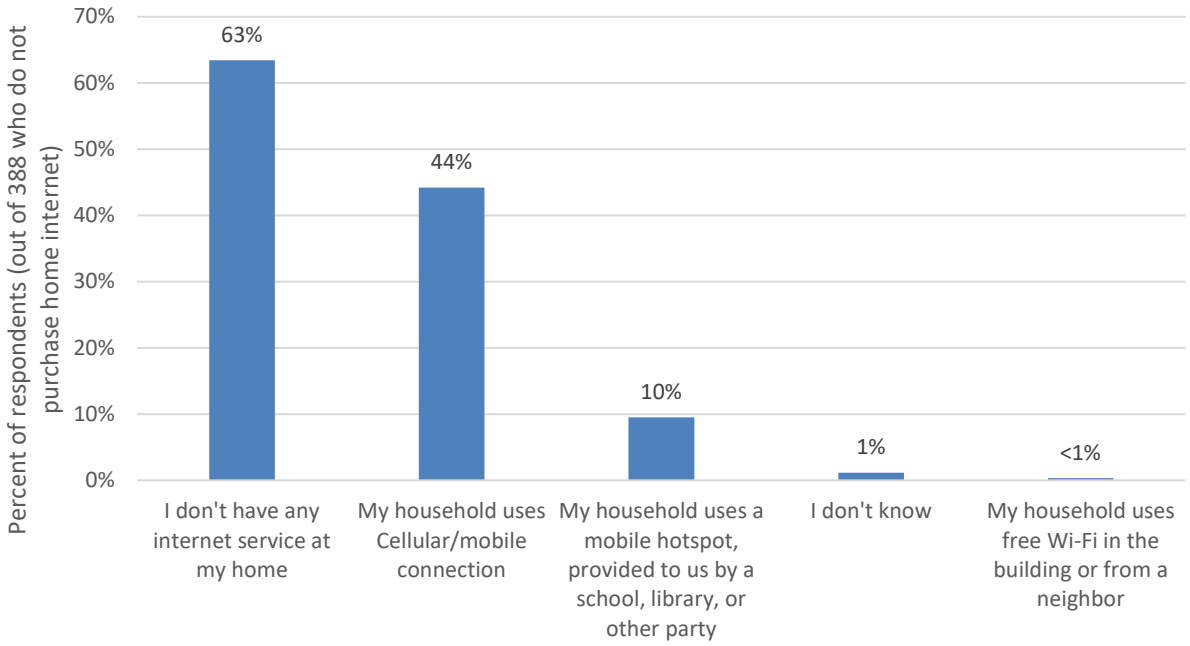


Figure 31: Percent of households that purchase home internet service by respondent age



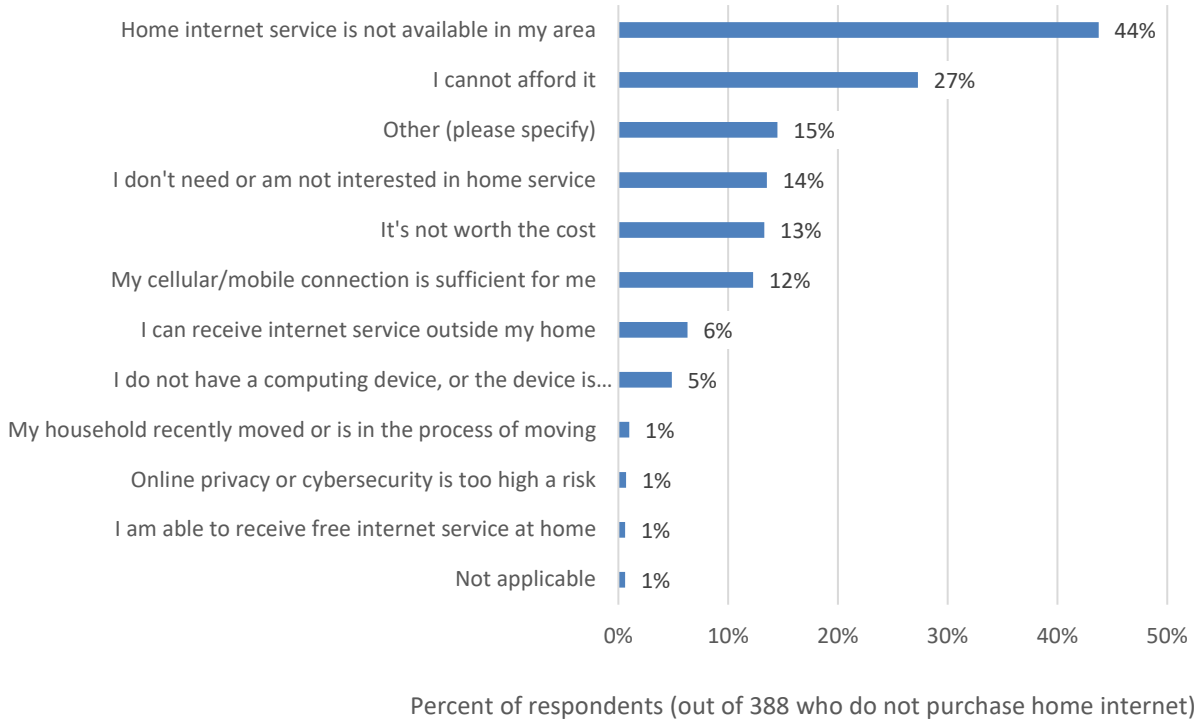
We understand that you don't purchase a home internet service. If you access the internet at home in other ways, which of the following about your service at home is correct:

Figure 32: Percent of households without home internet service who access the internet in other ways



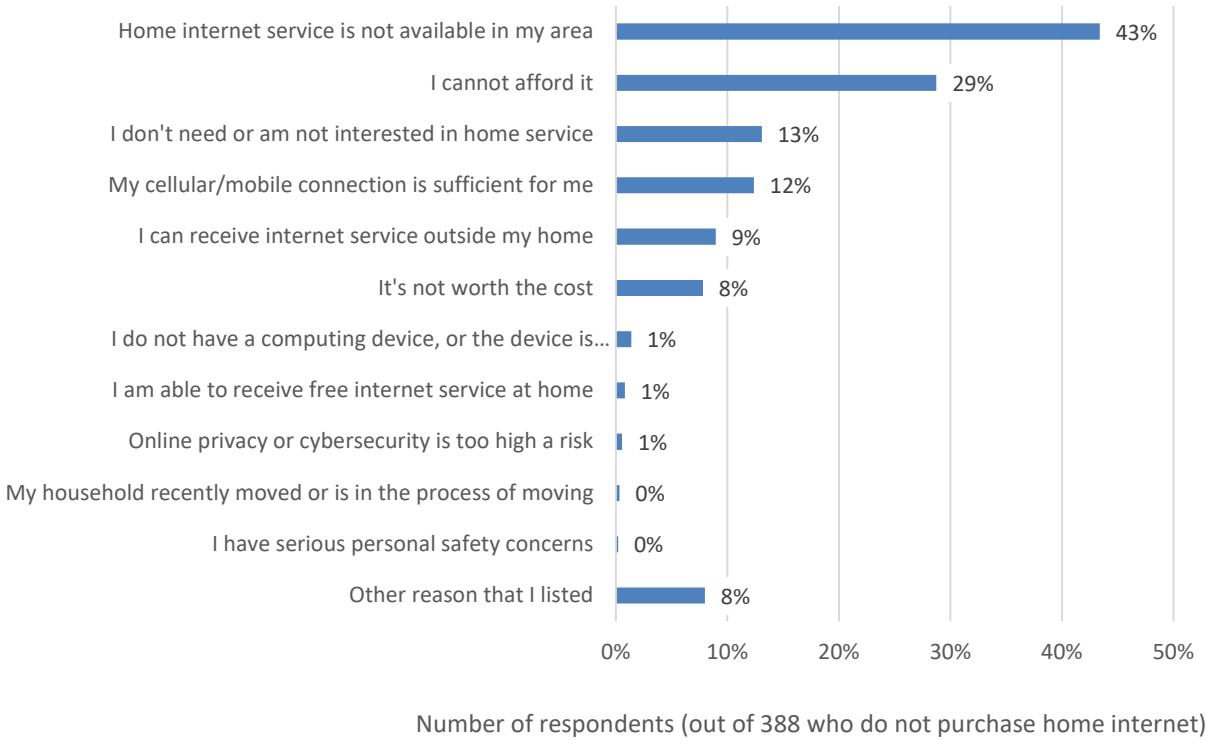
What are the reasons why your household does not purchase home internet service?

Figure 33: Reasons households do not purchase home internet service



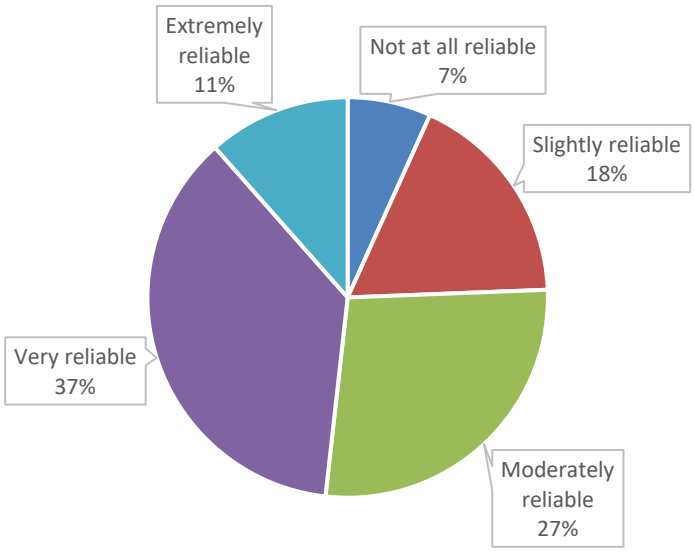
Of the reasons you picked for not purchasing a home internet service, which do you and the members of your household consider to be the most important?

Figure 34: Most important reason households do not purchase home internet service



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

Figure 35: Reliability of home internet service



Percent of households with home internet service

Figure 36: Reliability of home internet service by region

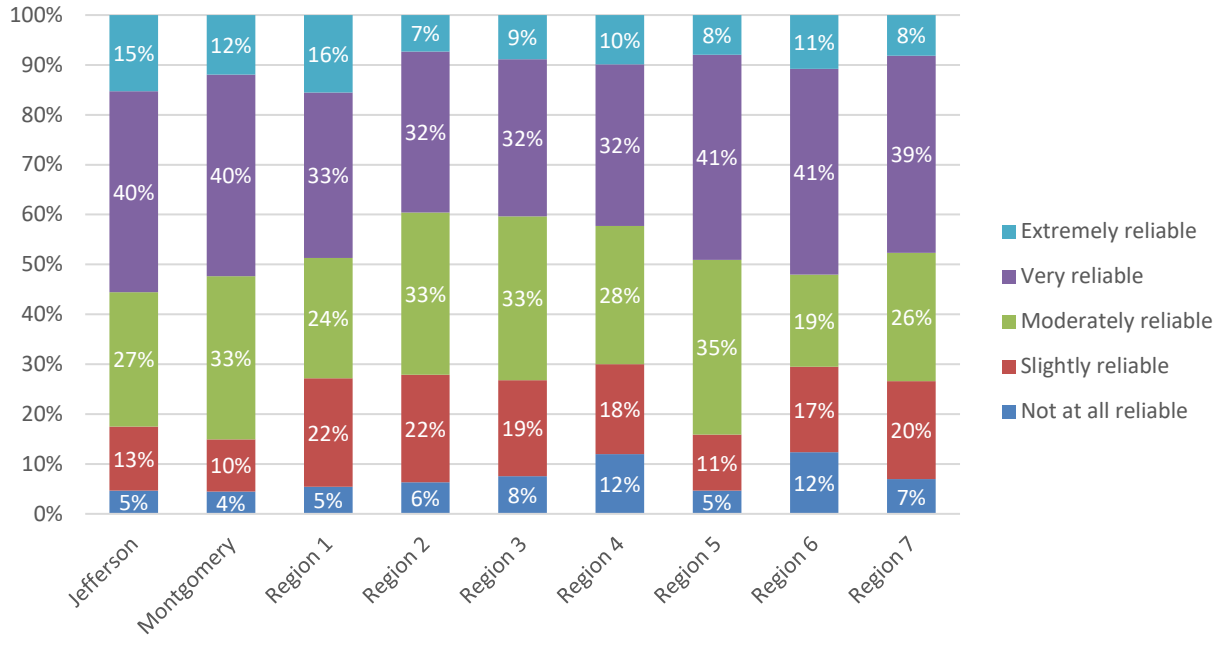


Figure 37: Reliability of home internet service by household income

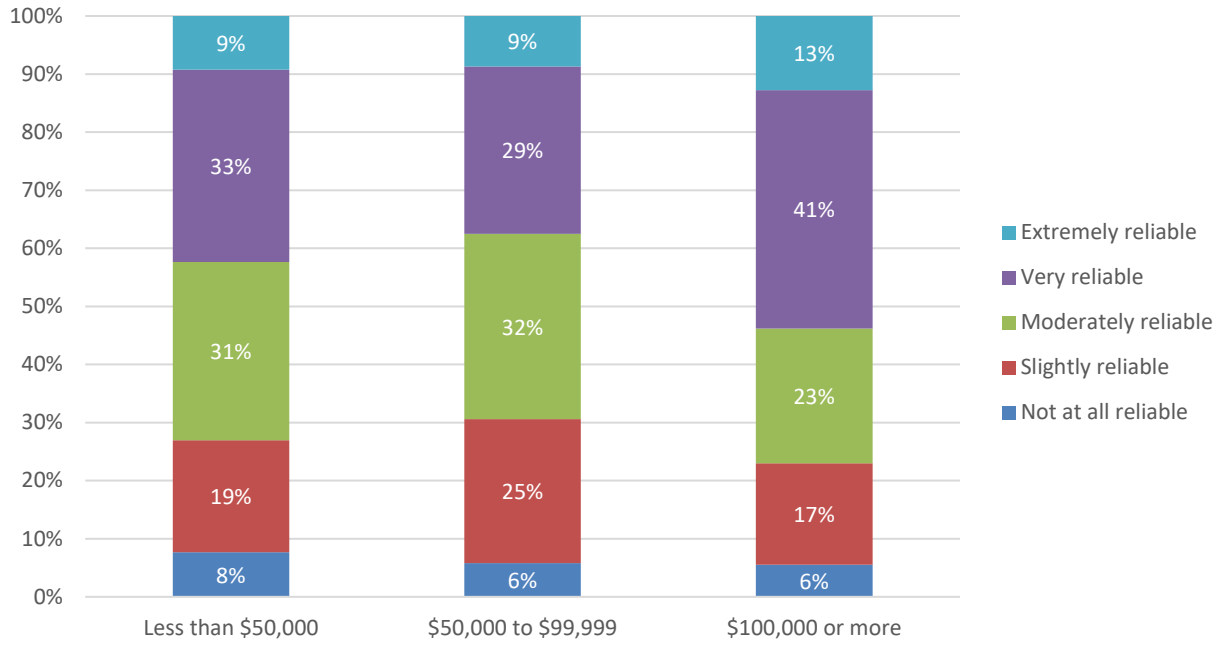


Figure 38: Reliability of home internet service by race/ethnicity

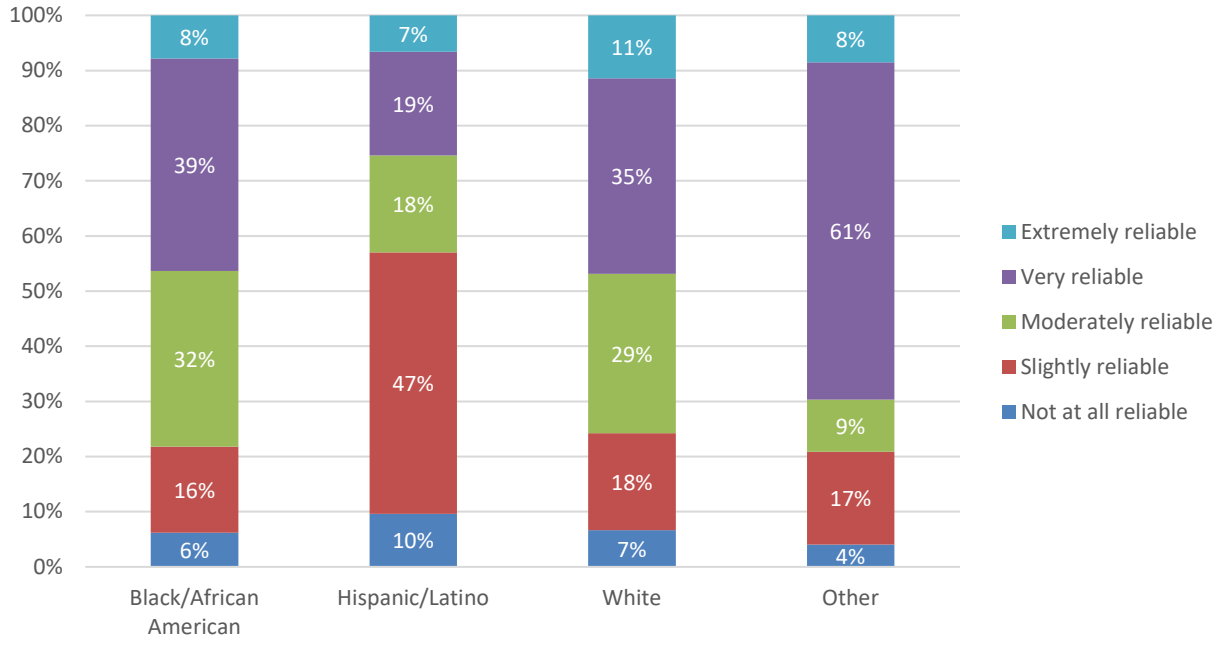


Figure 39: Reliability of home internet service by student status

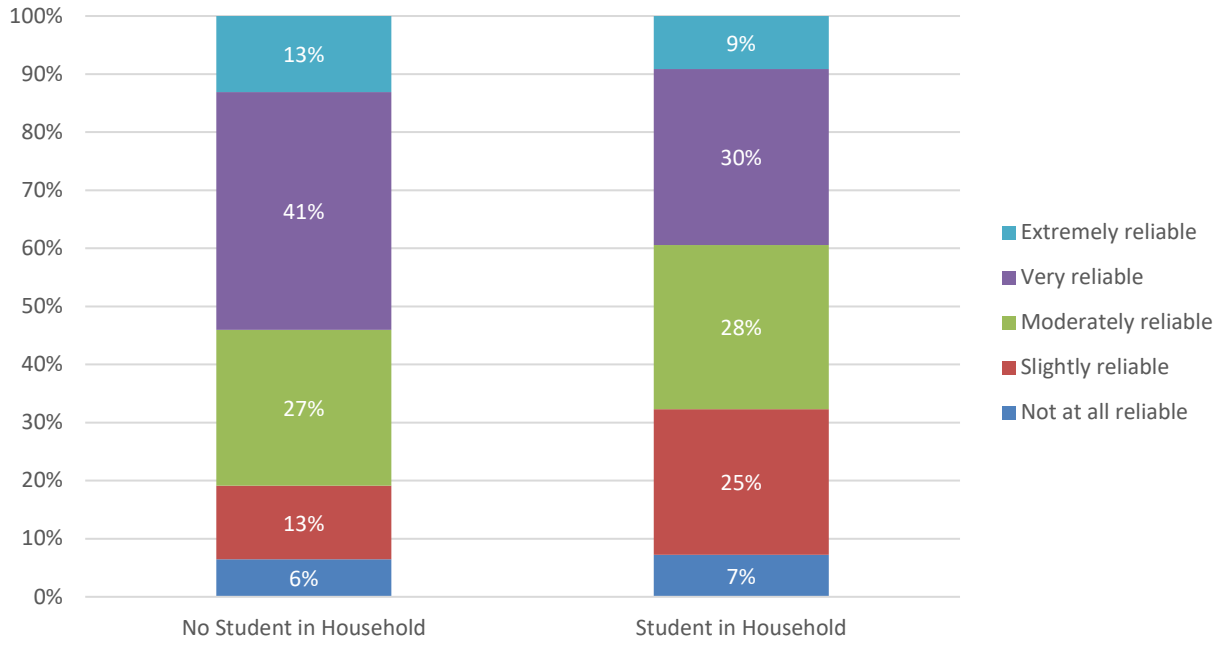


Figure 40: Reliability of home internet service by household size

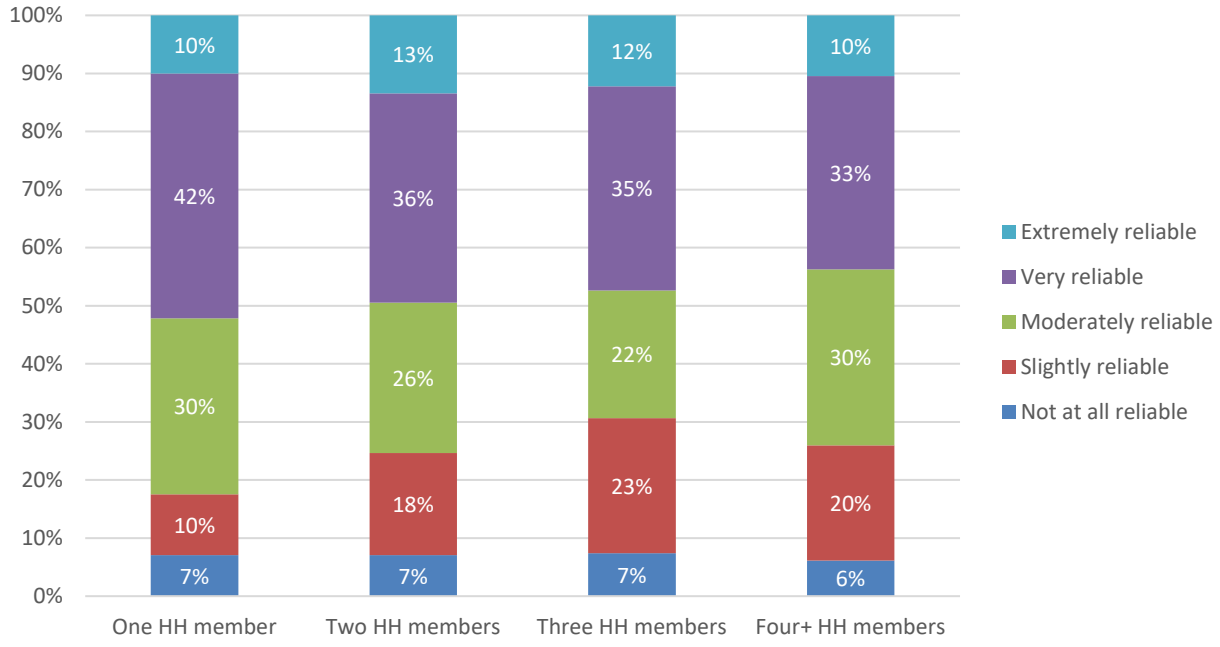


Figure 41: Reliability of home internet service by children in household (at least one person under age 18 in the household)

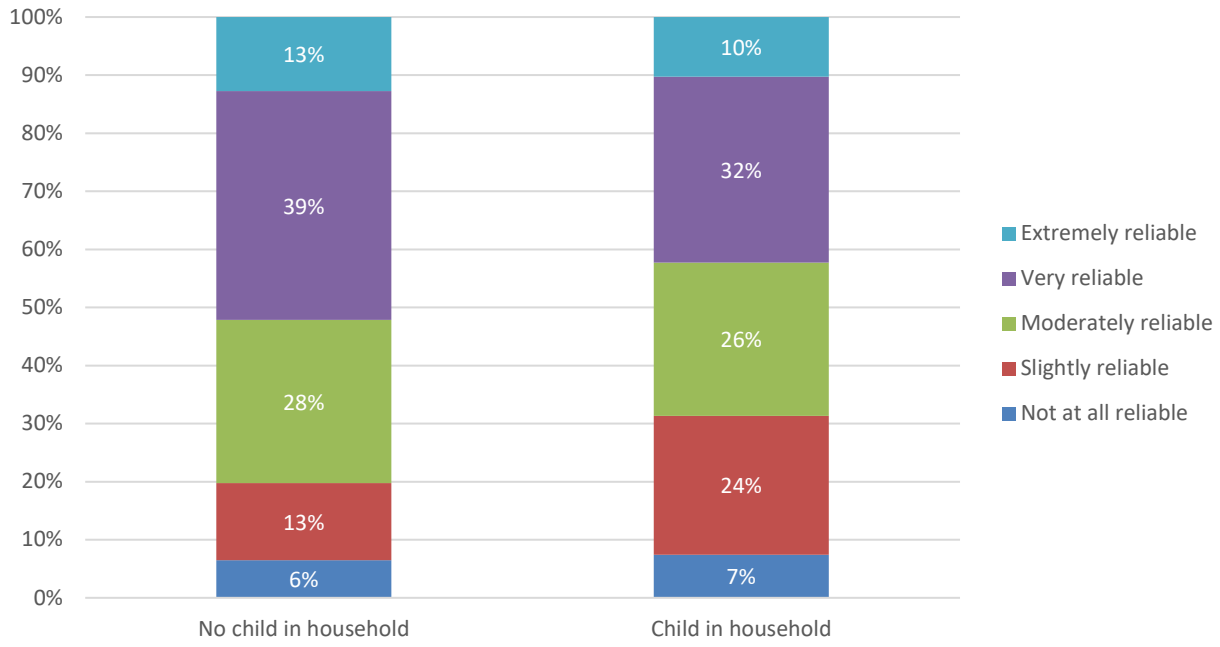


Figure 42: Reliability of home internet service by aging individuals in household

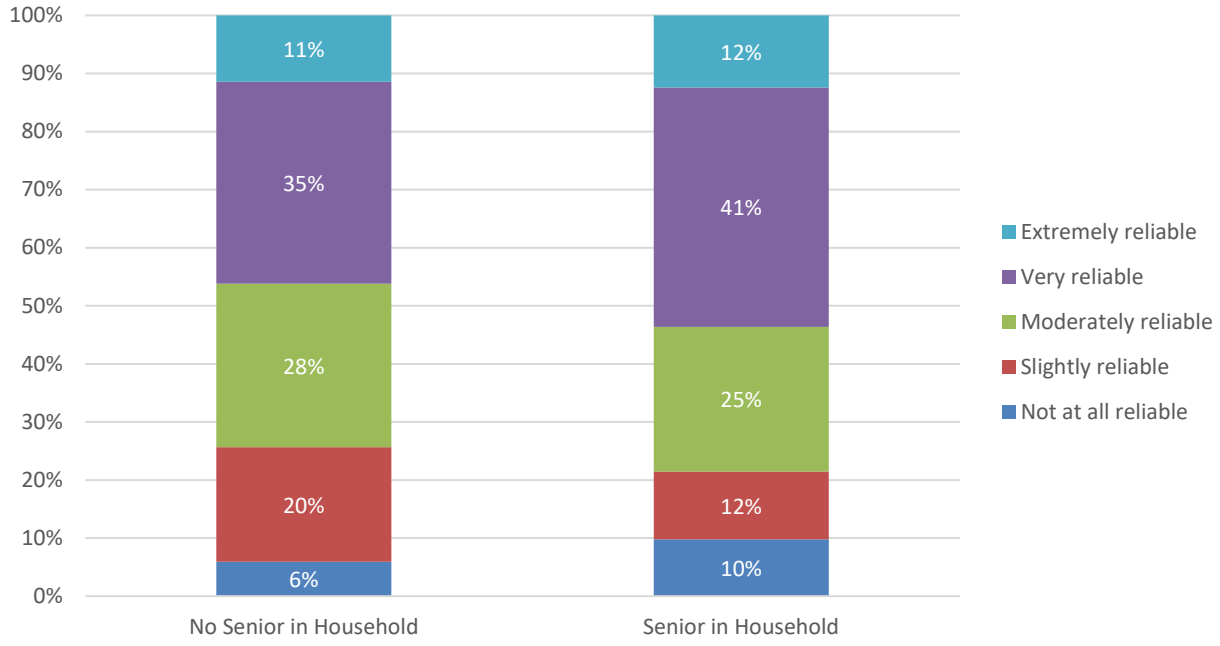
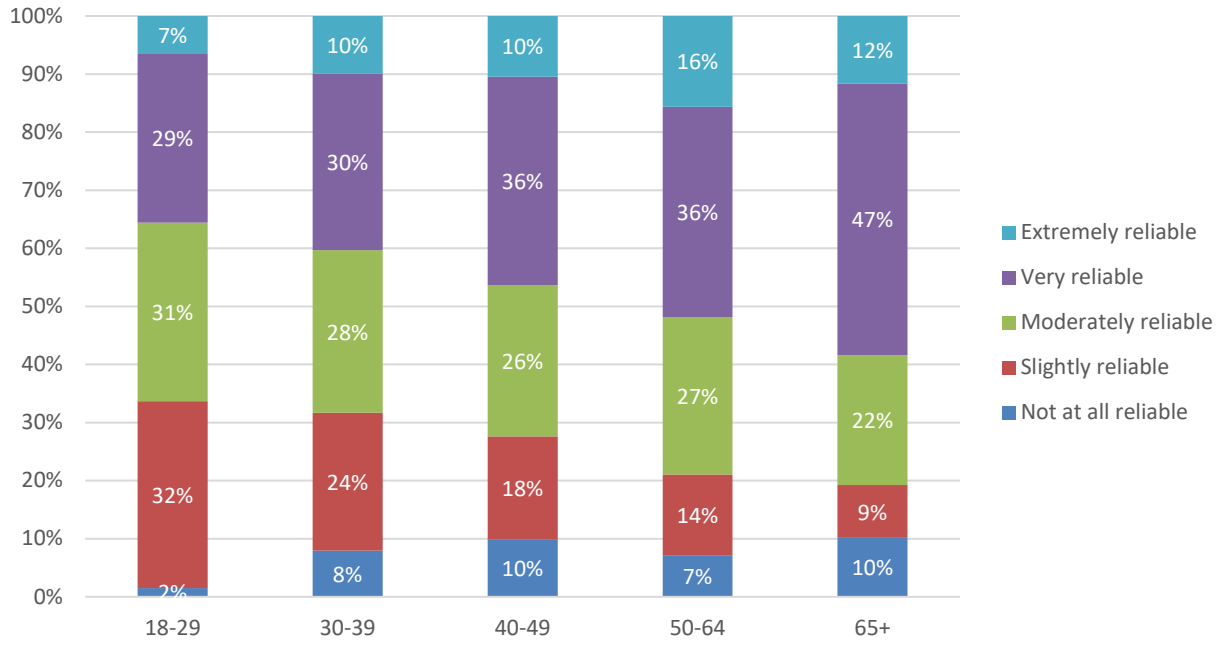


Figure 43: Reliability of home internet service by respondent age



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

Figure 44: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs

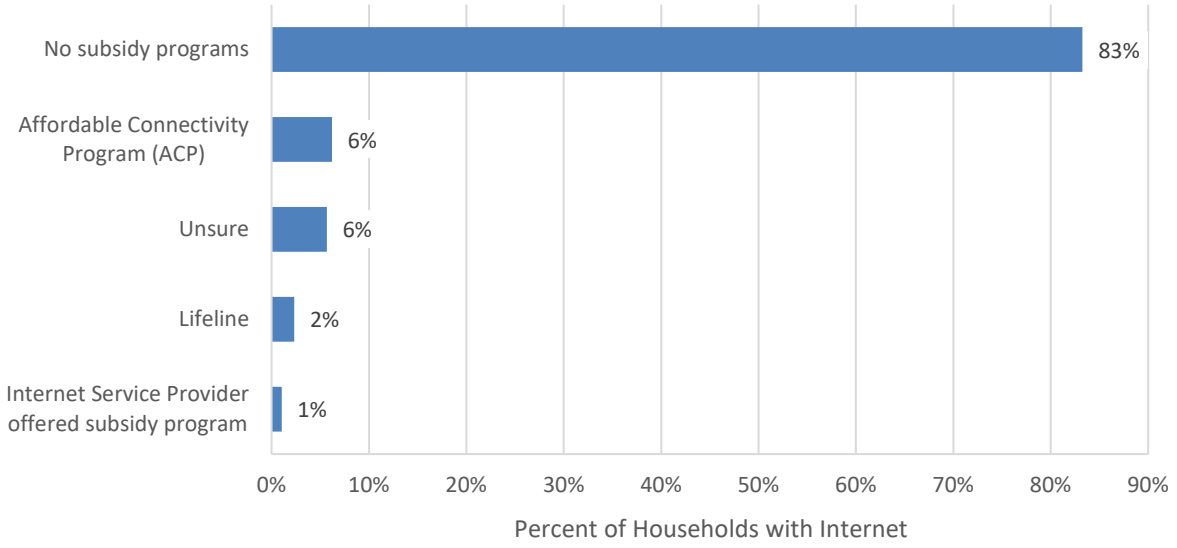


Figure 45: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by region

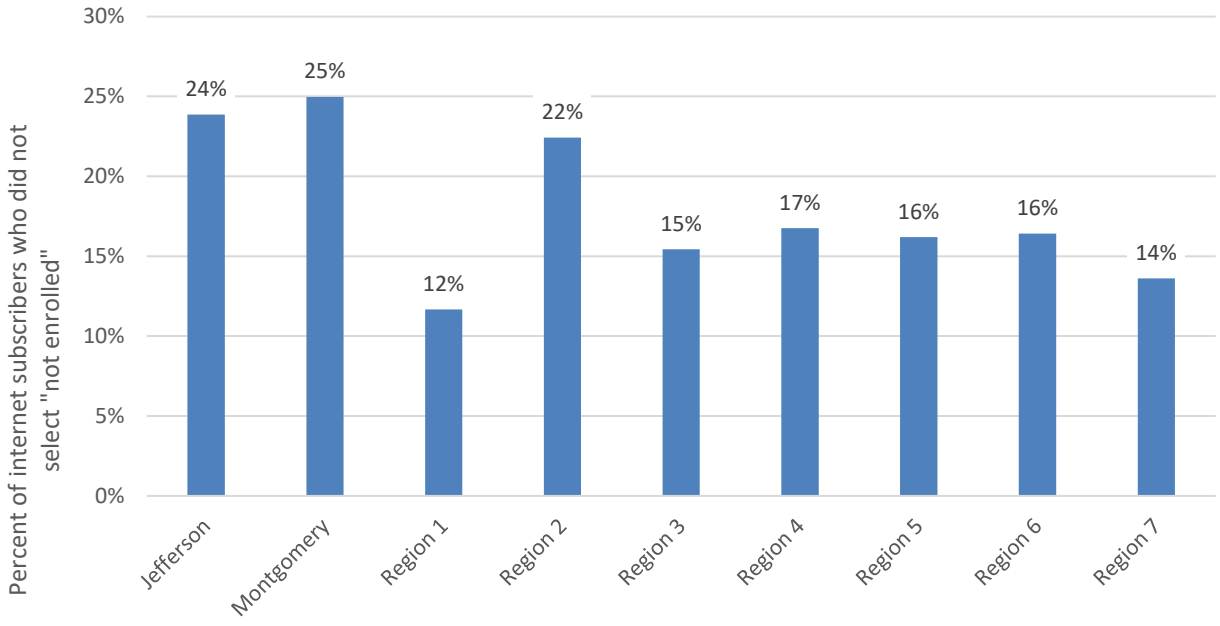


Figure 46: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by at-risk households

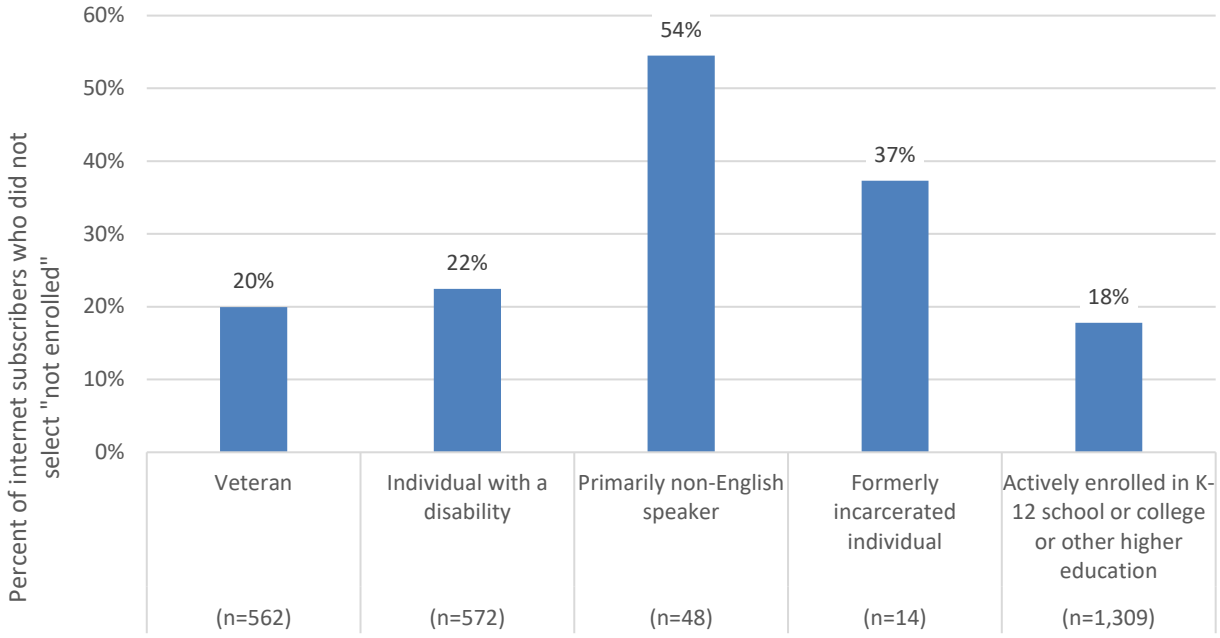


Figure 47: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by household income

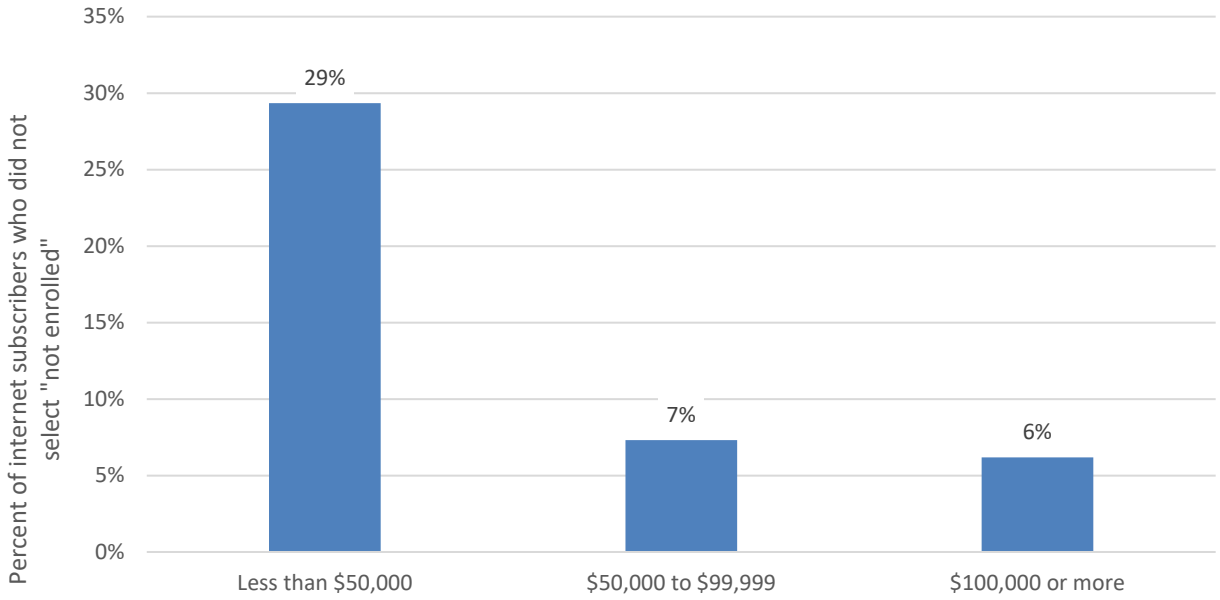


Figure 48: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by race/ethnicity

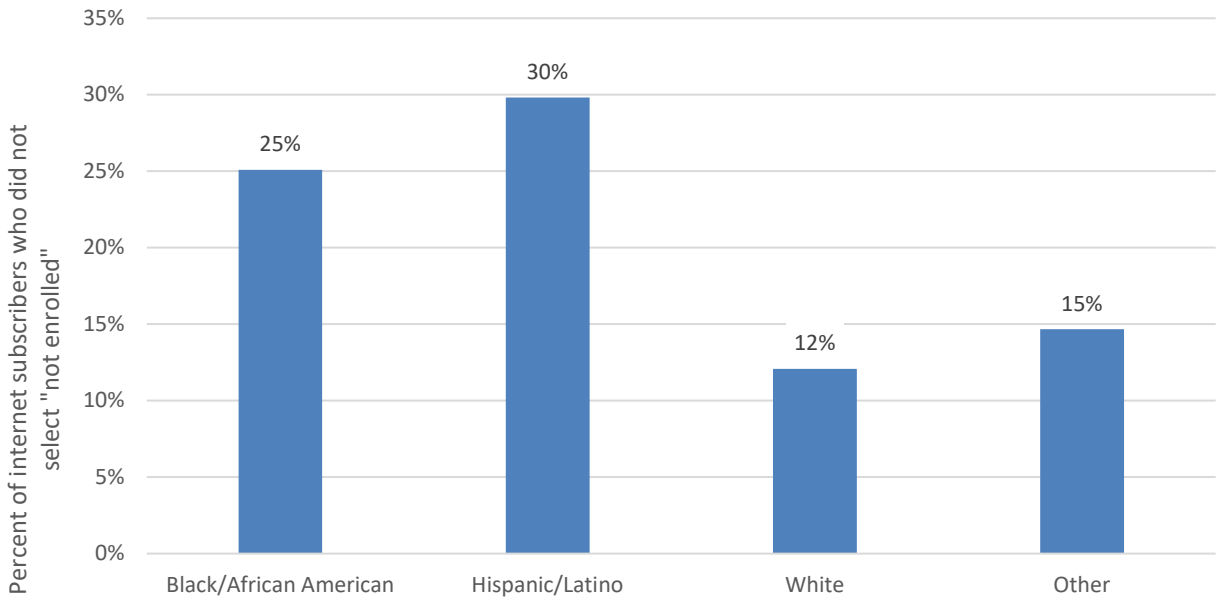


Figure 49: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by student status

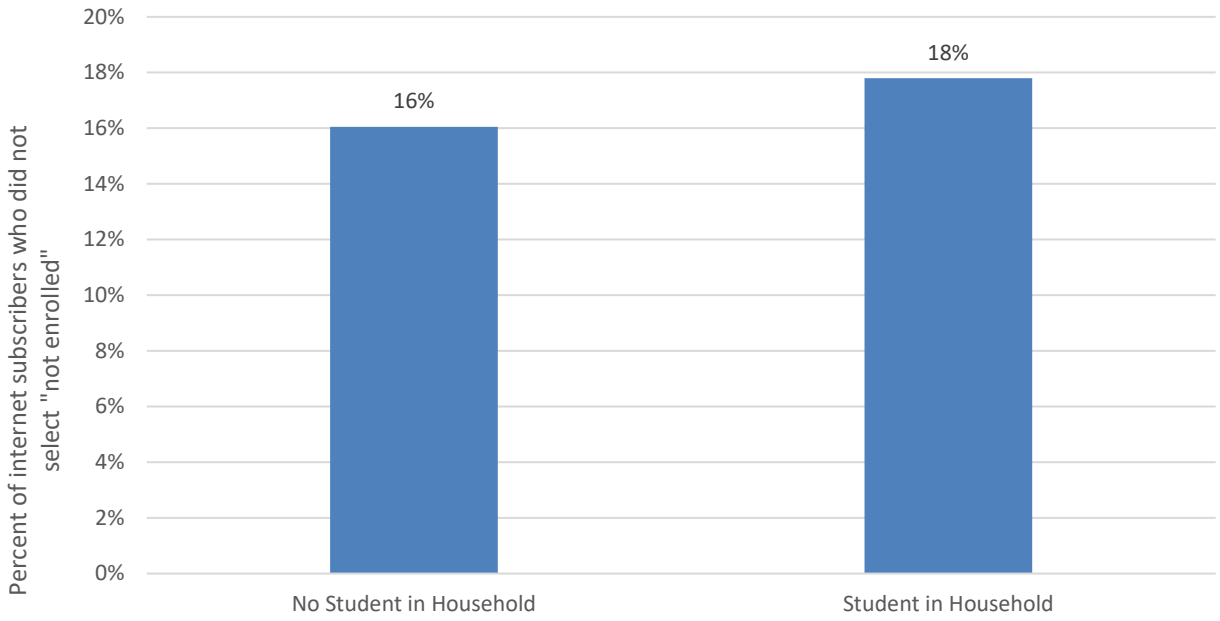


Figure 50: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by household size

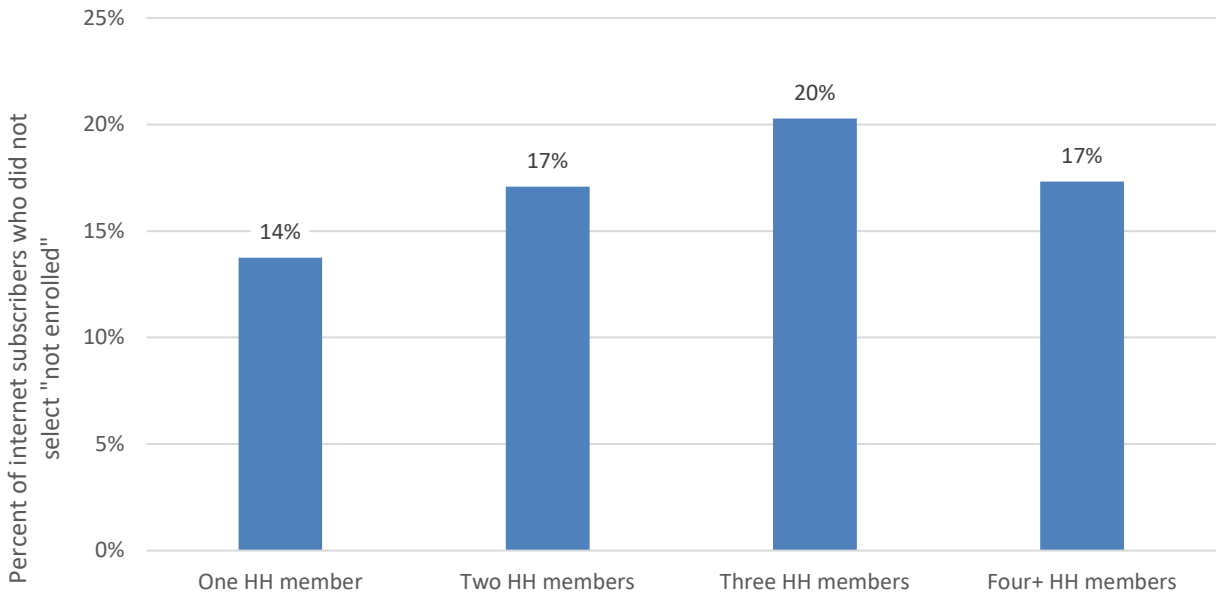


Figure 51: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by children in household (at least one person under age 18 in the household)

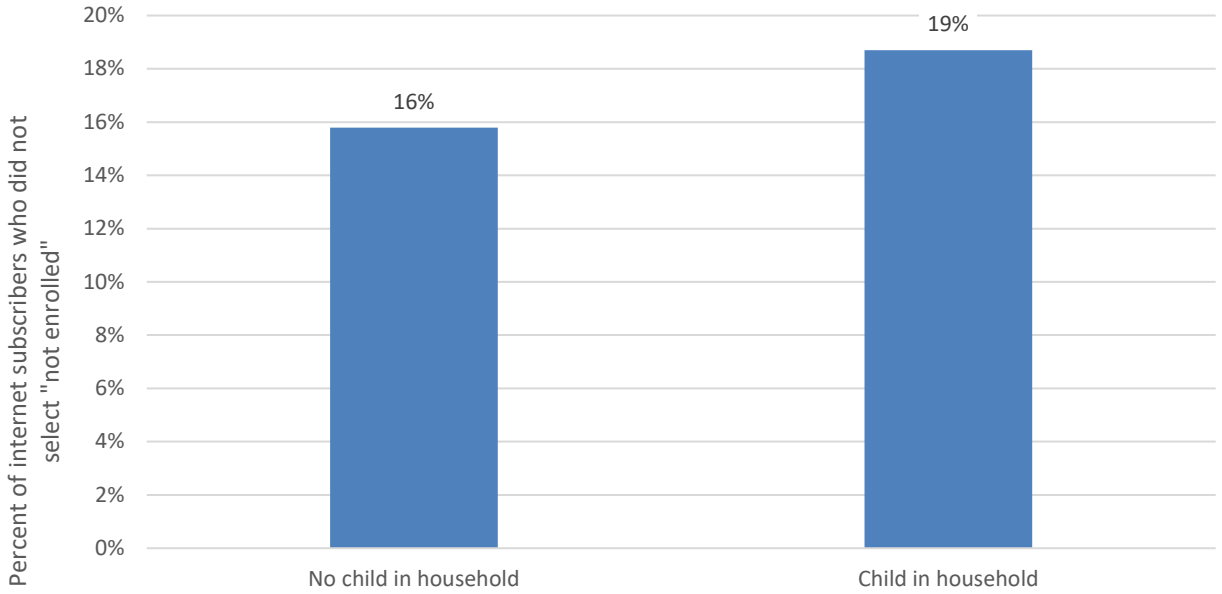


Figure 52: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by aging individuals in household

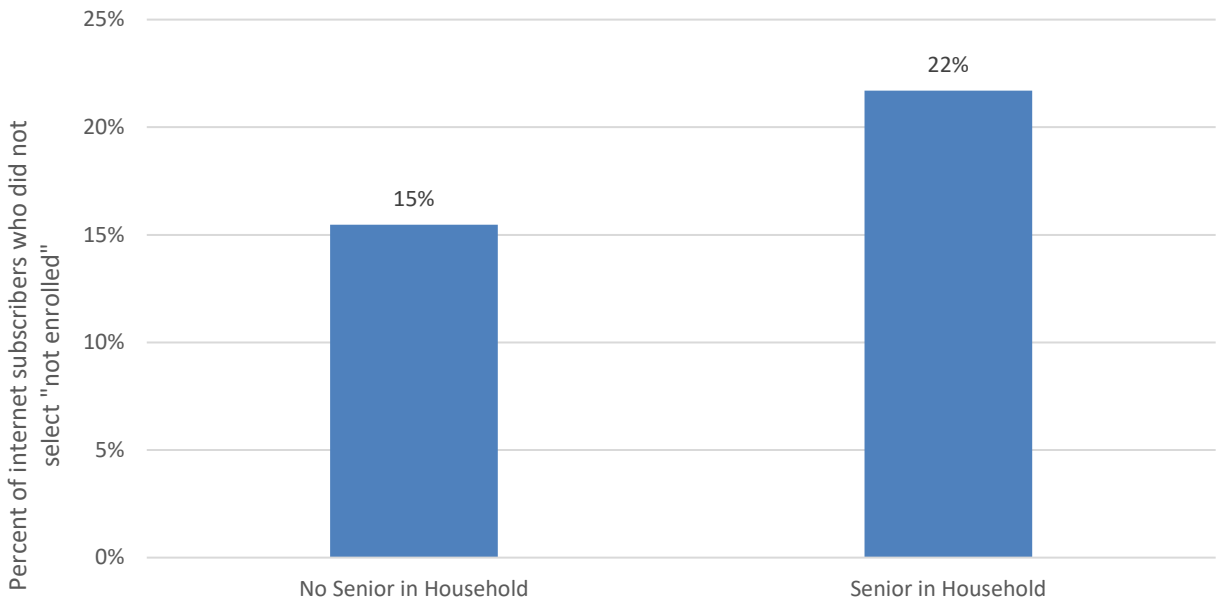
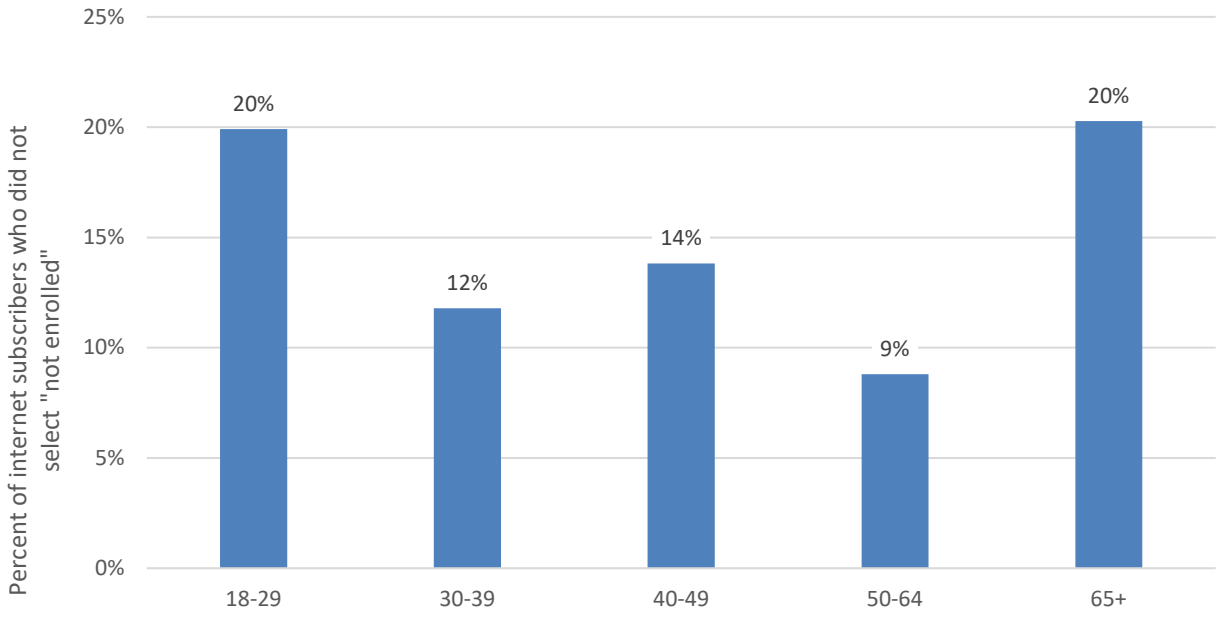


Figure 53: Percent of households with home internet service that are enrolled in subsidy programs by respondent age



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

Figure 54: Monthly cost of home internet service

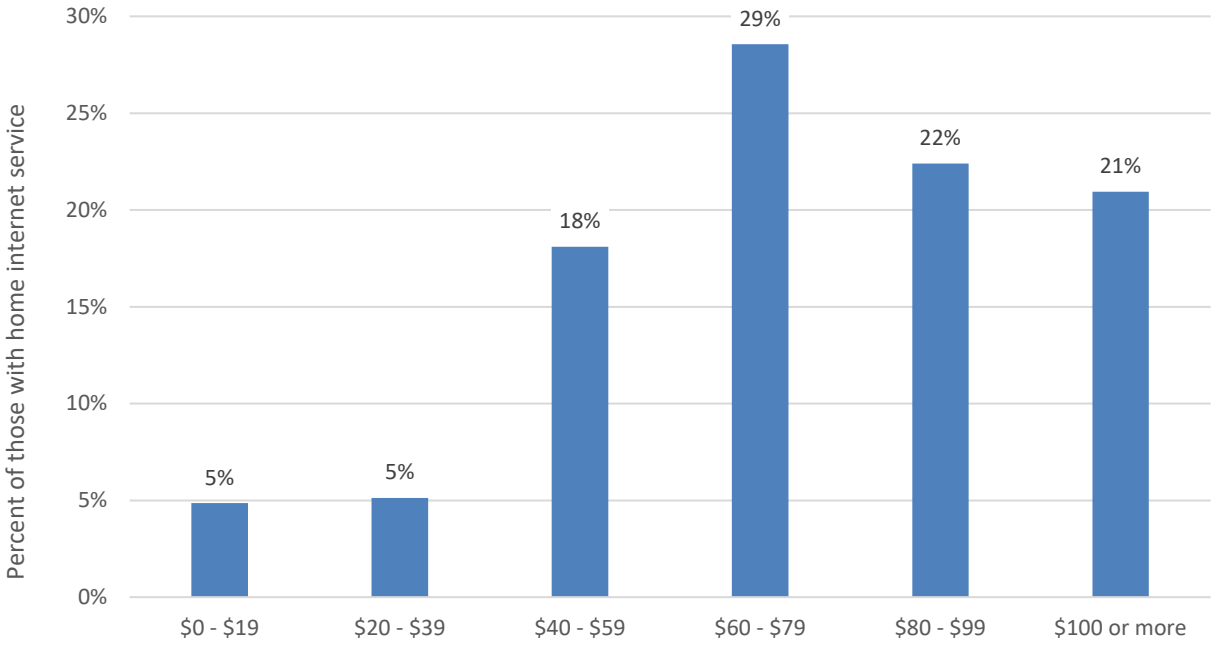


Figure 55: Monthly cost of home internet service by region

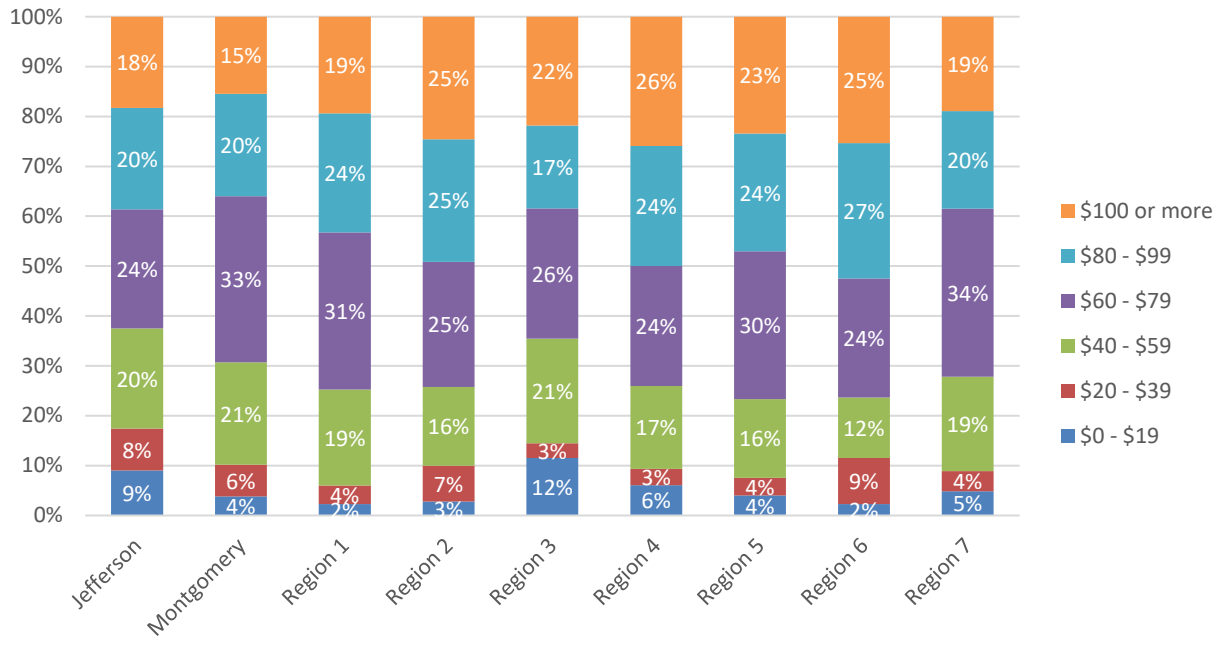


Figure 56: Monthly cost of home internet service by household income

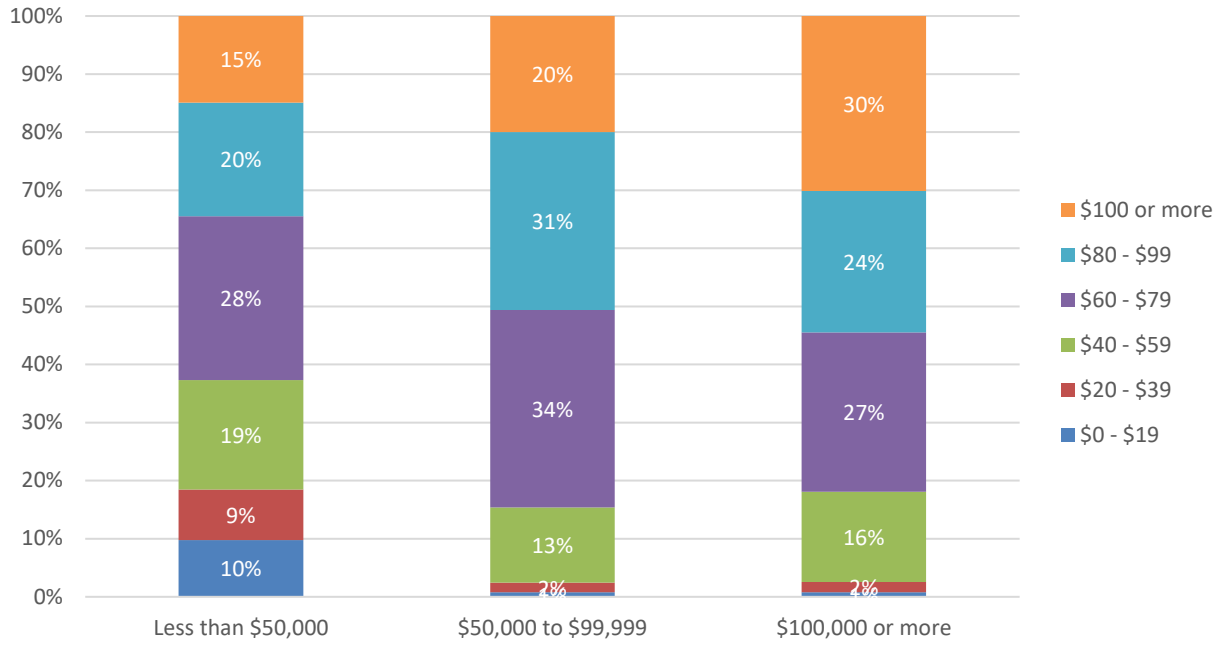


Figure 57: Monthly cost of home internet service by race/ethnicity

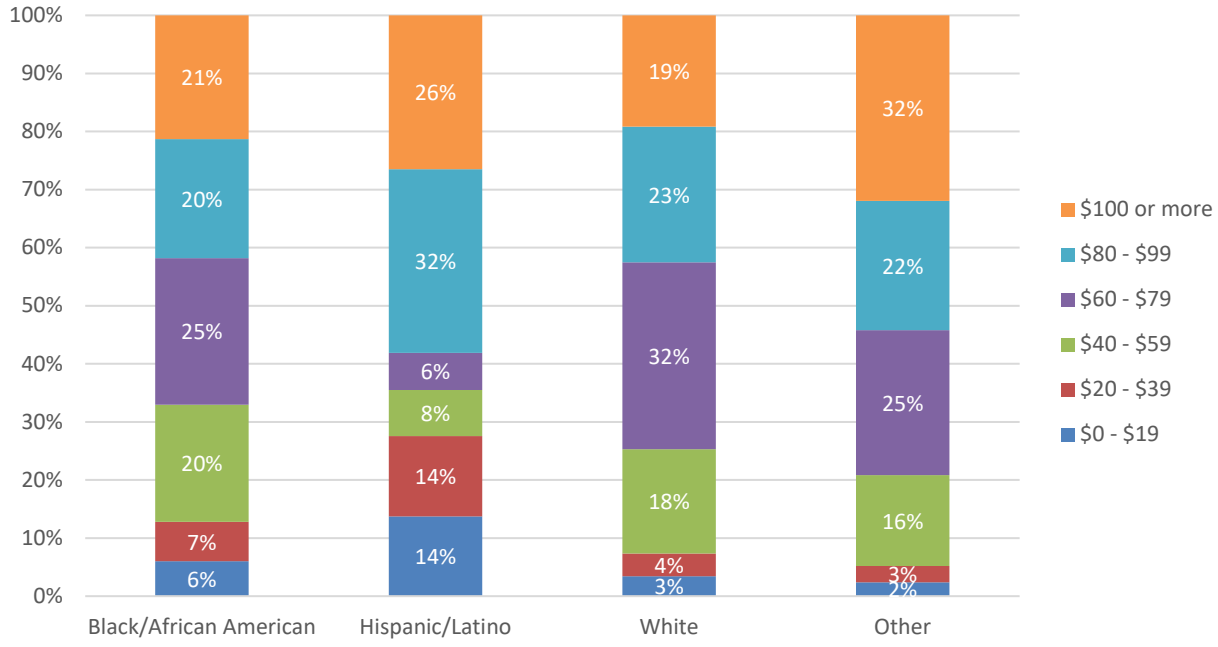


Figure 58: Monthly cost of home internet service by student status

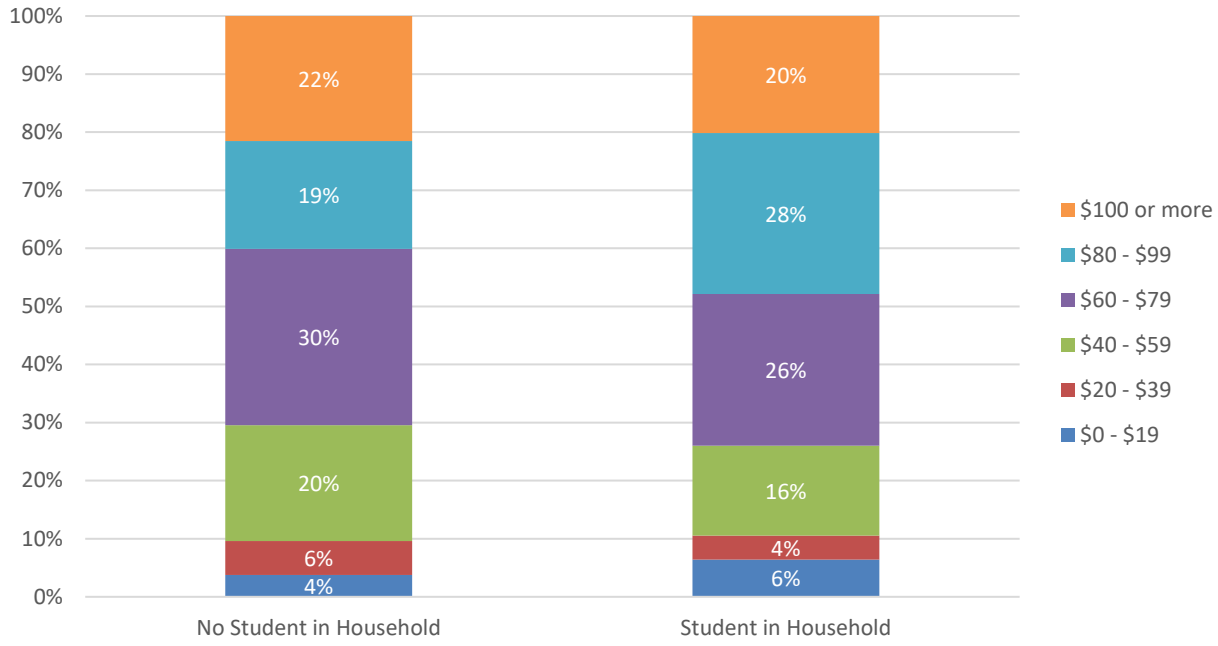


Figure 59: Monthly cost of home internet service by household size

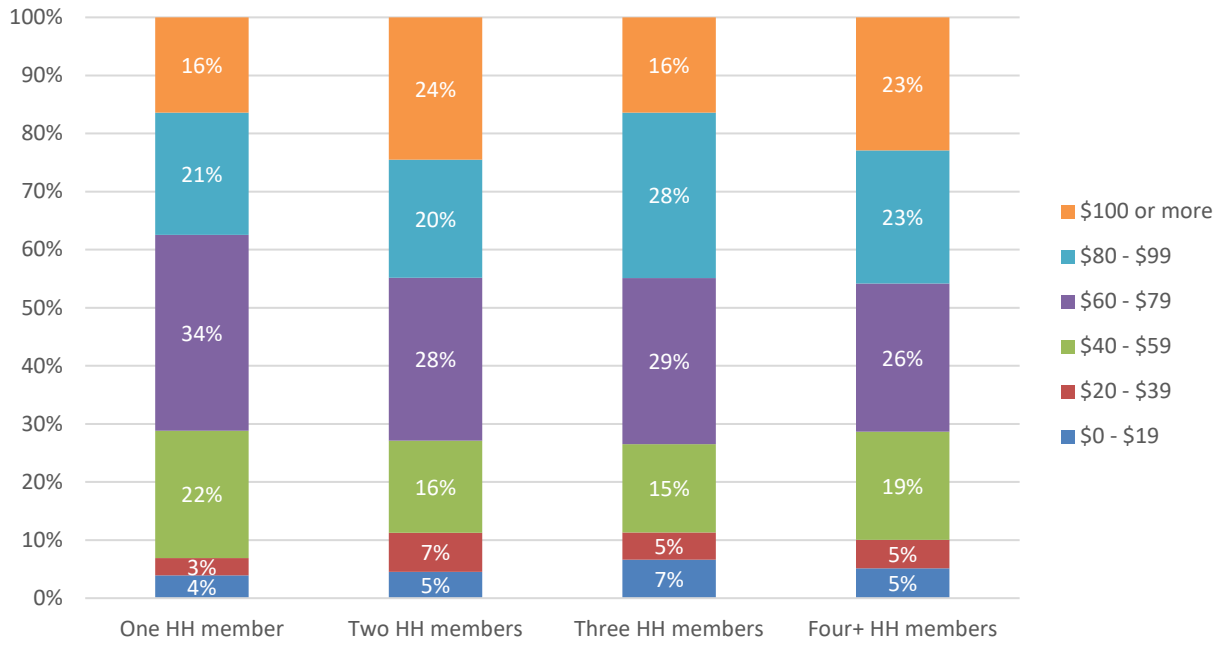


Figure 60: Monthly cost of home internet service by children in household (at least one person under age 18 in the household)

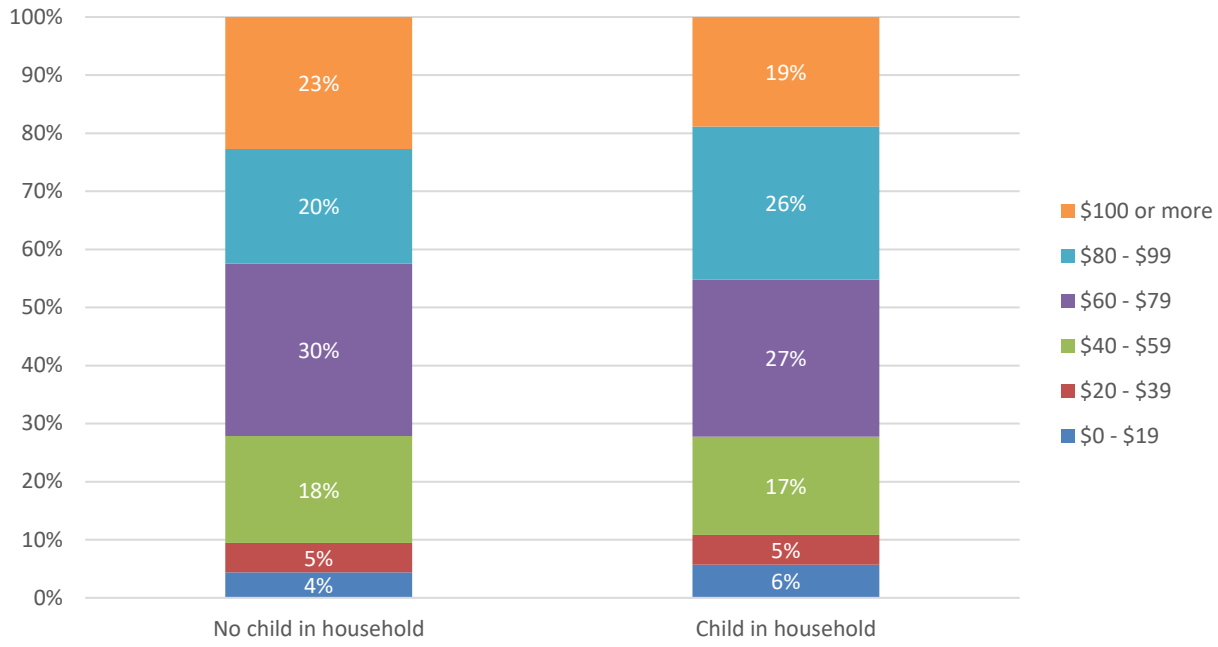


Figure 61: Monthly cost of home internet service by aging individuals in household

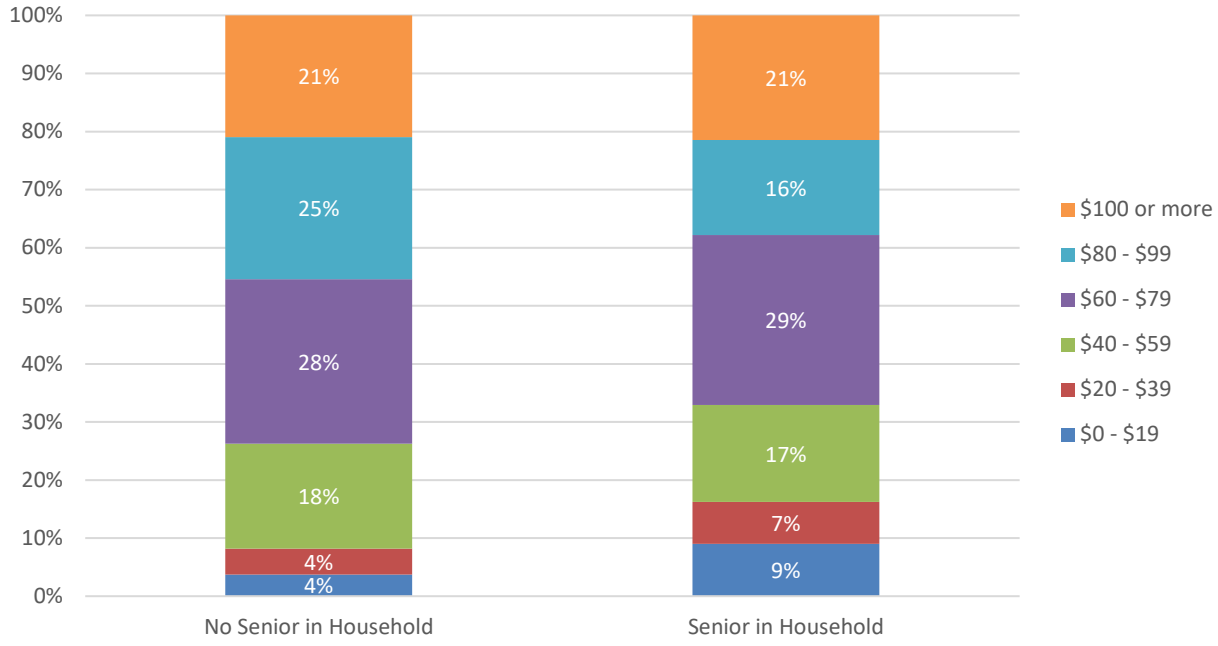
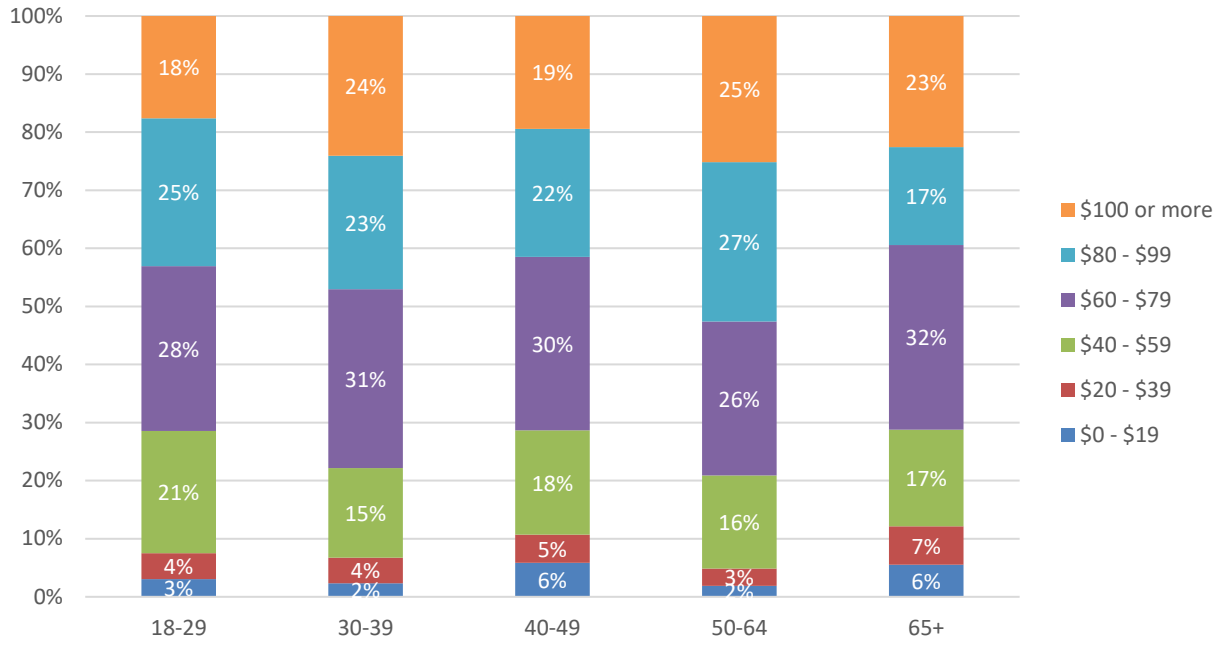


Figure 62: Monthly cost of home internet service by respondent age



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

Figure 63: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service

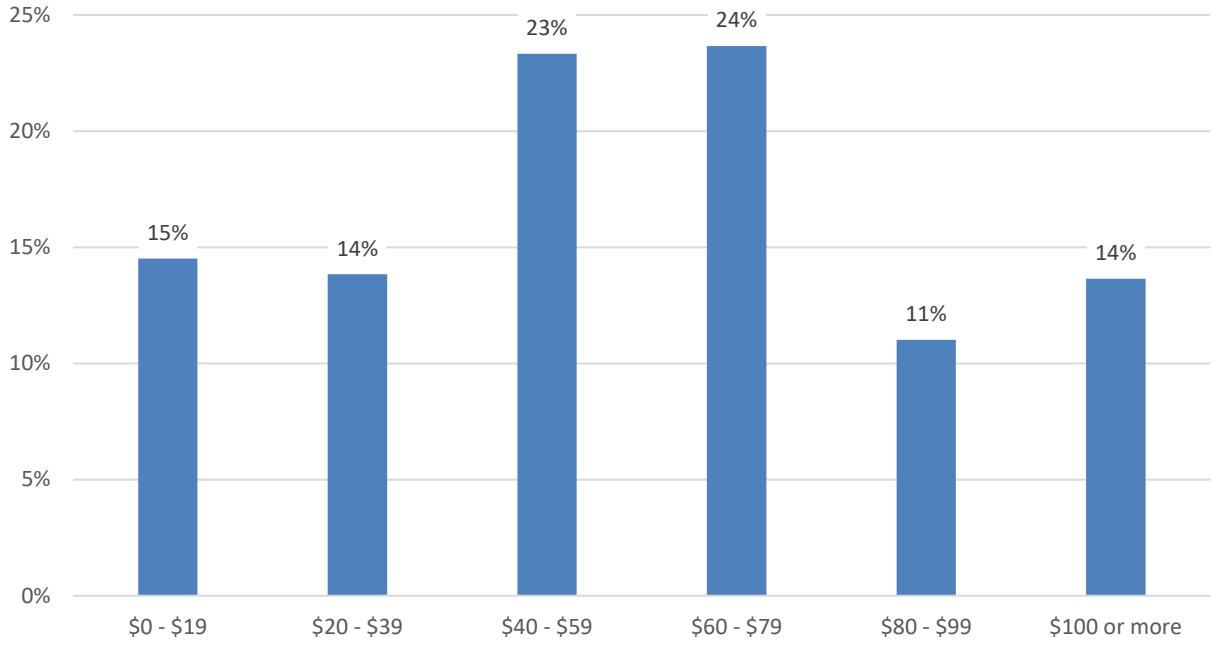


Figure 64: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by region

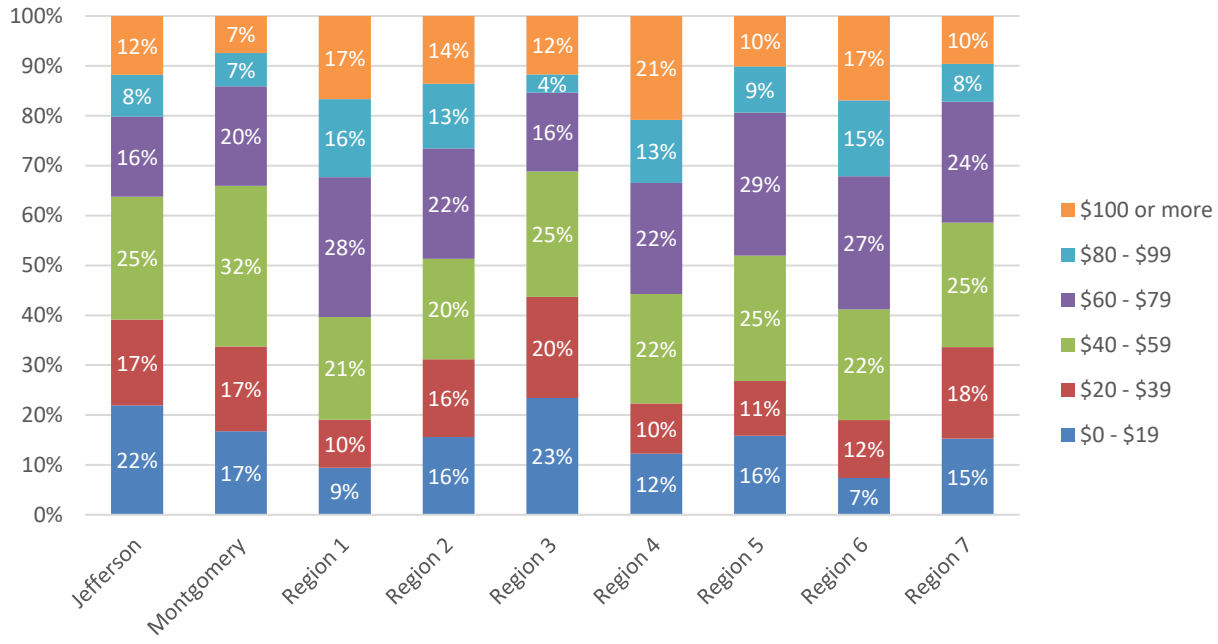


Figure 65: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by household income

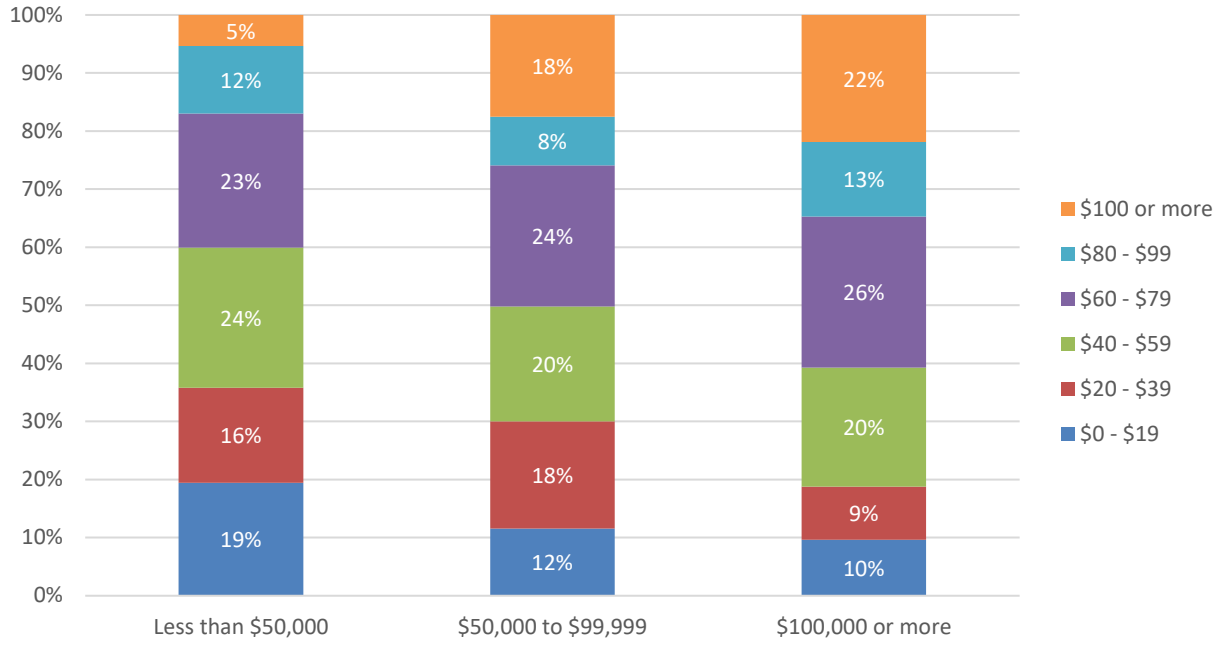


Figure 66: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by race/ethnicity

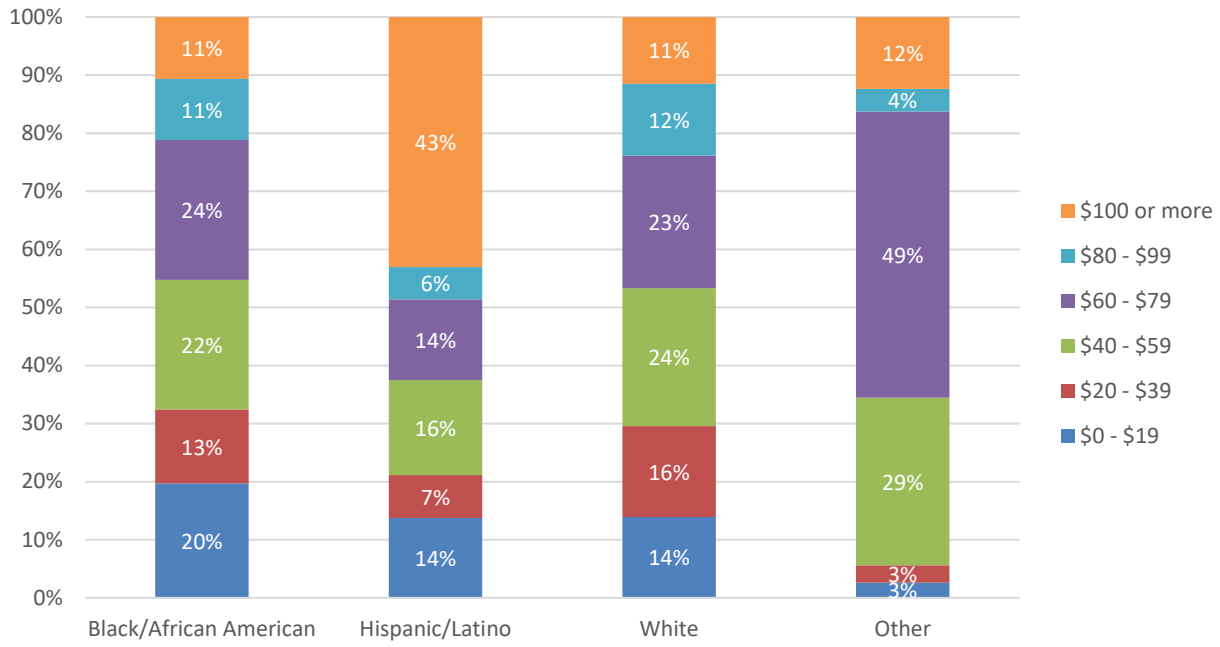


Figure 67: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by student status

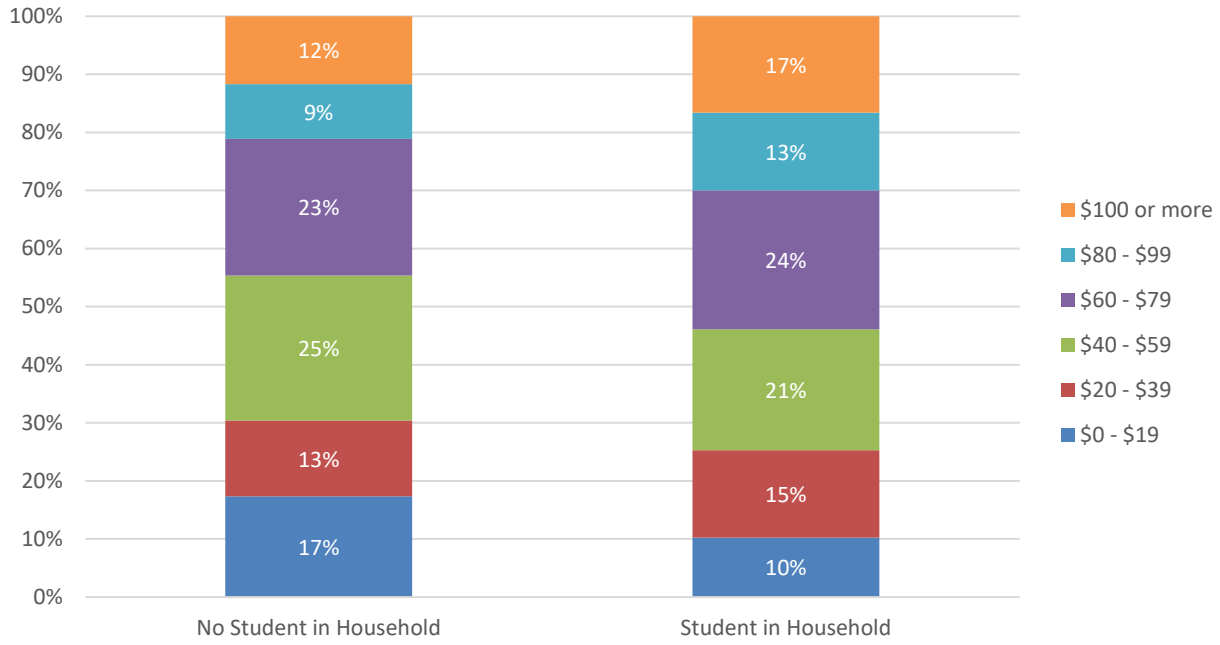


Figure 68: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by household size

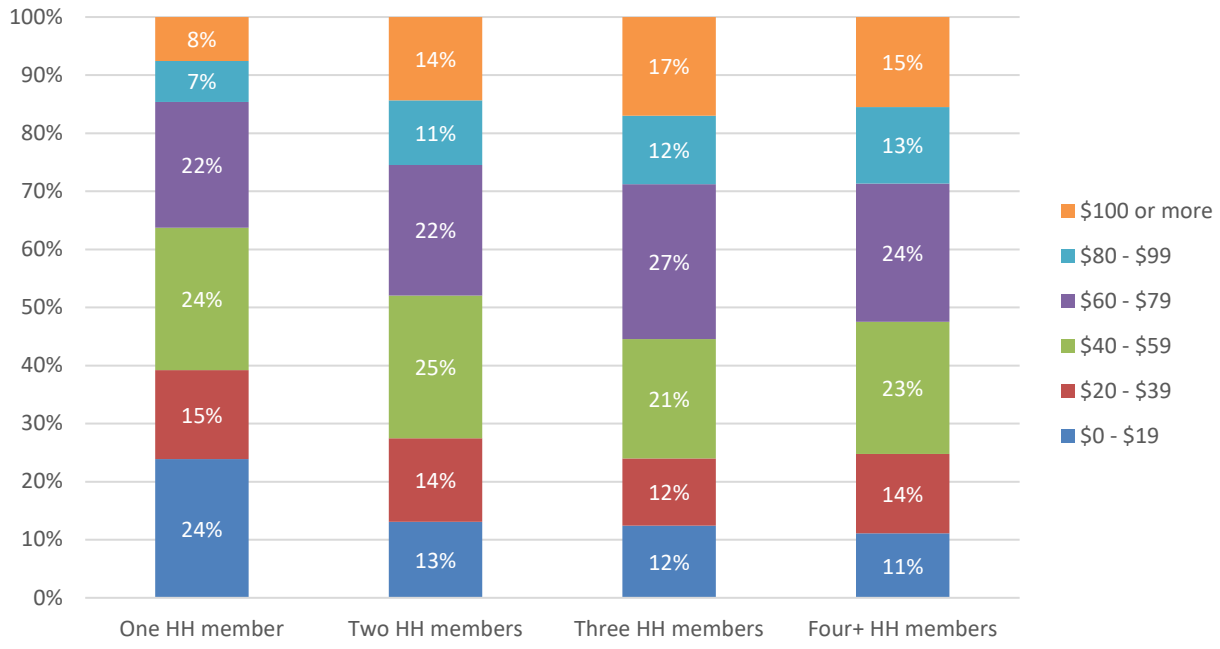


Figure 69: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by children in household (at least one person under age 18 in the household)

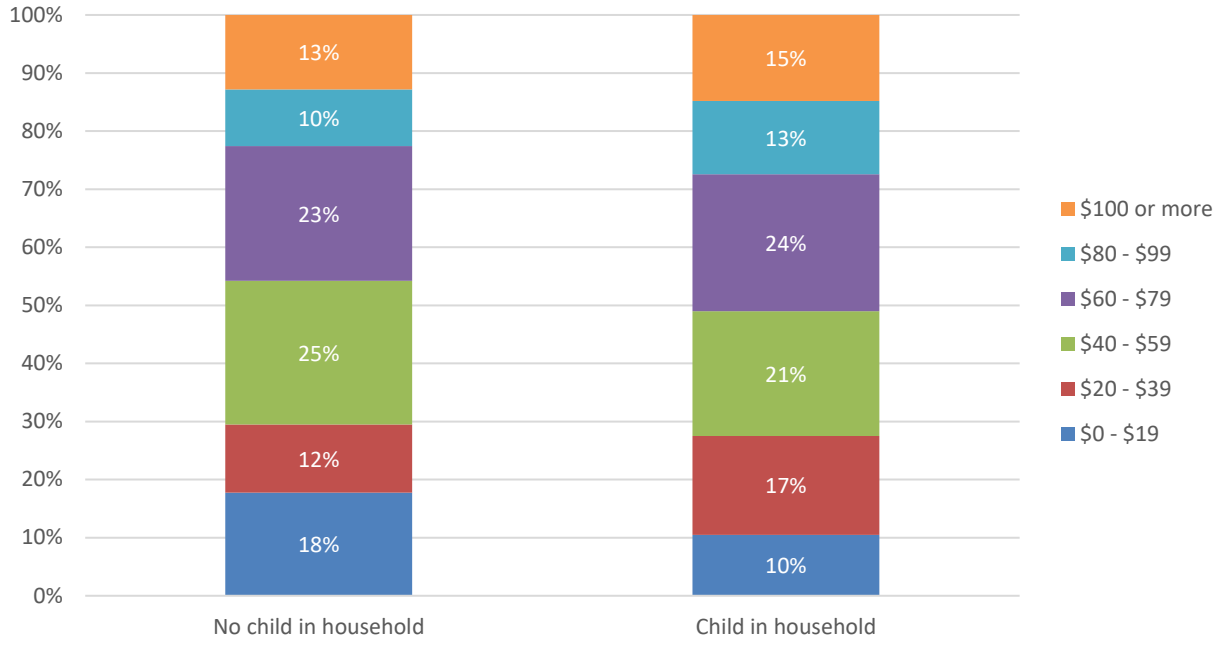


Figure 70: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by aging individuals in household

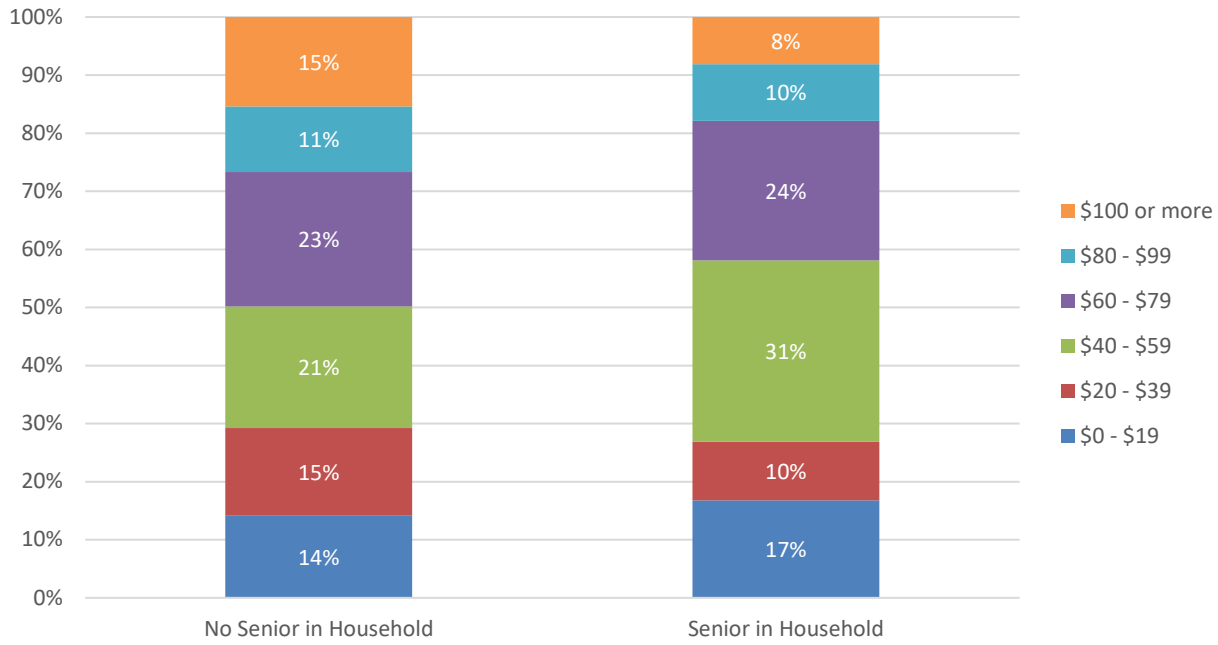
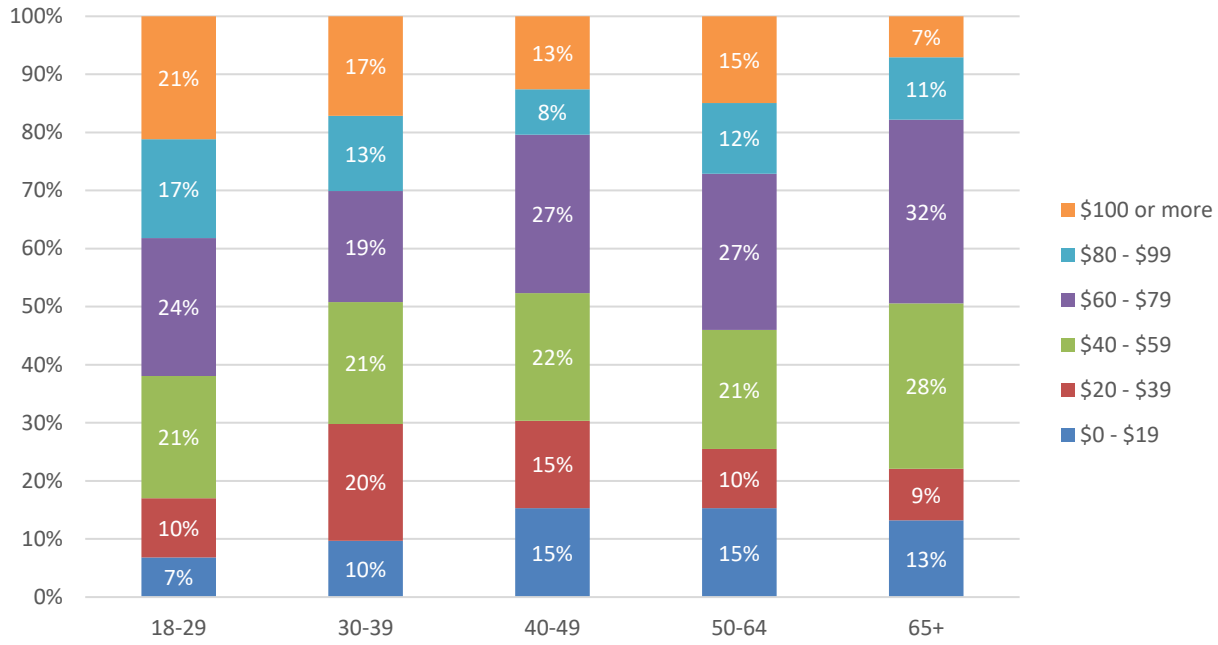


Figure 71: Amount willing to pay for high-speed, reliable home internet service by respondent age



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

Figure 72: Number of computing devices in the household

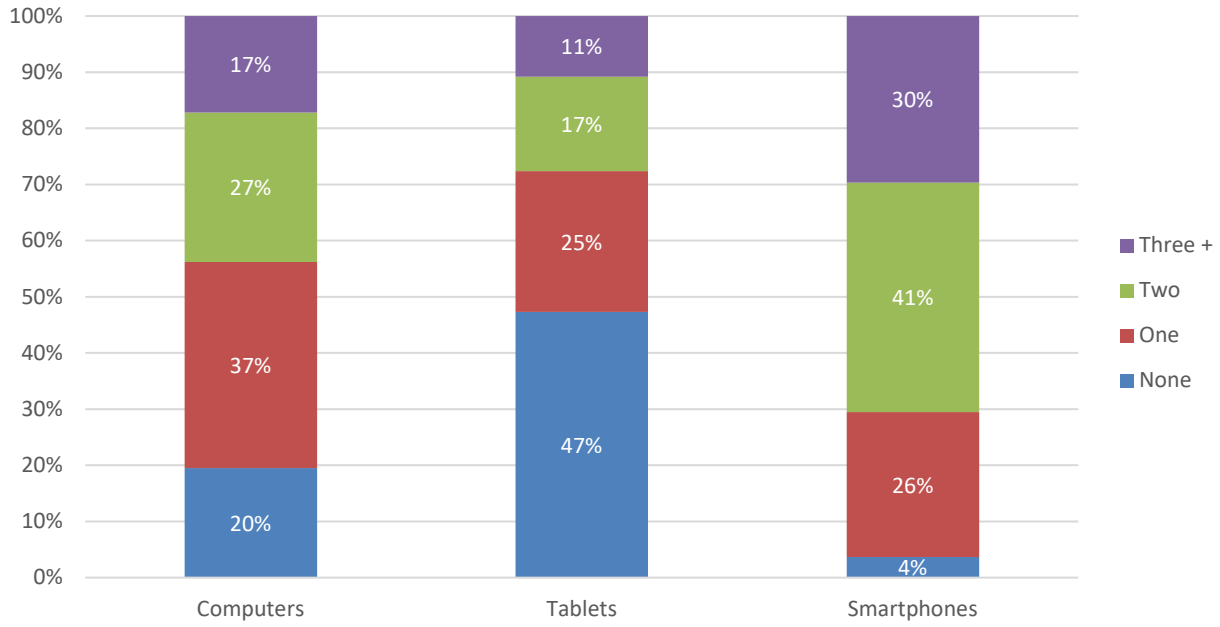


Figure 73: Average number of computing devices in the household (among households with at least one device)

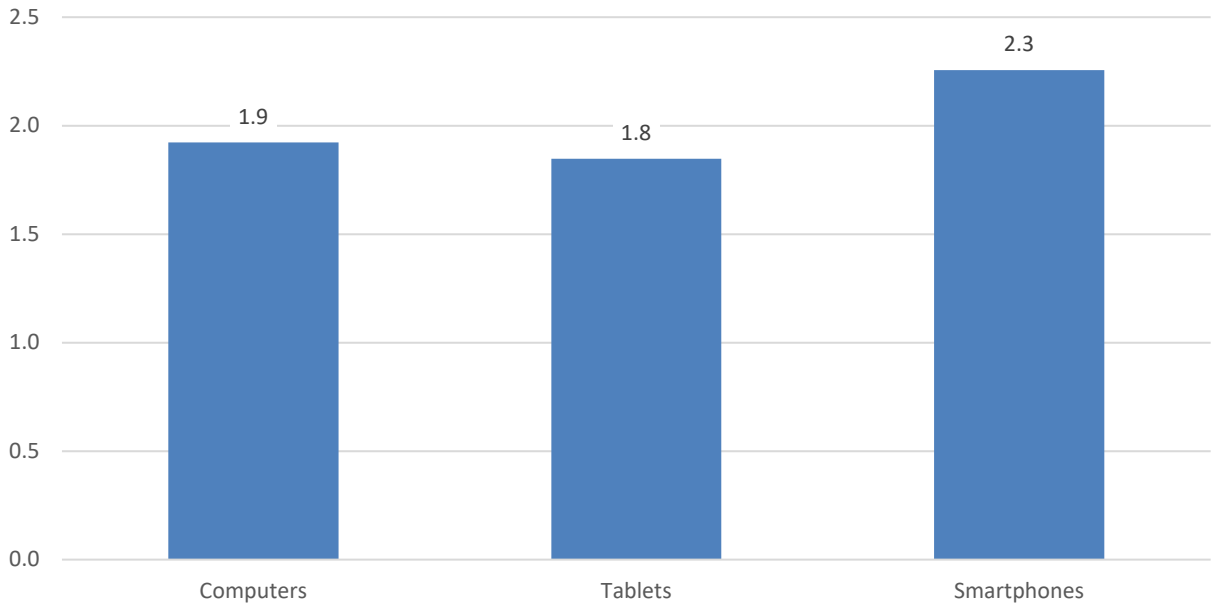


Table 36: Number of computing devices by region

		Jefferson	Montgomery	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
Computers	None	24%	15%	16%	17%	27%	21%	22%	20%	17%
	One	37%	36%	43%	42%	35%	31%	29%	36%	33%
	Two	24%	26%	25%	23%	22%	25%	34%	26%	32%
	Three or more	15%	22%	16%	18%	16%	22%	14%	18%	18%
	Total Weighted Count	517	177	881	275	244	340	385	275	559
Tablets	None	58%	43%	48%	44%	45%	49%	46%	45%	40%
	One	20%	31%	21%	28%	26%	25%	26%	34%	28%
	Two	13%	15%	18%	12%	19%	14%	18%	11%	24%
	Three or more	9%	11%	13%	16%	11%	11%	10%	10%	7%
	Total Weighted Count	517	177	881	275	244	340	385	275	559
Smartphones	None	7%	4%	2%	5%	4%	2%	4%	4%	2%
	One	38%	36%	22%	24%	30%	18%	24%	27%	23%
	Two	31%	30%	45%	33%	36%	45%	46%	41%	47%
	Three or more	24%	30%	31%	37%	30%	36%	26%	29%	28%
	Total Weighted Count	517	177	881	275	244	340	385	275	559

Figure 74: Number of computers by region

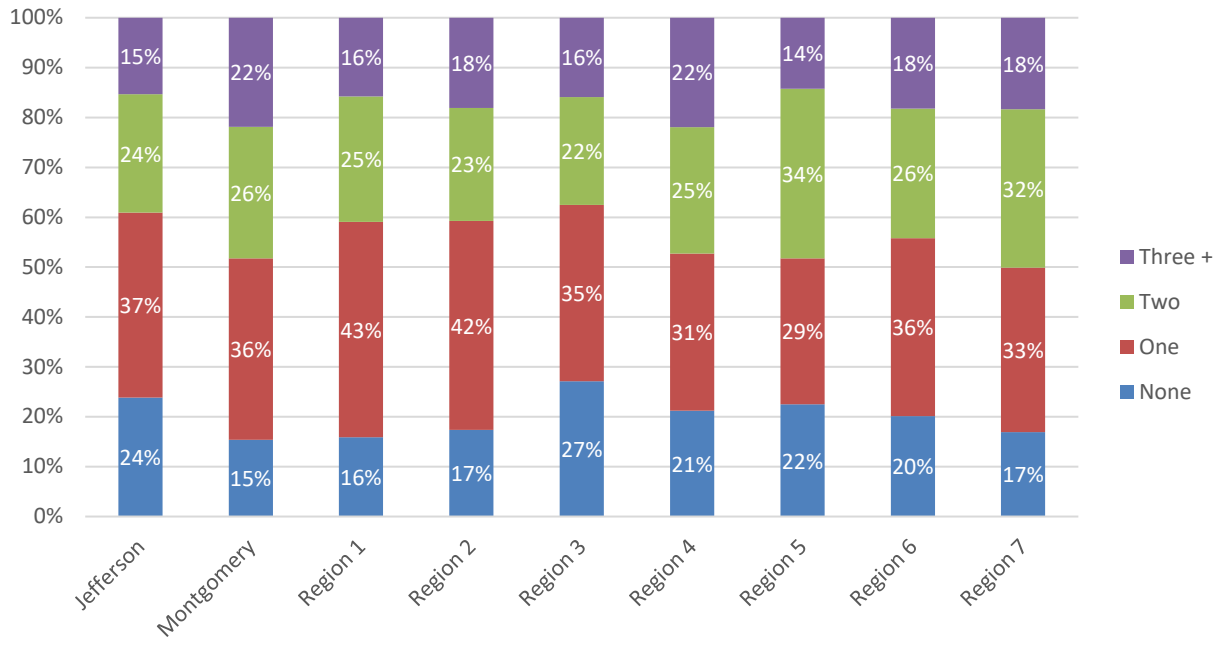


Figure 75: Number of tablets by region

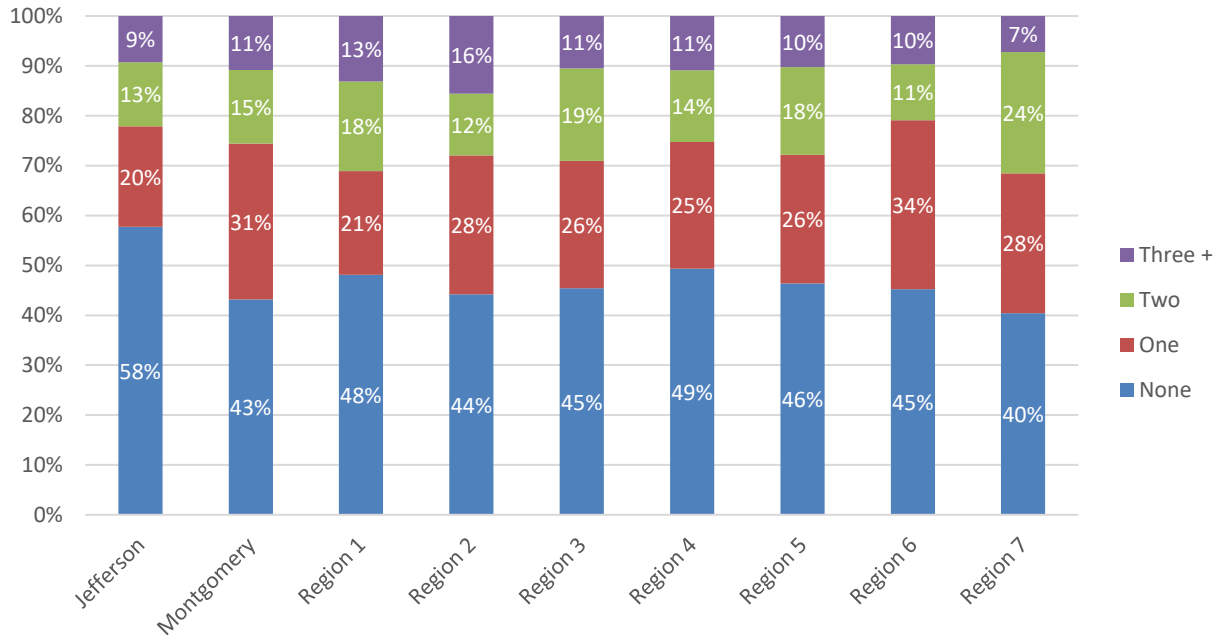


Figure 76: Number of smartphones by region

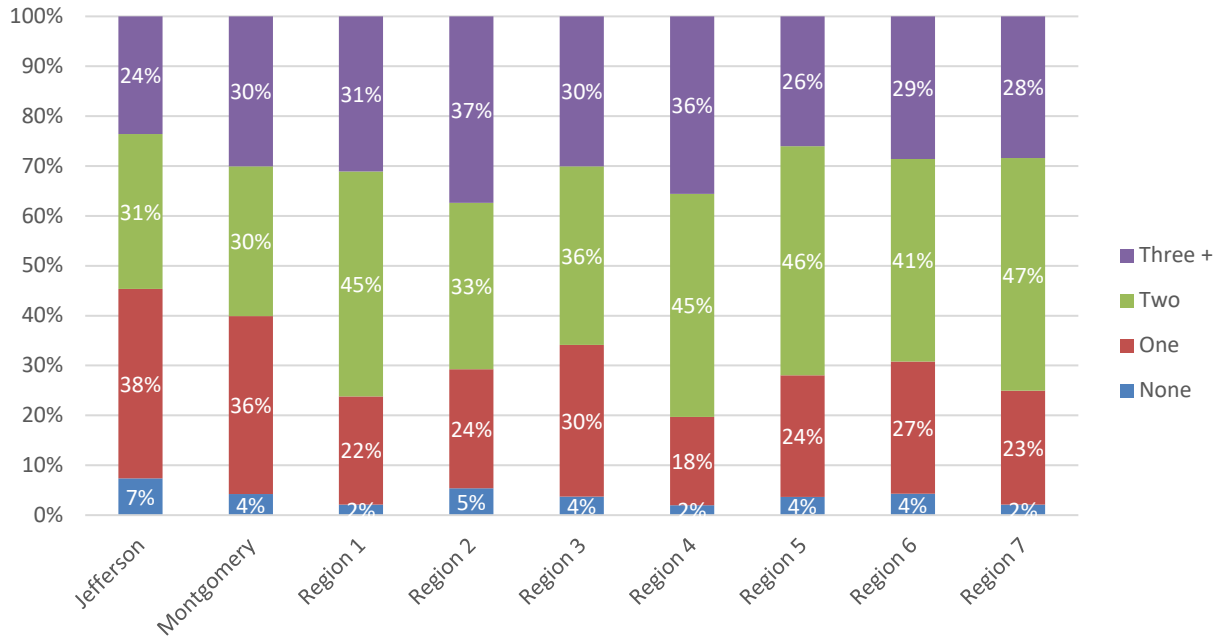


Table 37: Number of computing devices by household income

		Less than $50,000	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more
Computers	None	28%	13%	6%
	One	44%	45%	22%
	Two	20%	27%	33%
	Three or more	7%	15%	39%
	Total Weighted Count	1174	769	613
Tablets	None	55%	48%	33%
	One	24%	28%	24%
	Two	11%	16%	26%
	Three or more	10%	8%	16%
	Total Weighted Count	1174	769	613
Smartphones	None	5%	2%	0%
	One	43%	23%	7%
	Two	38%	44%	43%
	Three or more	14%	31%	50%
	Total Weighted Count	1174	769	613

Figure 77: Number of computers by household income

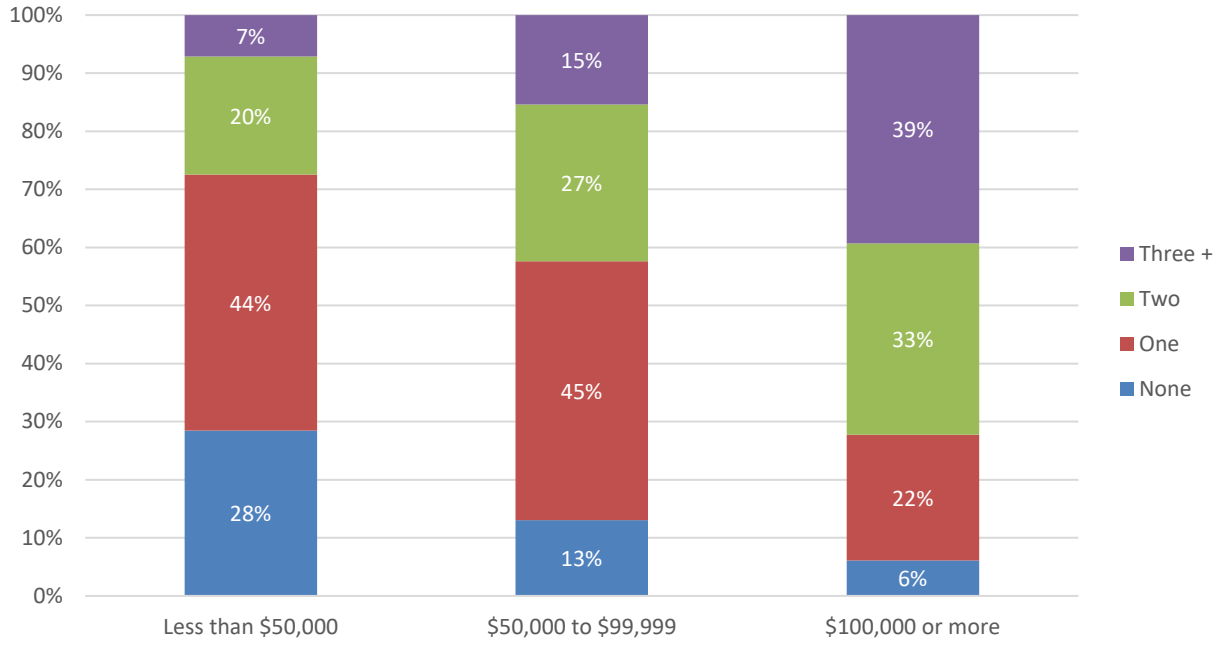


Figure 78: Number of tablets by household income

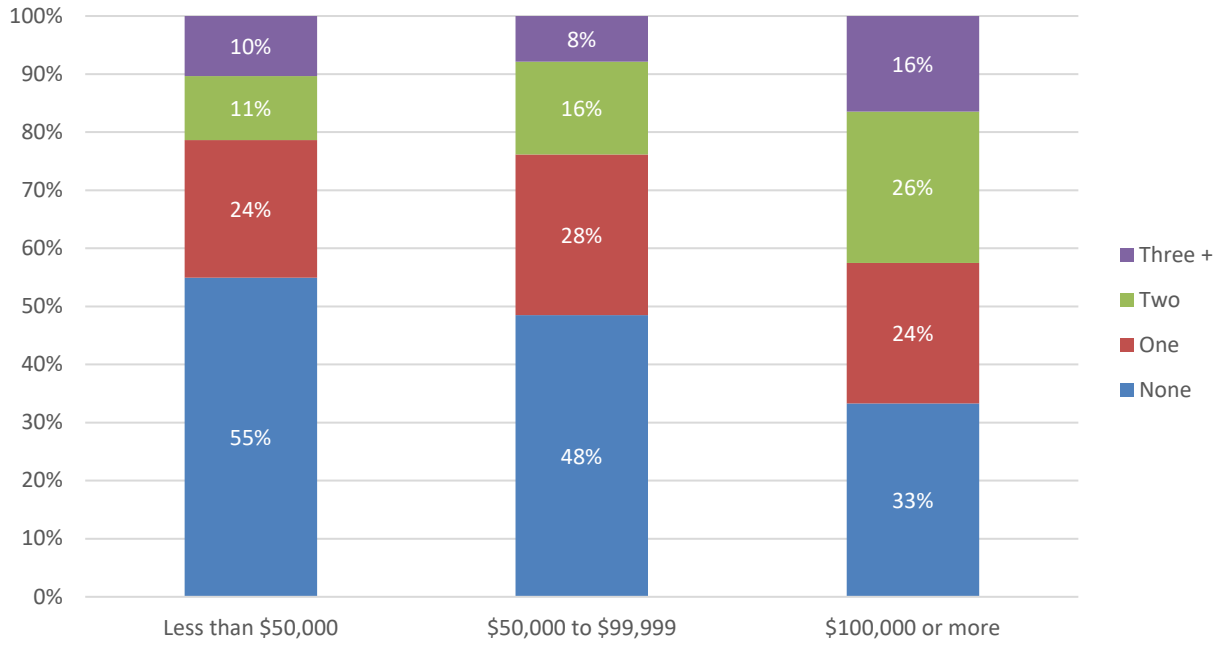


Figure 79: Number of smartphones by household income

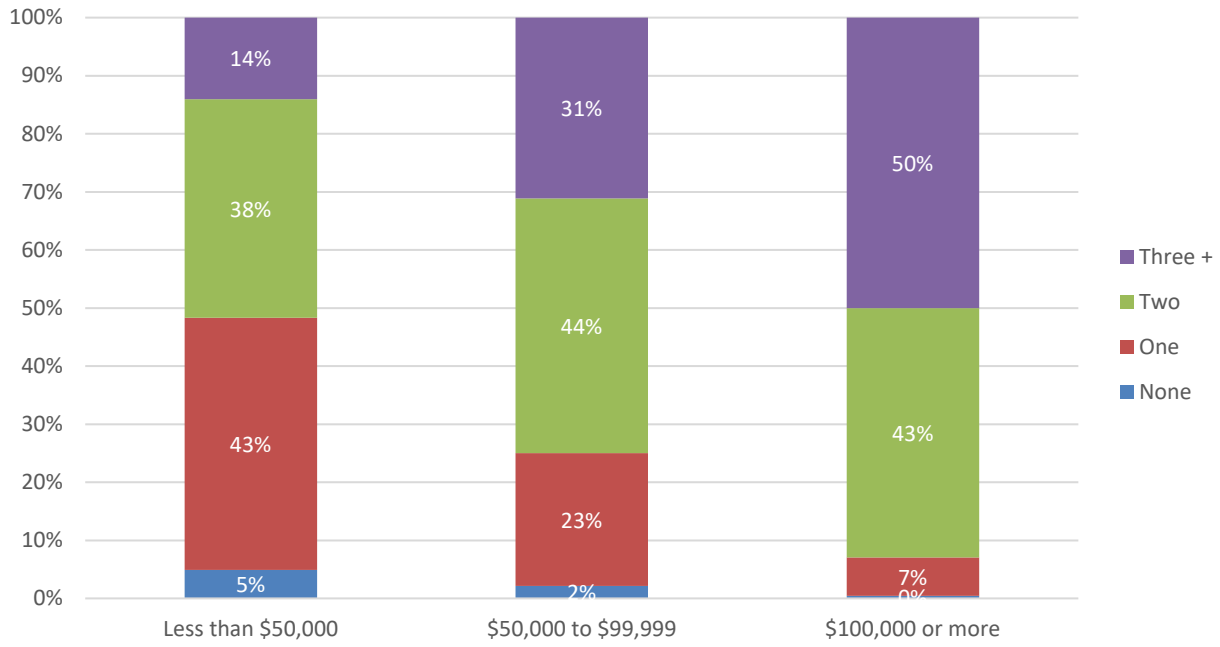


Table 38: Number of computing devices by race/ethnicity

		Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White	Other
Computers	None	29%	5%	17%	5%
	One	35%	53%	38%	21%
	Two	22%	23%	29%	24%
	Three or more	15%	19%	16%	50%
	Total Weighted Count	841	158	2105	126
Tablets	None	53%	45%	45%	40%
	One	20%	17%	29%	13%
	Two	16%	23%	16%	32%
	Three or more	11%	15%	10%	15%
	Total Weighted Count	841	158	2105	126
Smartphones	None	5%	4%	3%	0%
	One	36%	14%	24%	29%
	Two	33%	37%	46%	14%
	Three or more	26%	45%	27%	57%
	Total Weighted Count	841	158	2105	126

Figure 80: Number of computers by race/ethnicity

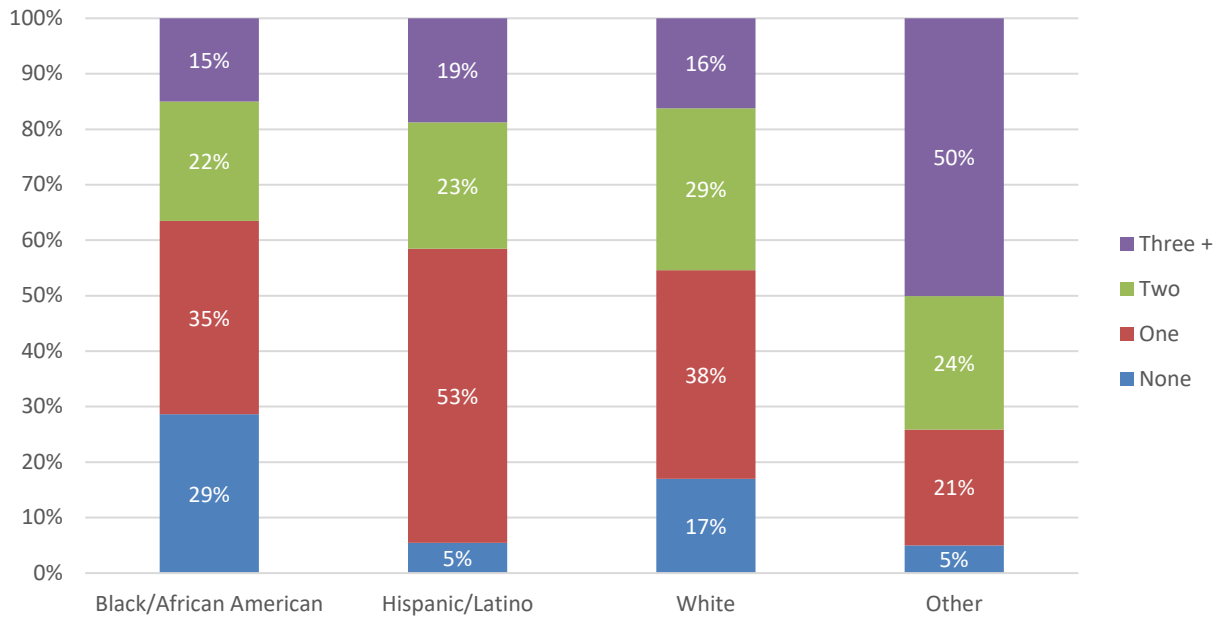


Figure 81: Number of tablets by race/ethnicity

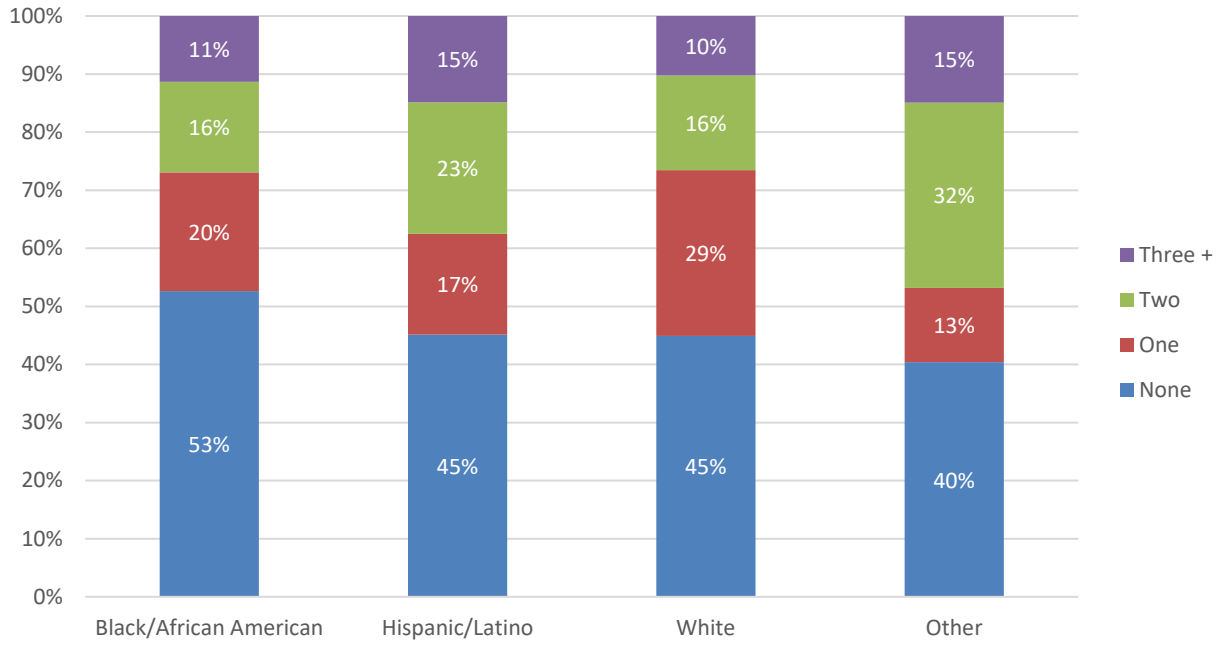


Figure 82: Number of smartphones by race/ethnicity

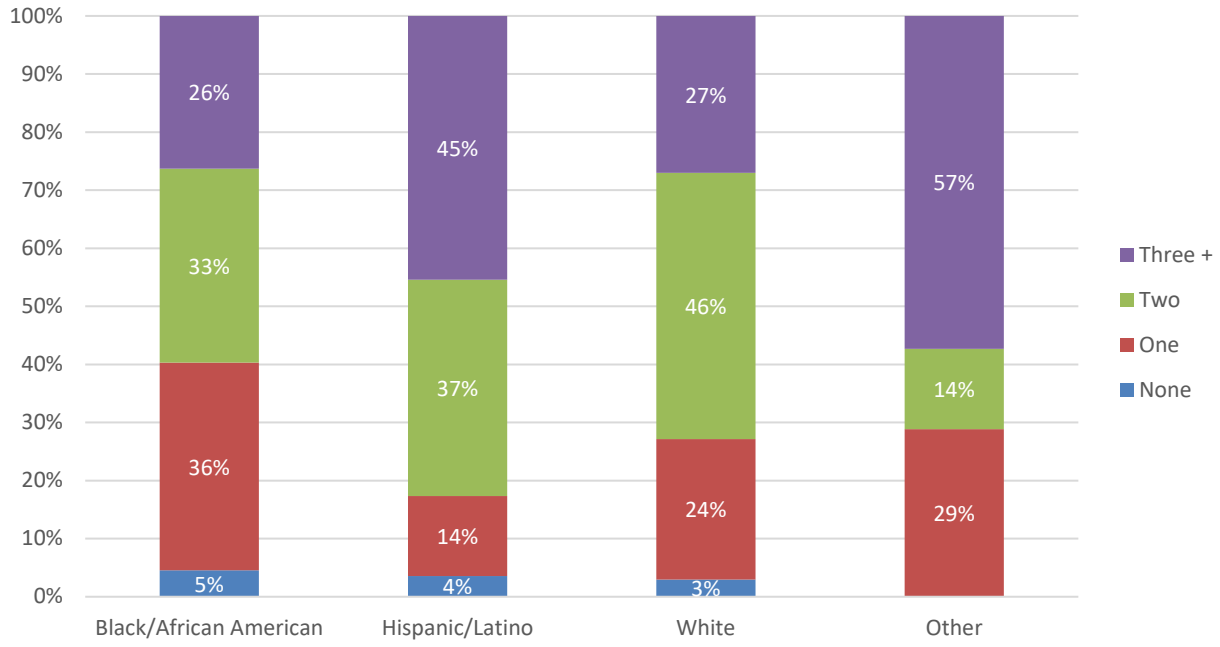


Table 39: Number of computing devices in at-risk households

		Veteran	Individual with a disability	Primarily non-English speaker	Formerly incarcerated individual	Actively enrolled in K-12 school or college or other higher education
Computers	None	17%	21%	9%	23%	11%
	One	31%	30%	55%	12%	34%
	Two	32%	30%	21%	27%	26%
	Three or more	20%	19%	14%	37%	29%
	Total Weighted Count	602	635	49	21	1386
Tablets	None	46%	44%	30%	47%	34%
	One	26%	23%	36%	30%	22%
	Two	18%	20%	13%	7%	23%
	Three or more	10%	13%	21%	16%	22%
	Total Weighted Count	602	635	49	21	1386
Smartphones	None	2%	3%	0%	15%	2%
	One	19%	24%	16%	6%	12%
	Two	47%	39%	43%	14%	33%
	Three or more	32%	34%	42%	65%	53%
	Total Weighted Count	602	635	49	21	1386

Figure 83: Number of computers by student in household

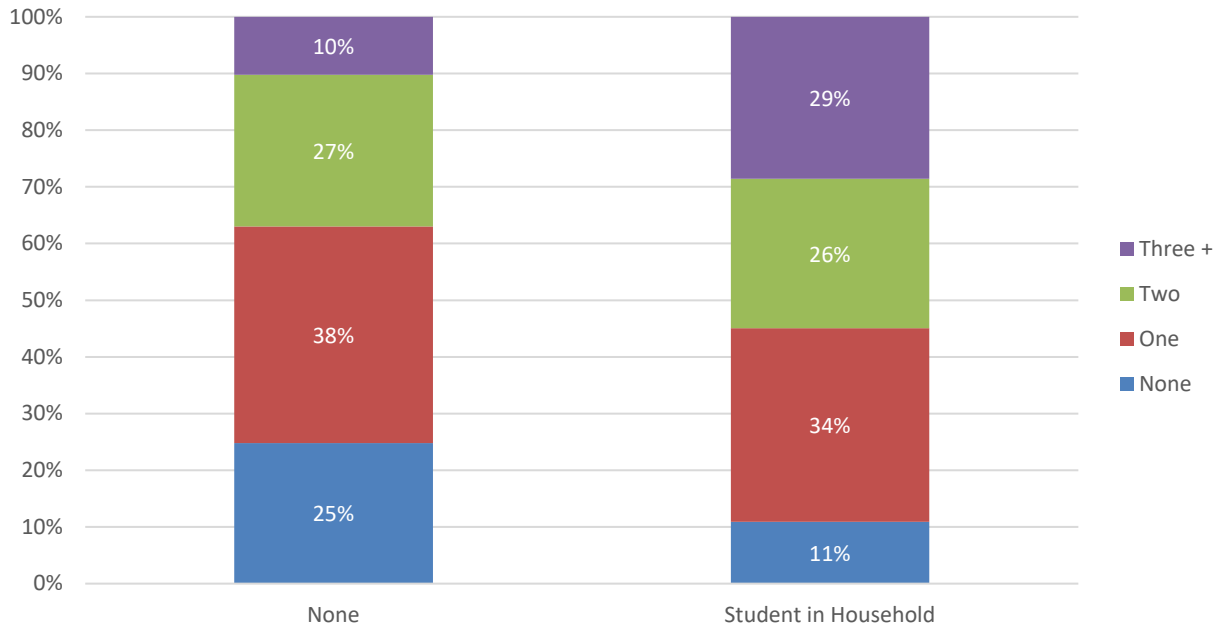


Figure 84: Number of tablets by student in household

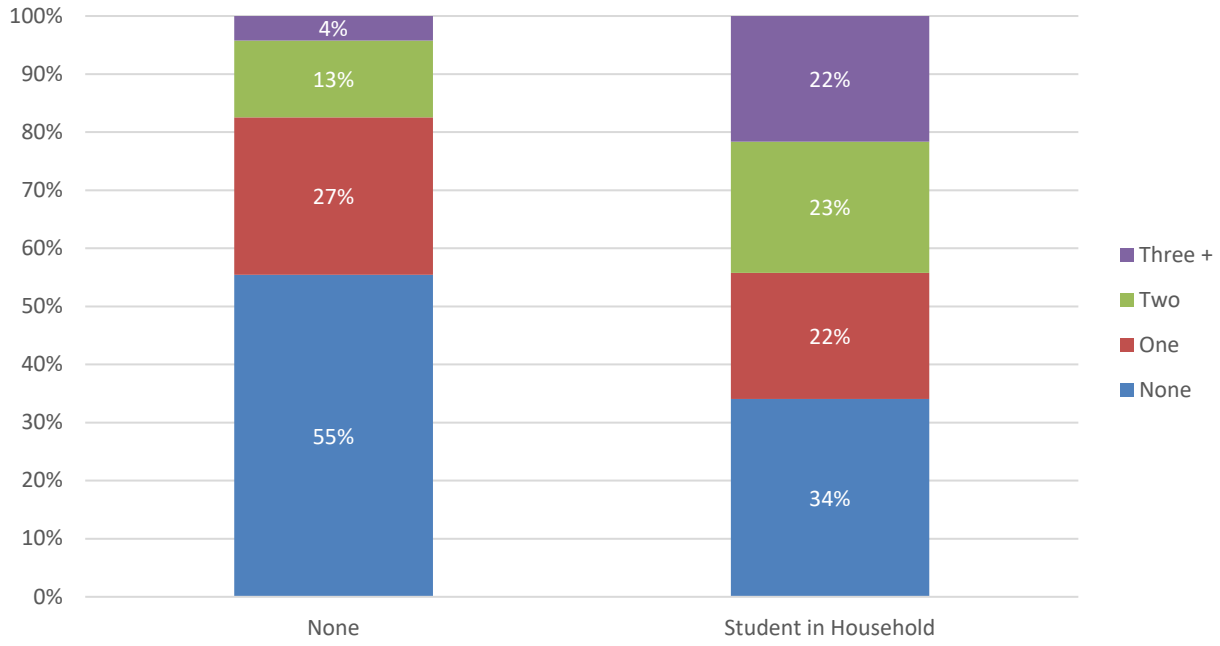


Figure 85: Number of smartphones by student in household

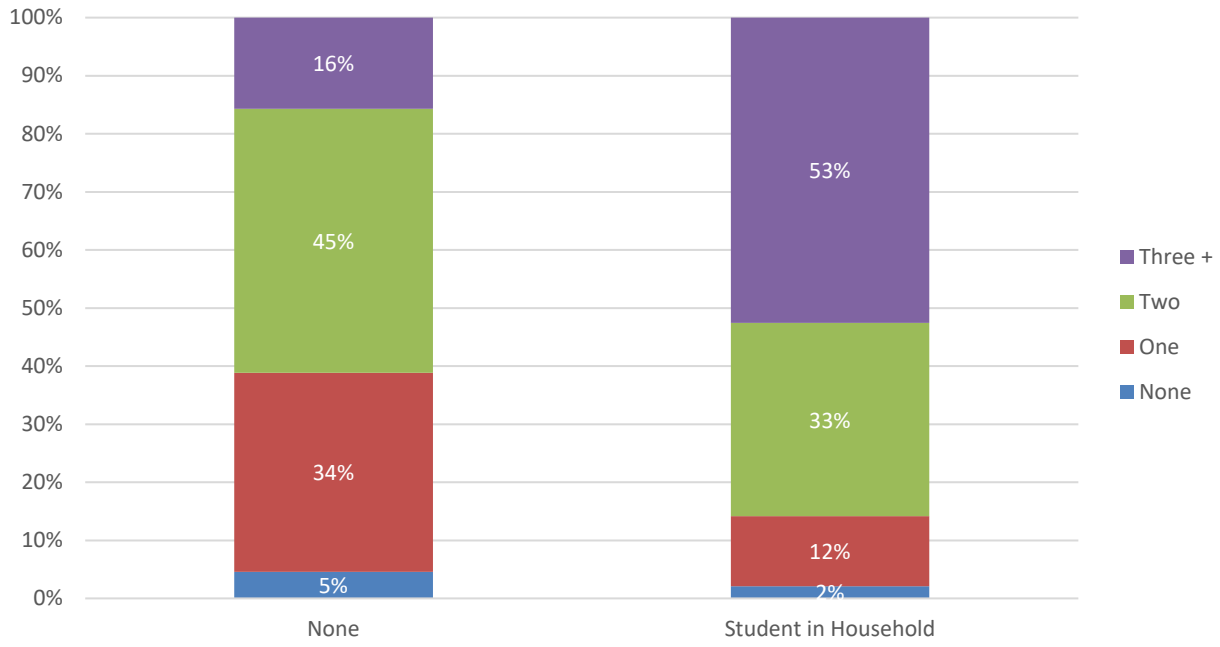


Table 40: Number of computing devices by household size

		One household member	Two household members	Three household members	Four+ household members
Computers	None	33%	19%	14%	11%
	One	47%	36%	37%	29%
	Two	14%	35%	27%	28%
	Three or more	6%	11%	22%	32%
	Total Weighted Count	762	1212	580	959
Tablets	None	62%	54%	41%	29%
	One	30%	27%	25%	19%
	Two	6%	14%	22%	27%
	Three or more	1%	5%	13%	26%
	Total Weighted Count	762	1212	580	959
Smartphones	None	5%	2%	3%	3%
	One	73%	18%	10%	5%
	Two	16%	68%	40%	30%
	Three or more	6%	12%	47%	62%
	Total Weighted Count	762	1212	580	959

Figure 86: Number of computers by household size

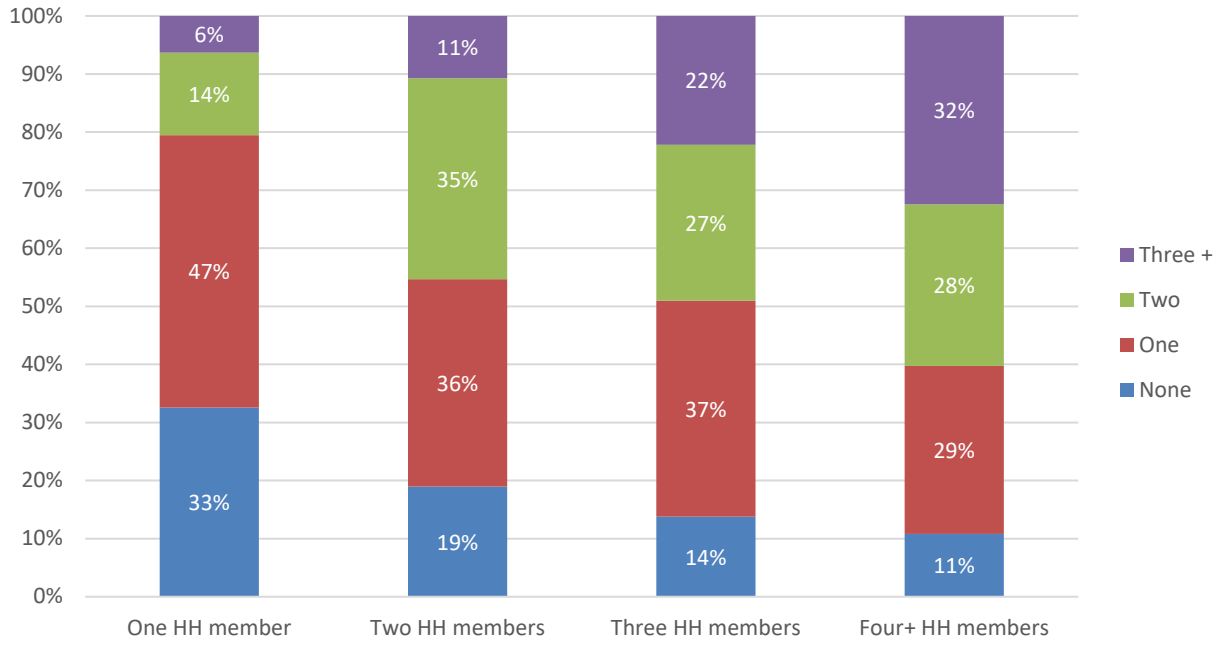


Figure 87: Number of tablets by household size

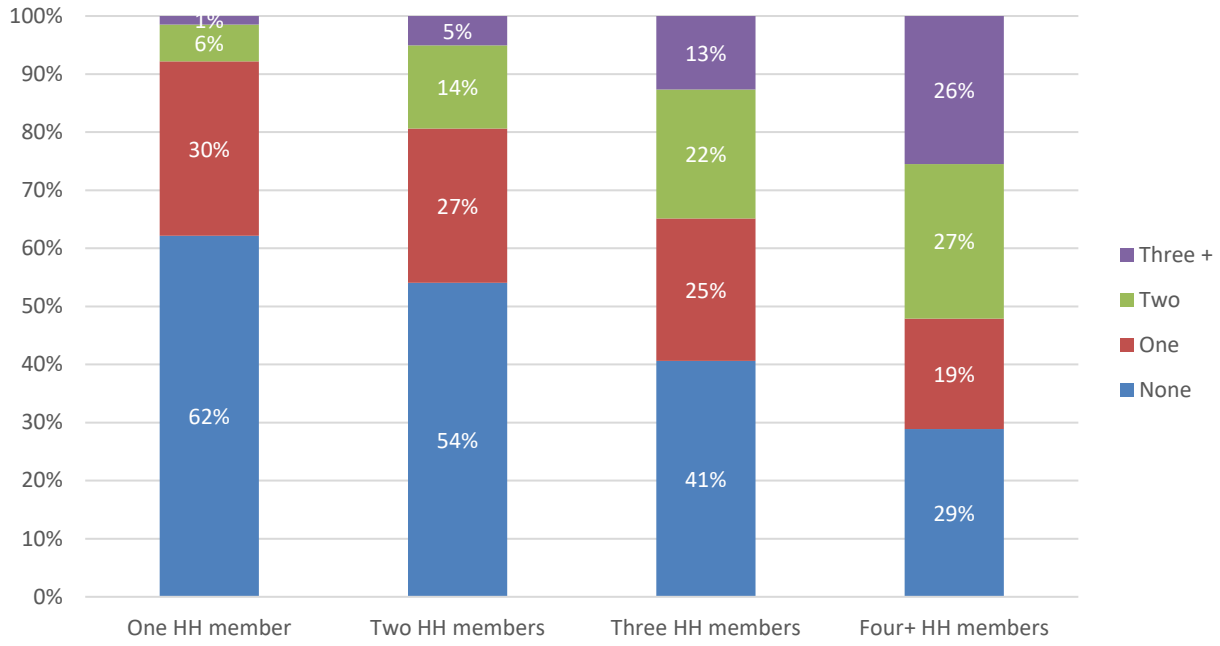


Figure 88: Number of smartphones by household size

Table 41: Number of computing devices by ages of householders (percent of households with at least one householder in each age group)

		Under 18	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
Computers	None	12%	17%	14%	15%	19%	23%
	One	36%	34%	40%	33%	30%	38%
	Two	27%	25%	28%	24%	28%	29%
	Three or more	25%	23%	19%	28%	23%	10%
	Total Weighted Count	1413	911	908	827	977	879
Tablets	None	33%	42%	43%	44%	43%	53%
	One	23%	19%	22%	23%	29%	28%
	Two	24%	20%	18%	19%	18%	14%
	Three or more	21%	19%	18%	15%	10%	5%
	Total Weighted Count	1413	911	908	827	977	879
Smartphones	None	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%
	One	12%	17%	16%	16%	19%	34%
	Two	36%	39%	42%	34%	42%	45%
	Three or more	50%	42%	39%	48%	36%	16%
	Total Weighted Count	1413	911	908	827	977	879

Figure 89: Number of computers by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

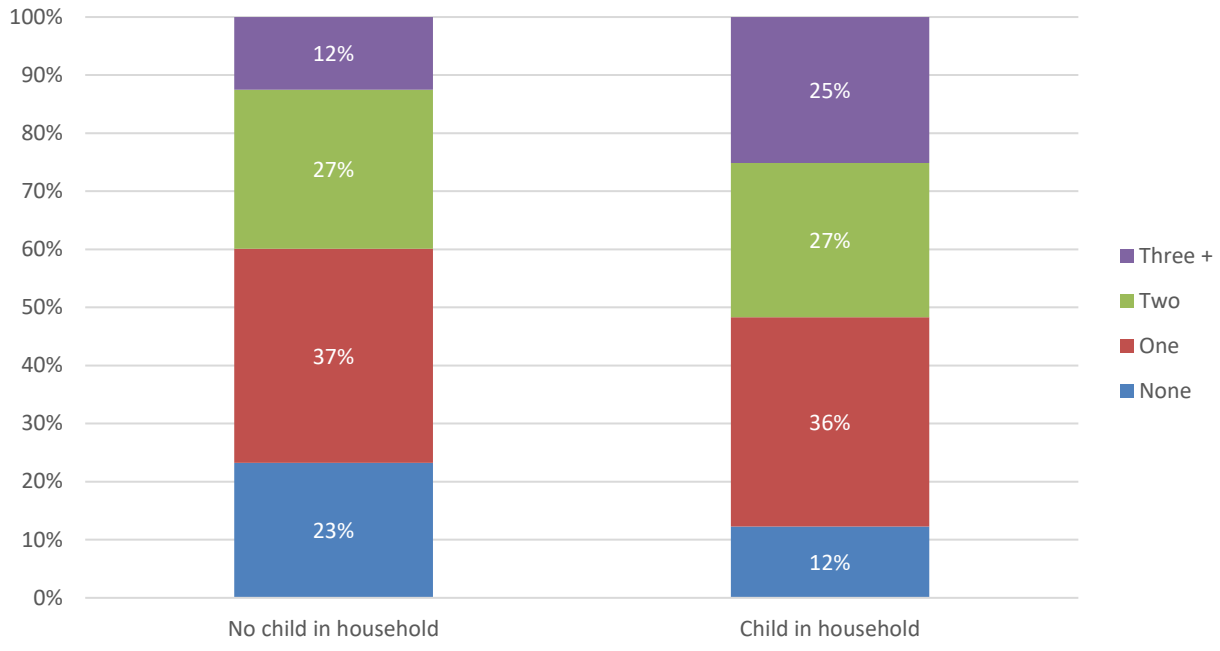


Figure 90: Number of tablets by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

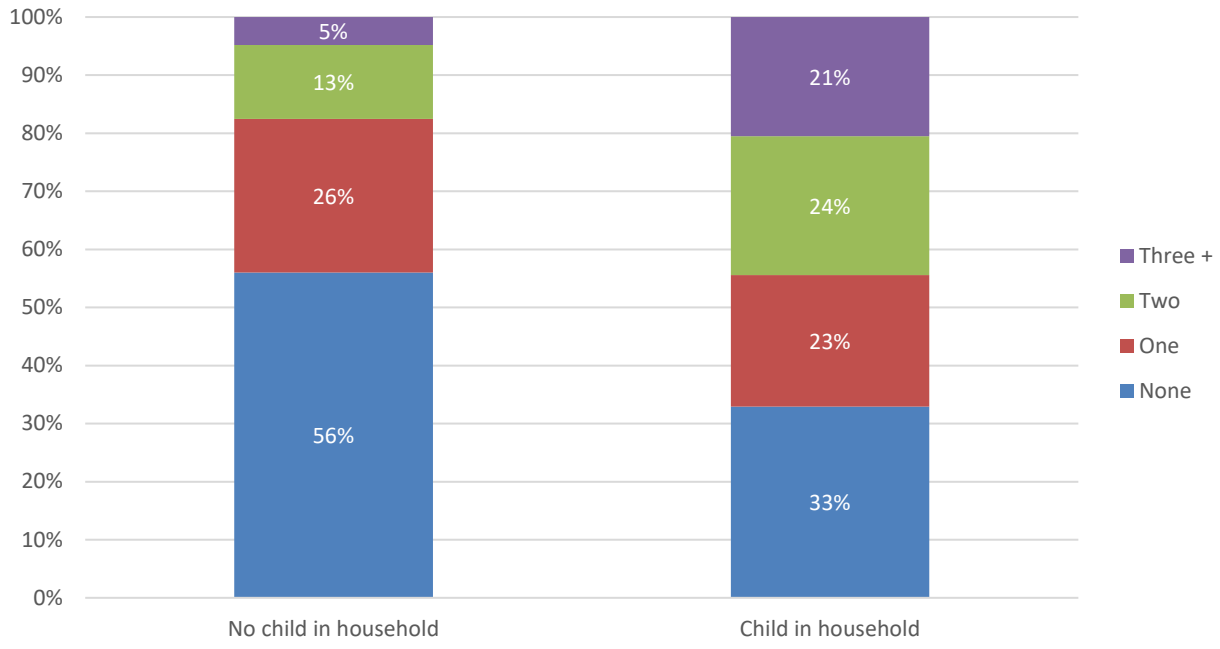


Figure 91: Number of smartphones by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

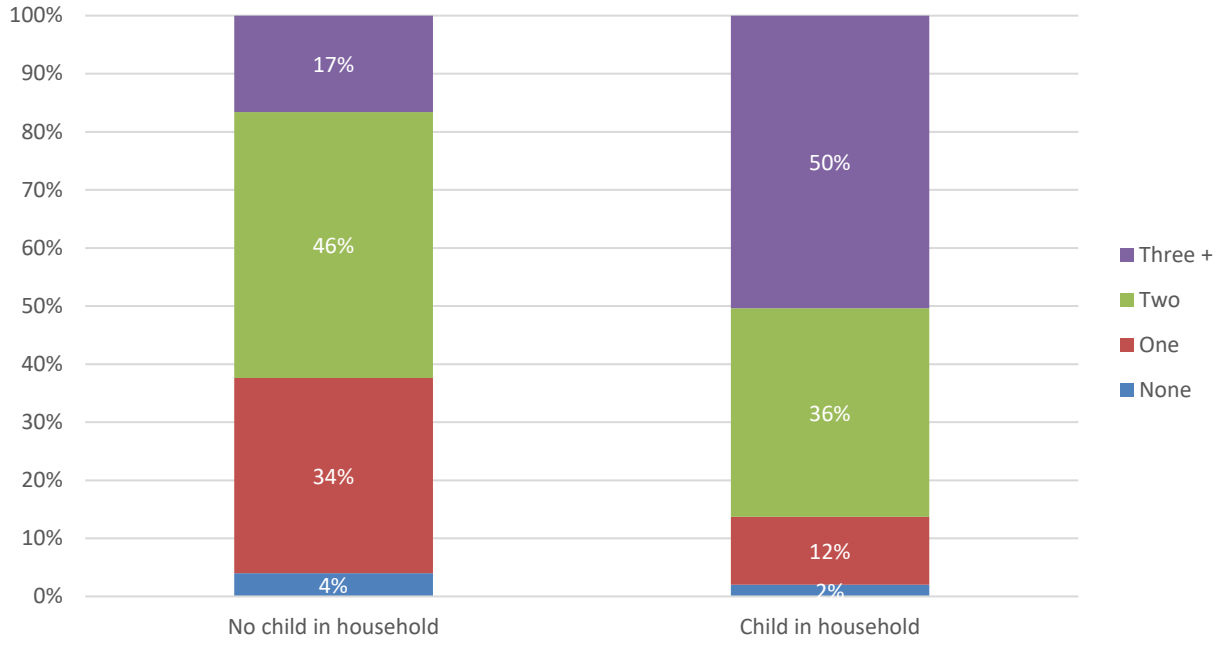


Figure 92: Number of computers by aging individuals in household

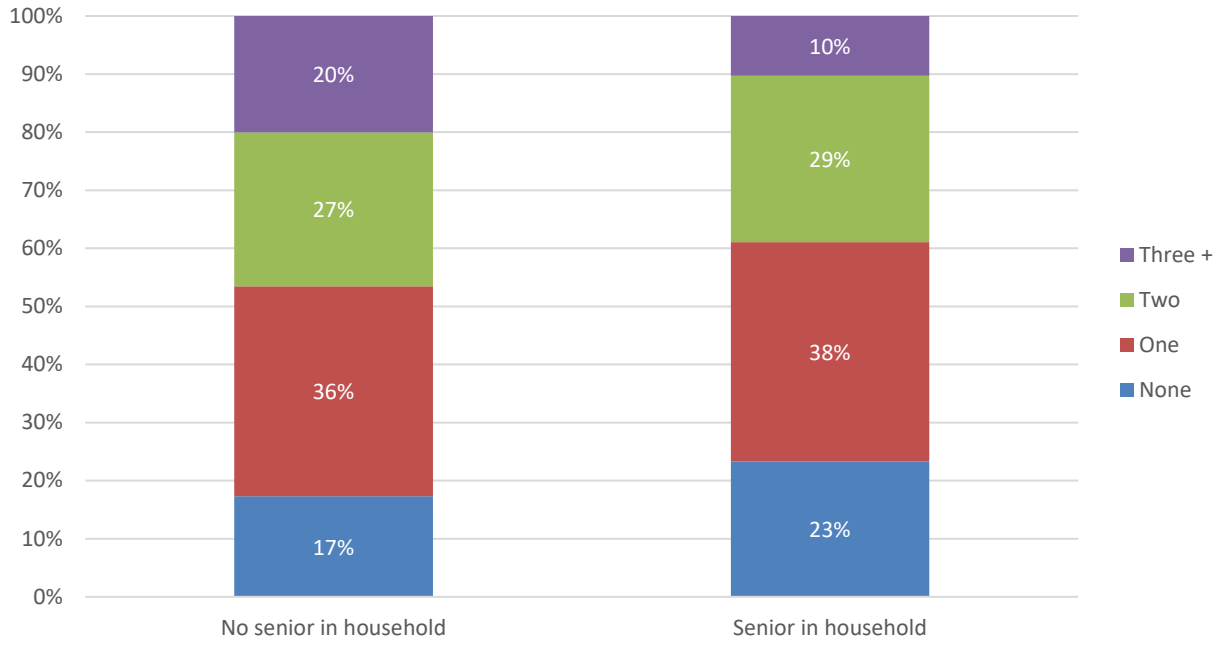


Figure 93: Number of tablets by aging individuals in household

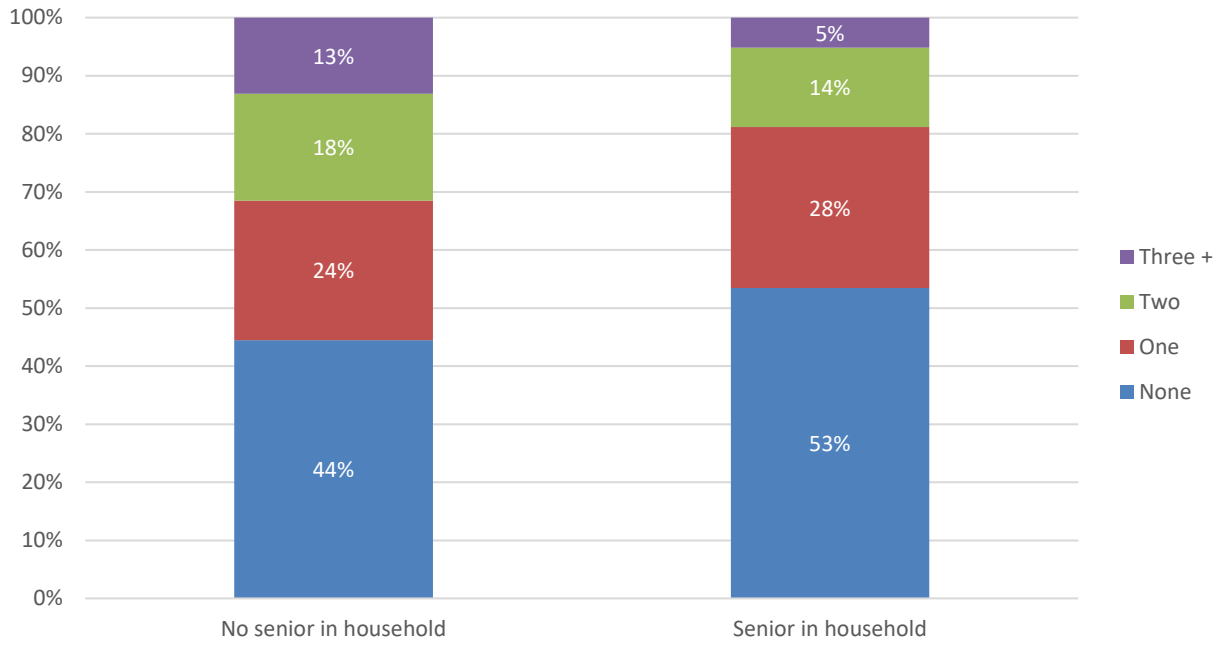


Figure 94: Number of smartphones by aging individuals in household

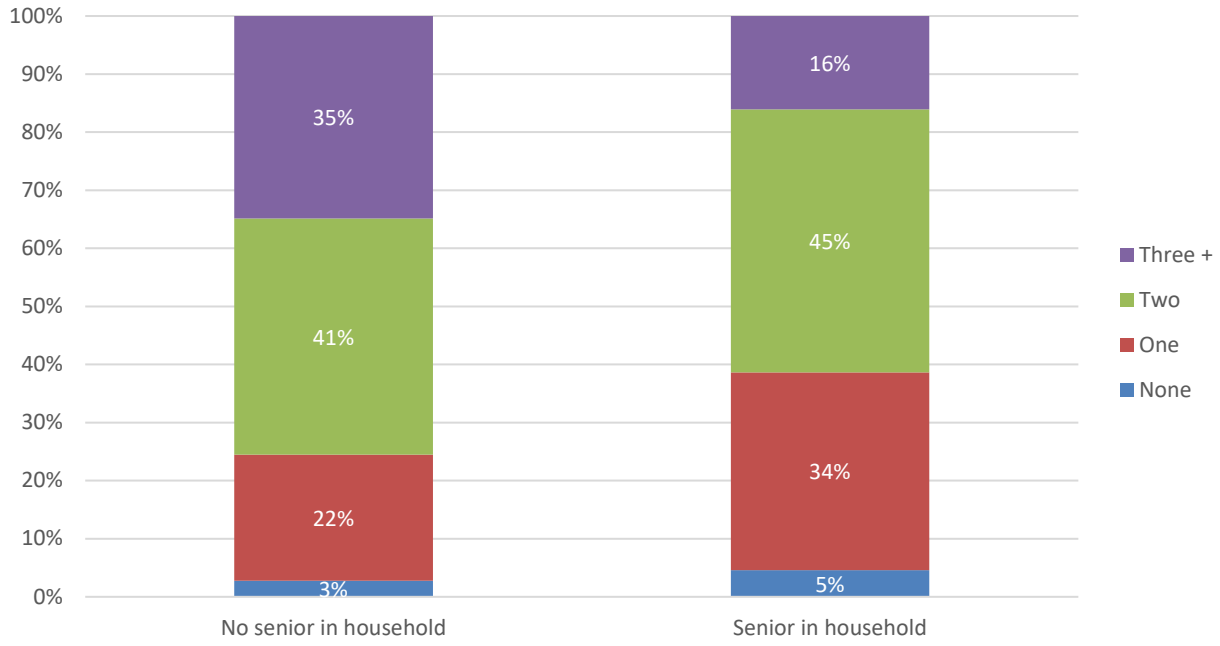


Table 42: Number of computing devices by respondent age

		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
Computers	None	20%	12%	16%	18%	20%
	One	44%	39%	31%	29%	44%
	Two	24%	31%	24%	31%	27%
	Three or more	12%	18%	28%	22%	9%
	Total Weighted Count	539	422	428	691	580
Tablets	None	44%	41%	41%	42%	59%
	One	19%	25%	22%	31%	29%
	Two	20%	18%	23%	19%	9%
	Three or more	18%	16%	14%	8%	4%
	Total Weighted Count	539	422	428	691	580
Smartphones	None	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%
	One	24%	16%	11%	19%	40%
	Two	50%	41%	37%	45%	46%
	Three or more	23%	42%	50%	34%	11%
	Total Weighted Count	539	422	428	691	580

Figure 95: Number of computers by respondent age

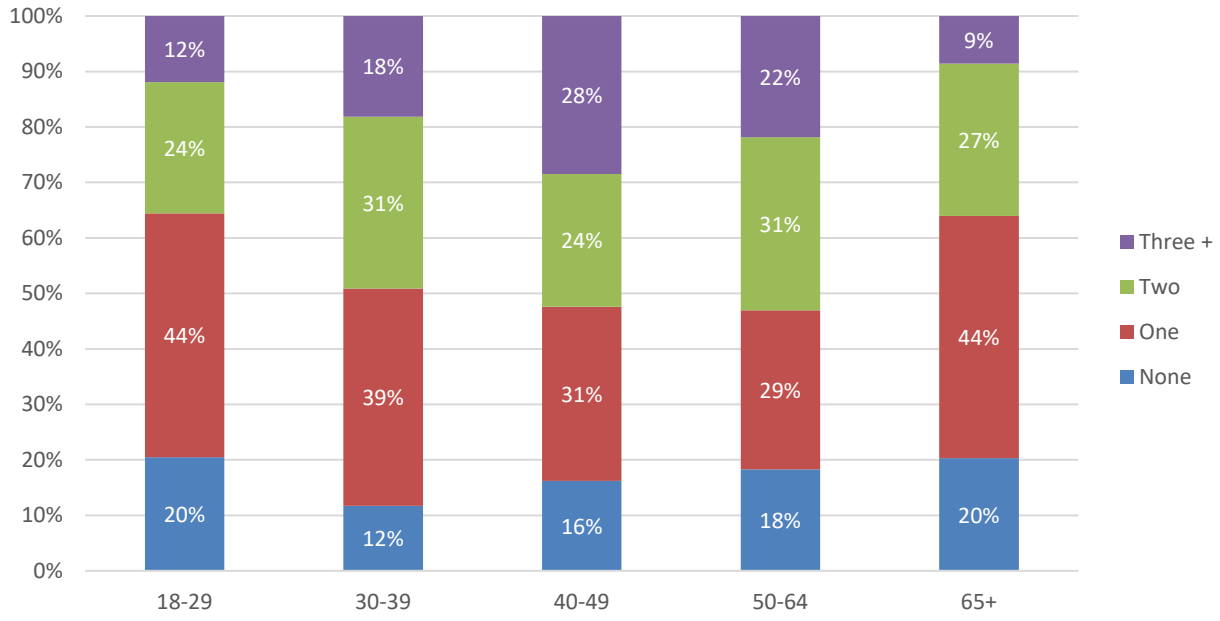


Figure 96: Number of tablets by respondent age

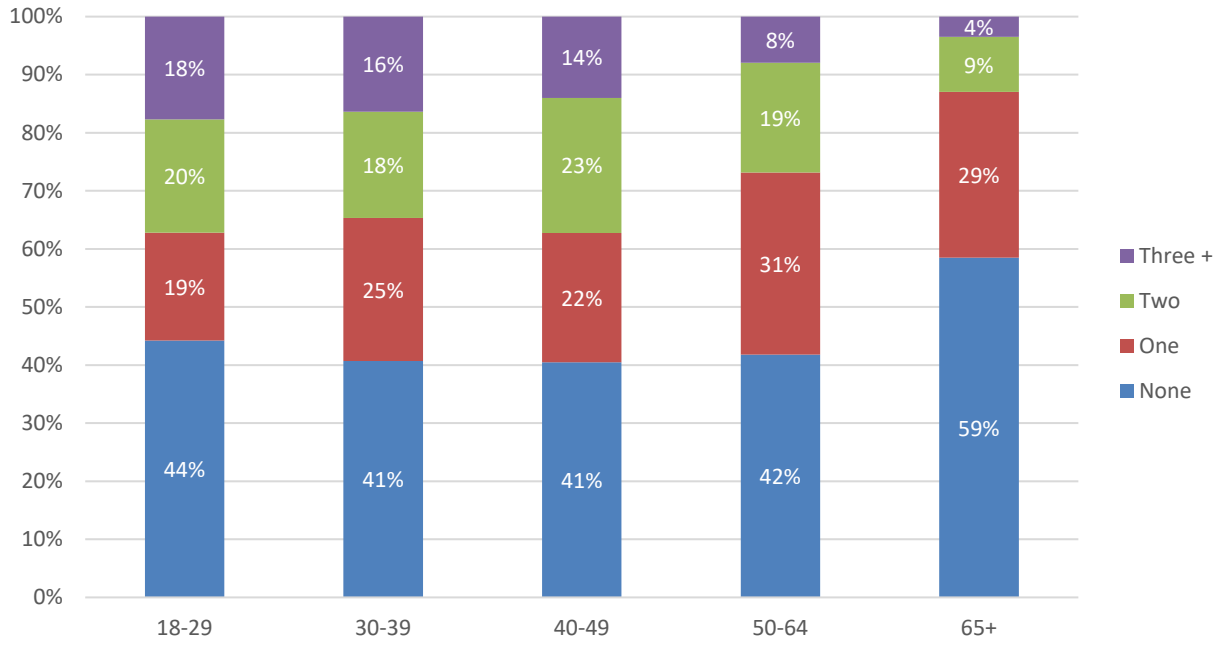
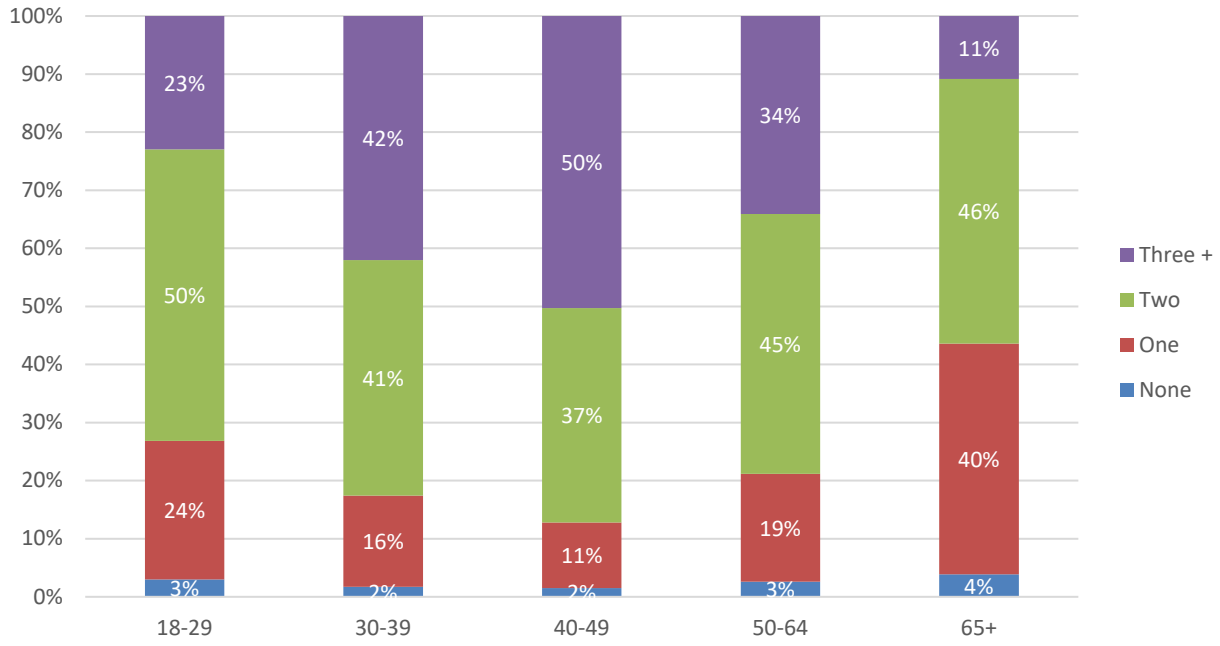


Figure 97: Number of smartphones by respondent age



Thinking about the computing device you primarily use, if it were lost or damaged beyond repair, how long do you think it would take you to replace it?

Figure 98: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device

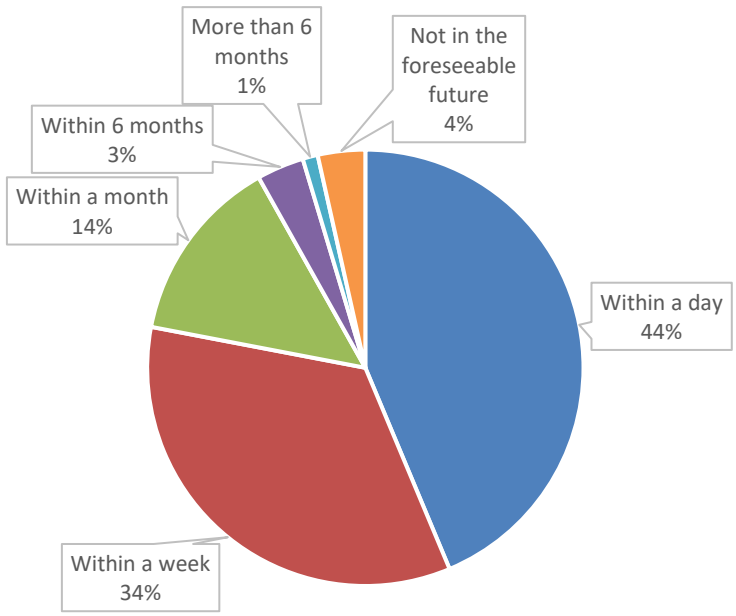


Figure 99: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by region

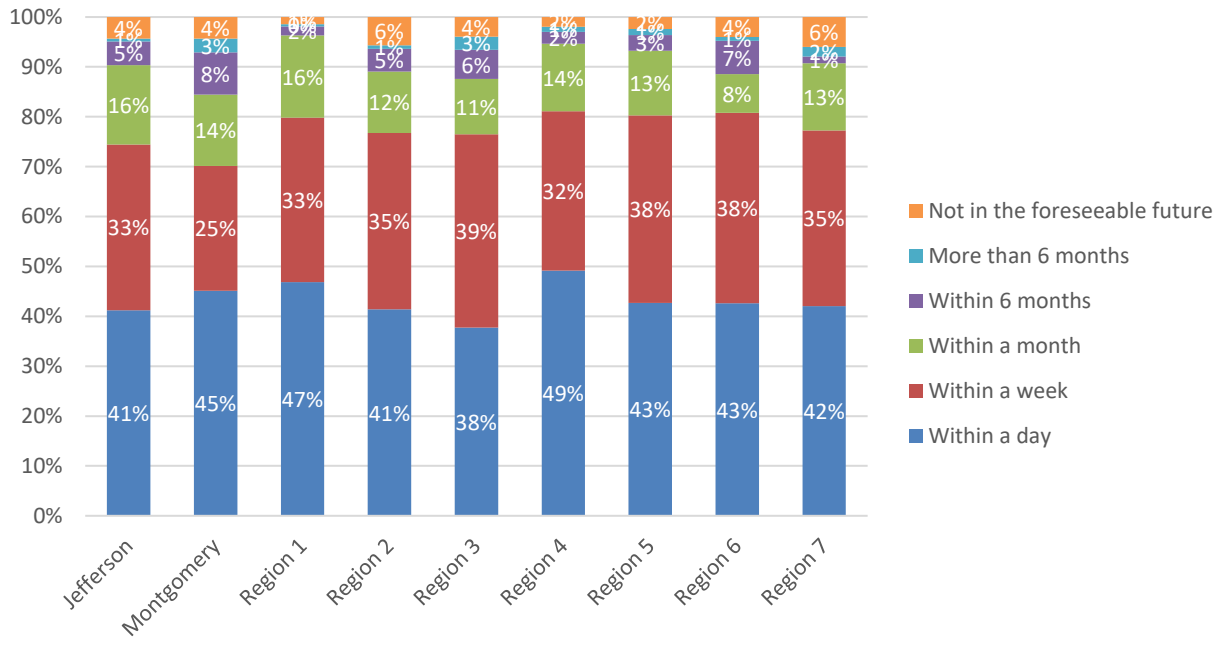


Figure 100: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by household income

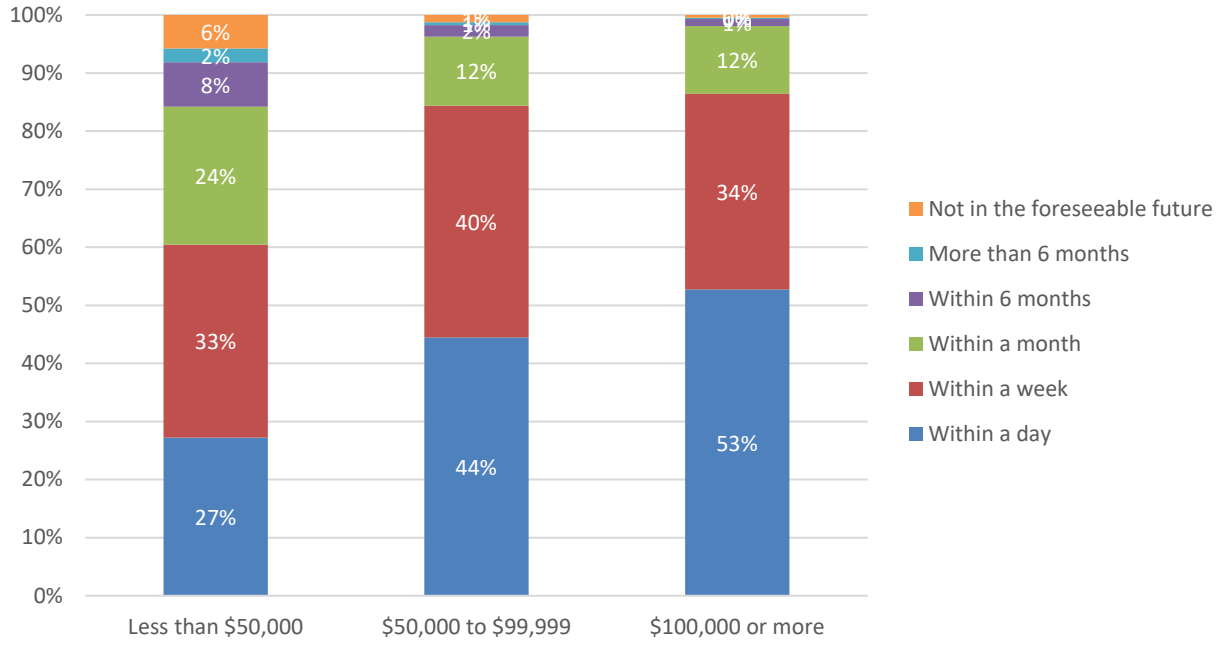


Figure 101: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by race/ethnicity

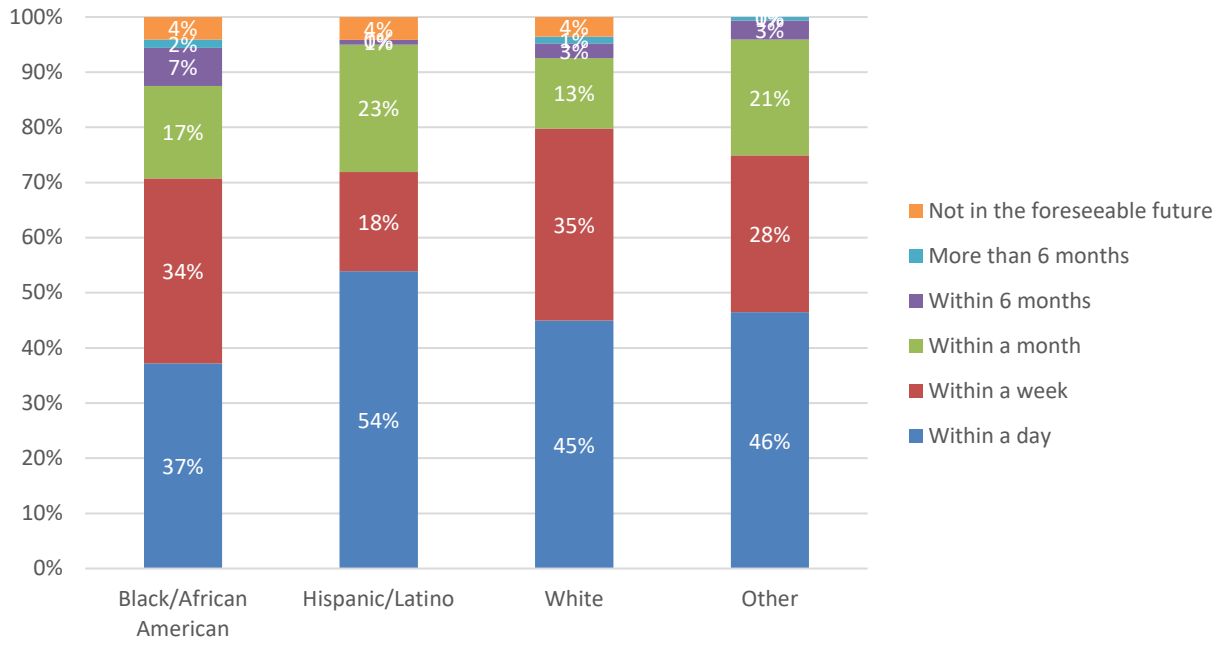


Figure 102: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by student status

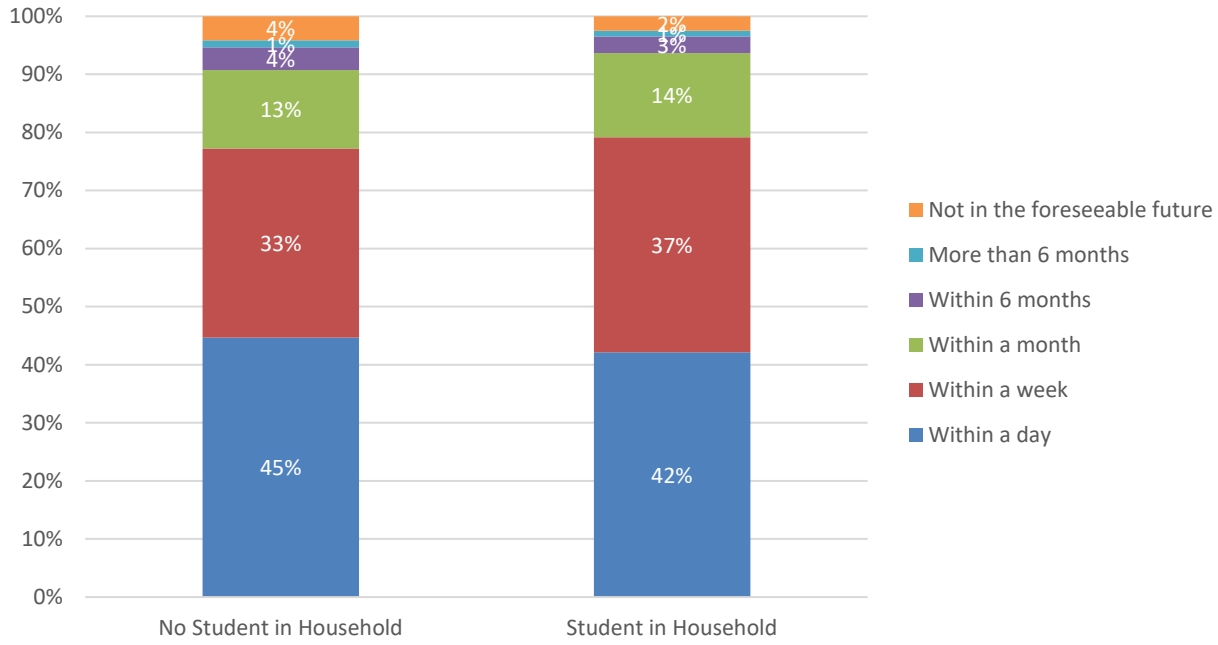


Figure 103: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by household size

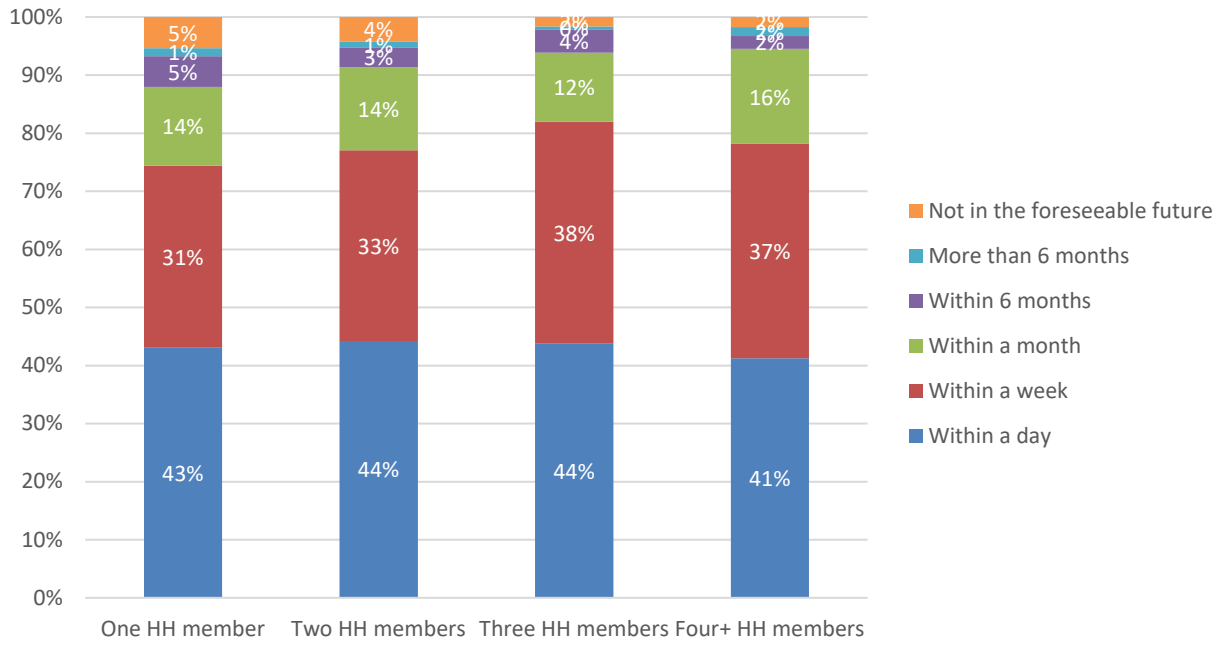


Figure 104: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by children in household (at least one person under age 18 in the household)

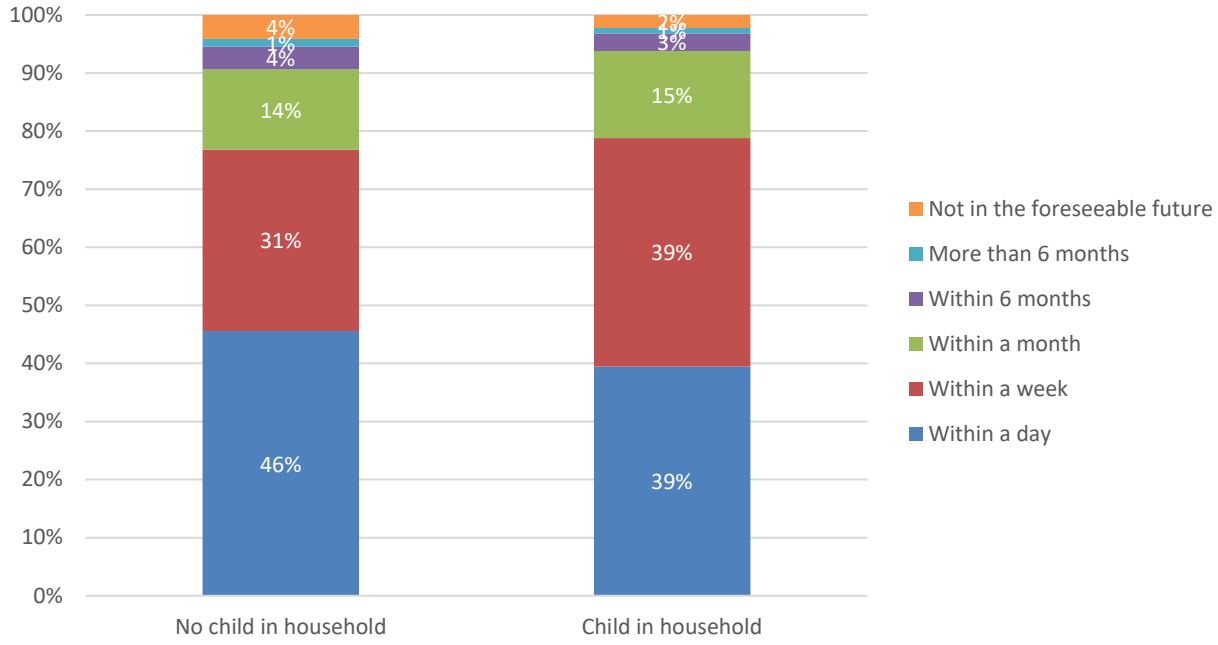


Figure 105: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by aging individuals in household

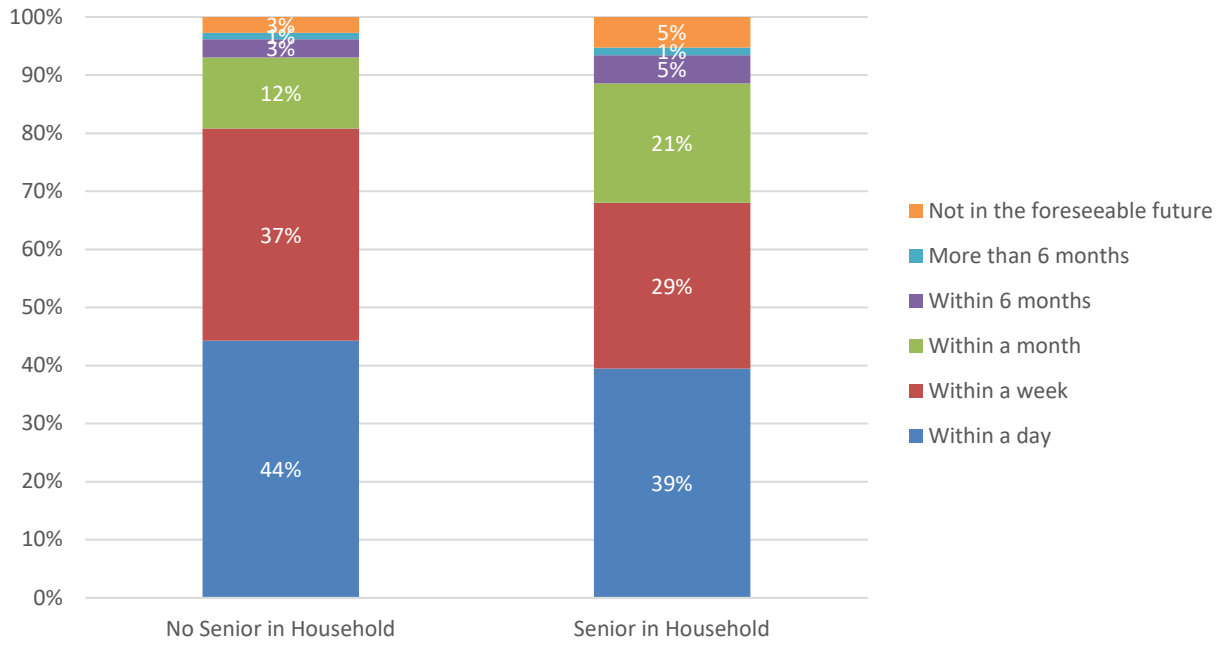
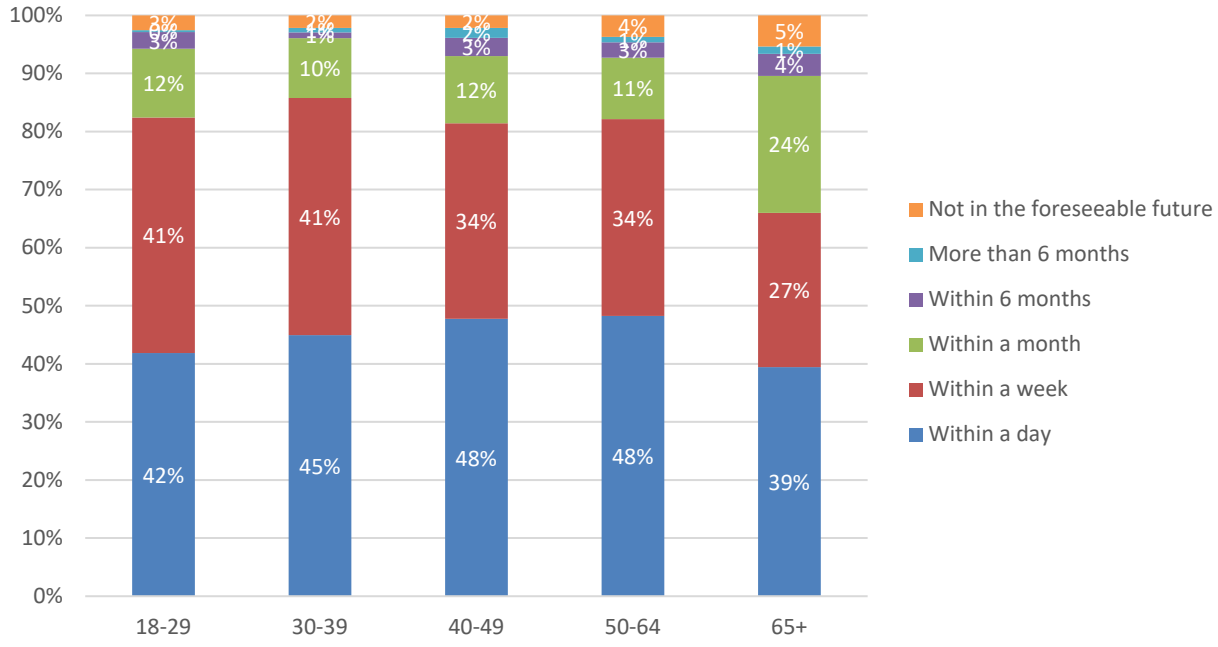


Figure 106: How long it would take to replace a lost or damaged computing device by respondent age



Please rate how confident you or the primary user are in doing the following activities on the internet?

Figure 107: Confidence in using the internet for various activities

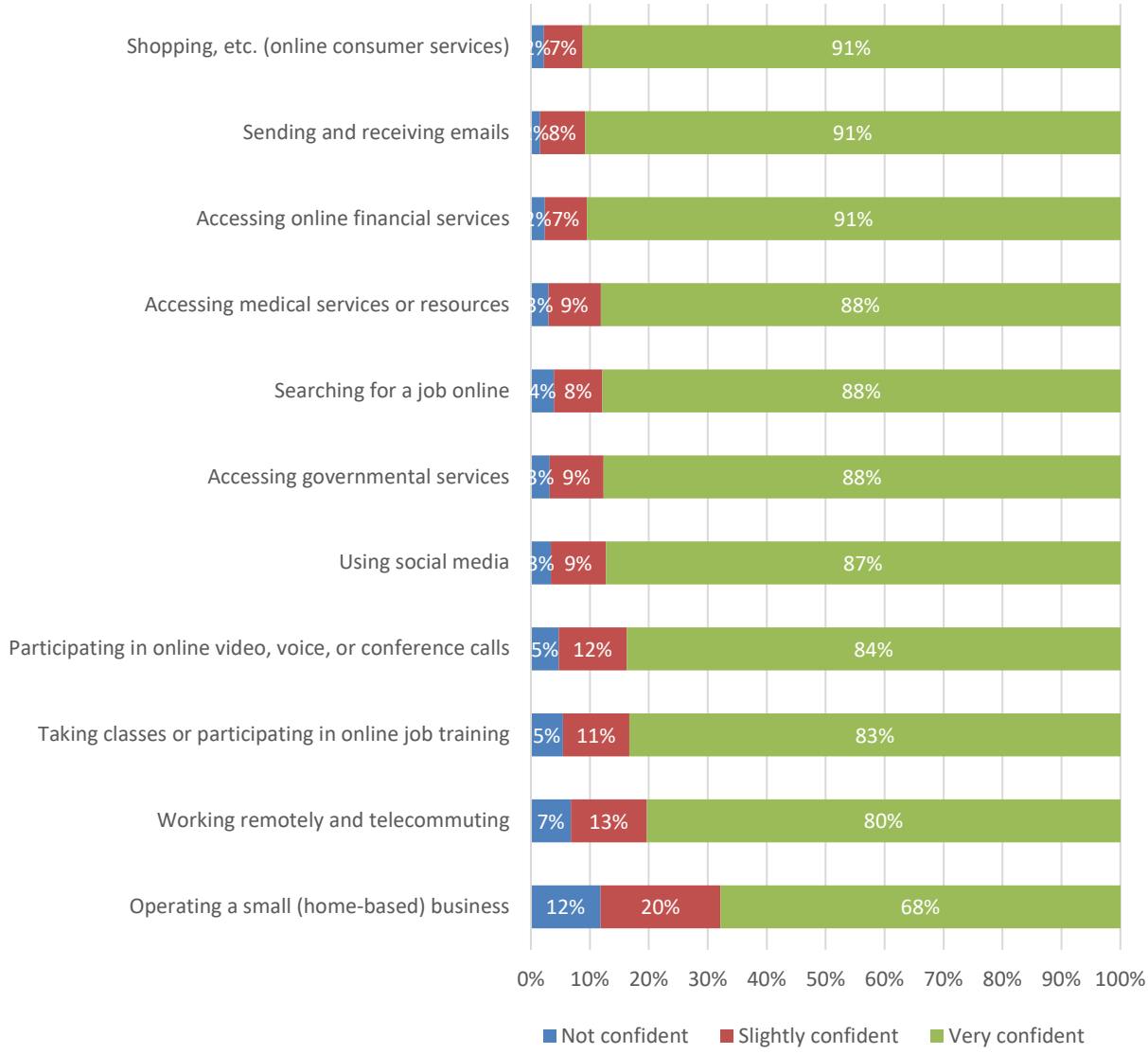


Table 43: Confidence in using the internet for various activities by region

		Jefferson	Mont gomery	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	0%
	Slightly confident	8%	12%	5%	9%	10%	8%	8%	7%	9%
	Very confident	90%	85%	94%	90%	87%	89%	91%	93%	91%
	Total	498	171	857	260	233	328	373	262	533
Using social media?	Not confident	4%	6%	2%	3%	4%	8%	3%	3%	1%
	Slightly confident	6%	14%	9%	8%	13%	8%	10%	12%	11%
	Very confident	90%	79%	89%	89%	83%	84%	88%	85%	88%
	Total	467	158	830	242	225	315	356	248	492
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls?	Not confident	4%	6%	4%	4%	8%	9%	5%	4%	2%
	Slightly confident	10%	16%	15%	12%	10%	11%	10%	9%	10%
	Very confident	86%	78%	81%	85%	82%	80%	85%	86%	88%
	Total	469	162	756	231	226	276	352	202	471
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	10%	24%	12%	10%	16%	8%	11%	10%	12%
	Slightly confident	14%	23%	20%	25%	22%	26%	14%	22%	24%
	Very confident	76%	53%	68%	65%	62%	66%	75%	68%	64%
	Total	325	102	504	152	170	196	229	148	298
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	6%	11%	6%	6%	10%	6%	6%	10%	6%
	Slightly confident	7%	16%	17%	17%	15%	14%	5%	14%	12%
	Very confident	87%	73%	77%	77%	75%	80%	89%	75%	82%
	Total	365	126	571	187	182	224	265	160	377
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	4%	7%	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%	2%
	Slightly confident	6%	15%	9%	11%	12%	6%	5%	8%	8%
	Very confident	90%	78%	87%	86%	83%	90%	92%	88%	90%
	Total	391	128	615	189	193	246	286	184	361
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	4%	8%	6%	4%	7%	6%	5%	7%	4%
	Slightly confident	7%	15%	13%	15%	12%	12%	6%	9%	13%
	Very confident	89%	77%	81%	80%	81%	81%	90%	84%	83%
	Total	397	131	596	196	189	242	282	182	339
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	4%	5%	2%	1%	7%	3%	4%	3%	2%
	Slightly confident	10%	18%	6%	8%	11%	12%	6%	12%	8%
	Very confident	87%	77%	92%	90%	82%	85%	91%	85%	90%
	Total	452	152	751	242	217	303	347	223	475
Accessing governmental services	Not confident	4%	5%	2%	3%	7%	3%	4%	2%	3%
	Slightly confident	9%	16%	6%	10%	11%	13%	7%	10%	10%
	Very confident	87%	79%	92%	87%	82%	84%	89%	88%	88%
	Total	466	157	765	234	216	315	340	231	450
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	3%	4%	2%	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	8%	13%	4%	4%	10%	6%	5%	9%	8%
	Very confident	89%	83%	95%	94%	85%	92%	93%	90%	91%
	Total	481	166	844	250	225	326	355	255	506
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	4%	4%	1%	2%	4%	3%	3%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	7%	15%	4%	7%	11%	9%	5%	7%	8%
	Very confident	90%	81%	94%	91%	85%	88%	92%	91%	91%
	Total	470	164	842	252	223	329	356	248	492

Figure 108: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by region

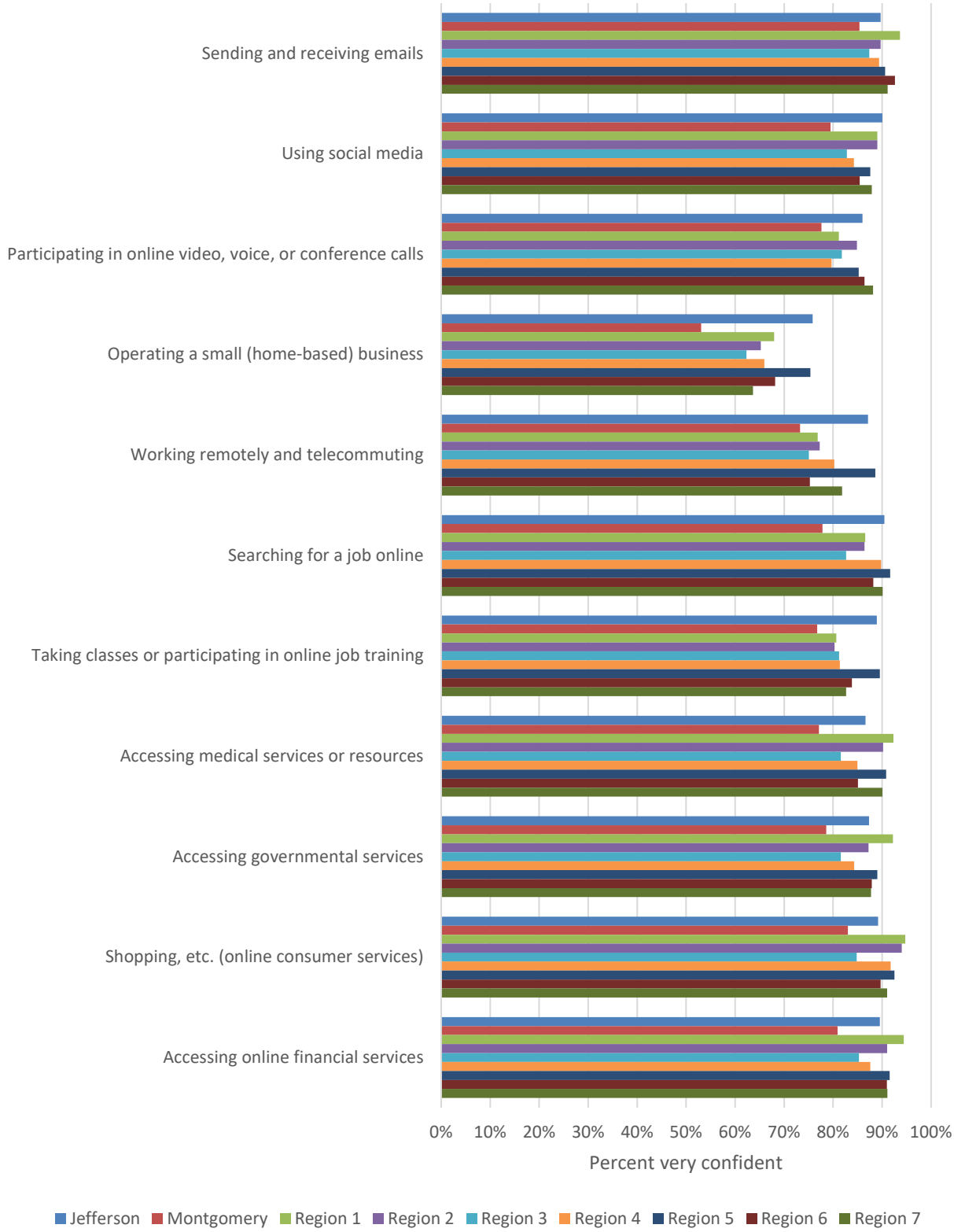


Table 44: Confidence in using the internet for various activities by household income

		Less than $50,000	$50,000 to $99,999	$100,000 or more
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	2%	0%	0%
	Slightly confident	11%	5%	2%
	Very confident	86%	95%	98%
	Total	1103	756	610
Using social media?	Not confident	6%	1%	1%
	Slightly confident	11%	9%	4%
	Very confident	83%	89%	95%
	Total	1023	736	586
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	8%	3%	1%
	Slightly confident	12%	13%	7%
	Very confident	79%	84%	92%
	Total	951	704	576
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	19%	14%	3%
	Slightly confident	20%	29%	14%
	Very confident	61%	57%	83%
	Total	546	477	404
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	12%	6%	2%
	Slightly confident	16%	17%	4%
	Very confident	73%	76%	94%
	Total	639	529	511
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	6%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	8%	11%	3%
	Very confident	86%	87%	96%
	Total	733	596	434
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	8%	3%	2%
	Slightly confident	14%	13%	4%
	Very confident	78%	84%	94%
	Total	695	588	462
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	5%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	12%	7%	5%
	Very confident	83%	92%	94%
	Total	973	696	557
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	5%	1%	1%
	Slightly confident	12%	7%	5%
	Very confident	83%	92%	93%
	Total	984	698	567
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	3%	1%	0%
	Slightly confident	9%	5%	3%
	Very confident	88%	94%	97%
	Total	1054	745	602
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	4%	1%	0%
	Slightly confident	11%	5%	3%
	Very confident	86%	94%	97%
	Total	1037	746	596

Figure 109: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by household income

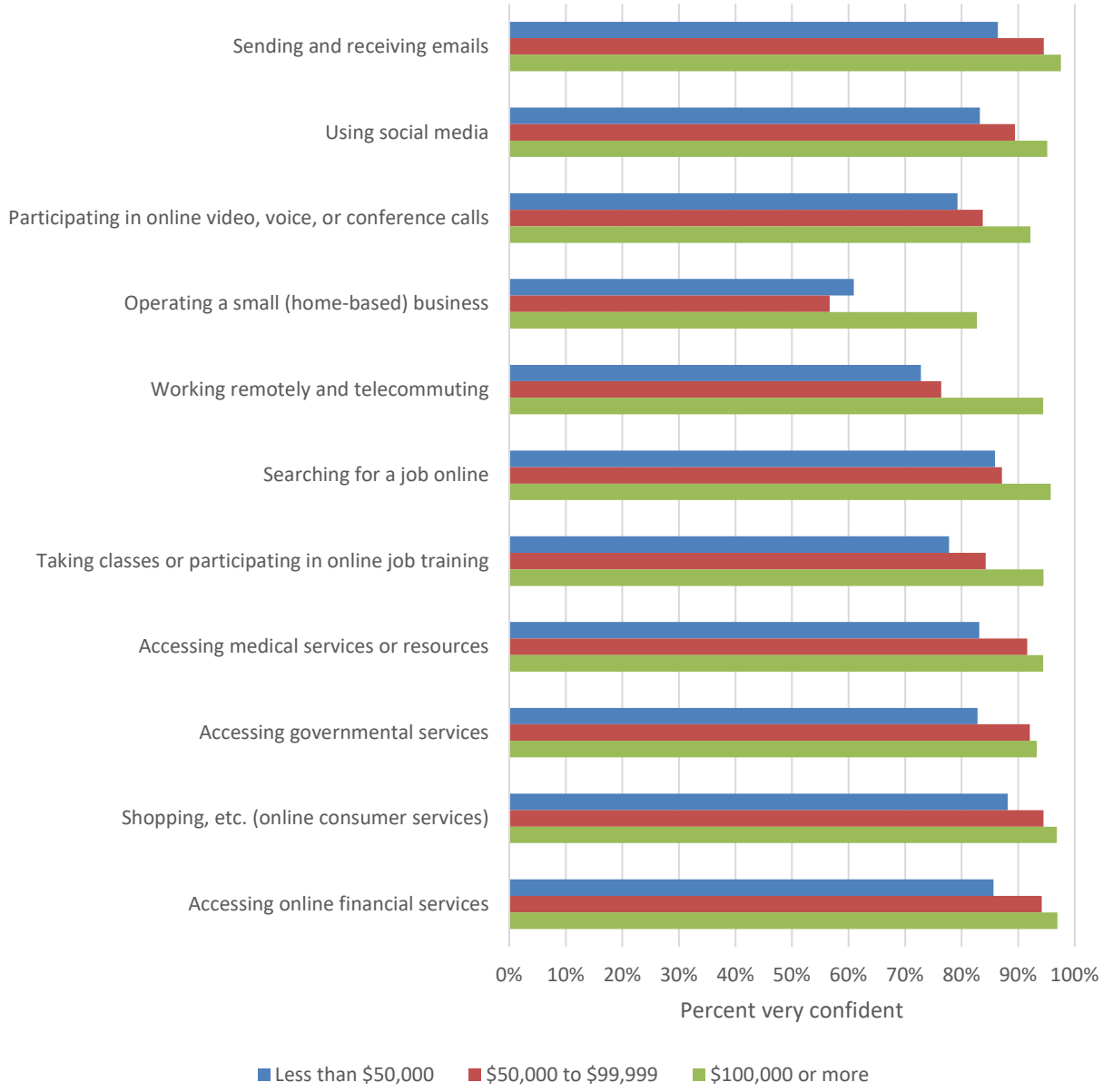


Table 45: Confidence in using the internet for various activities by race/ethnicity

		Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White	Other
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	3%	0%	1%	0%
	Slightly confident	10%	5%	7%	5%
	Very confident	87%	95%	92%	95%
	Total	810	158	2039	114
Using social media?	Not confident	5%	8%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	11%	17%	8%	6%
	Very confident	84%	75%	89%	92%
	Total	769	151	1948	105
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	6%	10%	4%	3%
	Slightly confident	11%	29%	11%	5%
	Very confident	83%	61%	85%	93%
	Total	750	152	1808	105
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	15%	1%	12%	6%
	Slightly confident	21%	2%	24%	8%
	Very confident	64%	97%	64%	86%
	Total	460	100	1225	75
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	11%	5%	6%	3%
	Slightly confident	16%	26%	12%	6%
	Very confident	73%	68%	82%	91%
	Total	544	111	1420	103
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	5%	0%	4%	0%
	Slightly confident	8%	29%	7%	7%
	Very confident	87%	71%	89%	93%
	Total	647	96	1452	83
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	6%	0%	6%	4%
	Slightly confident	13%	23%	11%	6%
	Very confident	80%	77%	83%	90%
	Total	630	103	1426	86
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	5%	2%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	11%	17%	8%	6%
	Very confident	83%	81%	90%	92%
	Total	732	151	1803	124
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	6%	3%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	11%	12%	9%	3%
	Very confident	83%	85%	89%	95%
	Total	752	129	1833	108
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	5%	0%	1%	2%
	Slightly confident	9%	3%	6%	3%
	Very confident	87%	97%	93%	94%
	Total	791	147	1988	112
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	4%	0%	2%	0%
	Slightly confident	11%	12%	6%	7%
	Very confident	85%	88%	93%	93%
	Total	762	148	1984	107

Figure 110: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by race/ethnicity

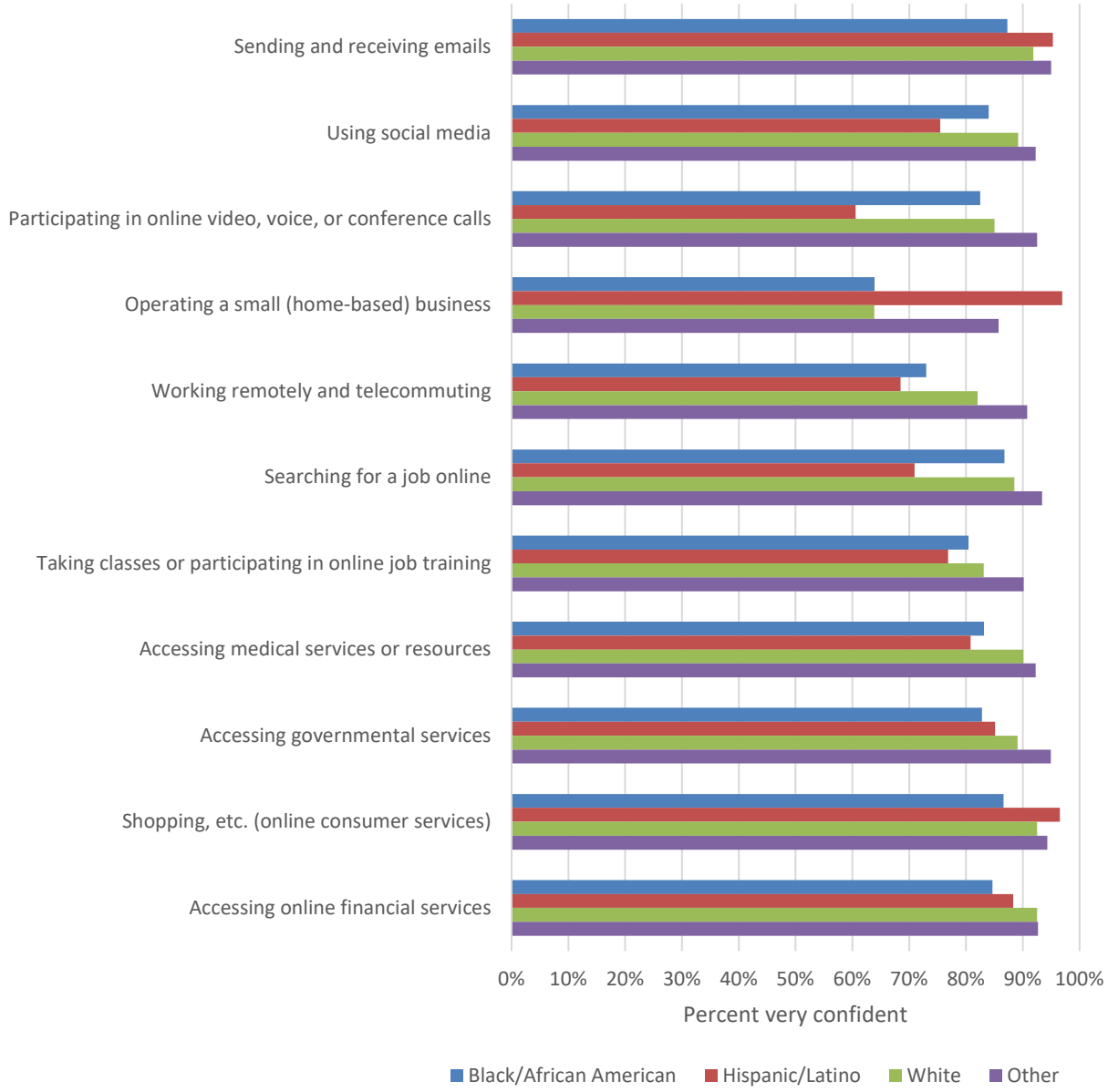


Table 46: Confidence in using the internet for various activities by household size

		One HH member	Two HH members	Three HH members	Four+ HH members
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	3%	1%	0%	1%
	Slightly confident	12%	8%	6%	4%
	Very confident	85%	90%	93%	96%
	Total	726	1184	560	939
Using social media?	Not confident	5%	3%	4%	1%
	Slightly confident	14%	11%	7%	4%
	Very confident	81%	86%	89%	94%
	Total	692	1086	541	910
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	8%	5%	5%	2%
	Slightly confident	12%	14%	13%	6%
	Very confident	80%	81%	82%	92%
	Total	631	1009	521	894
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	21%	15%	8%	5%
	Slightly confident	22%	20%	25%	17%
	Very confident	57%	66%	67%	78%
	Total	413	608	375	667
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	13%	7%	4%	4%
	Slightly confident	18%	13%	17%	8%
	Very confident	69%	80%	79%	89%
	Total	436	723	436	795
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	8%	4%	2%	1%
	Slightly confident	10%	9%	12%	4%
	Very confident	82%	87%	86%	95%
	Total	537	794	446	753
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	8%	6%	5%	2%
	Slightly confident	17%	12%	12%	7%
	Very confident	76%	81%	83%	91%
	Total	534	762	449	755
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	5%	3%	1%	2%
	Slightly confident	14%	10%	9%	4%
	Very confident	81%	87%	89%	94%
	Total	645	1049	515	853
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	6%	4%	1%	1%
	Slightly confident	12%	11%	11%	4%
	Very confident	82%	86%	88%	95%
	Total	651	1044	522	868
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	4%	2%	1%	1%
	Slightly confident	11%	8%	5%	2%
	Very confident	84%	90%	94%	97%
	Total	699	1144	553	918
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	5%	2%	1%	1%
	Slightly confident	11%	8%	7%	3%
	Very confident	84%	90%	92%	96%
	Total	700	1127	541	910

Figure 111: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by household size

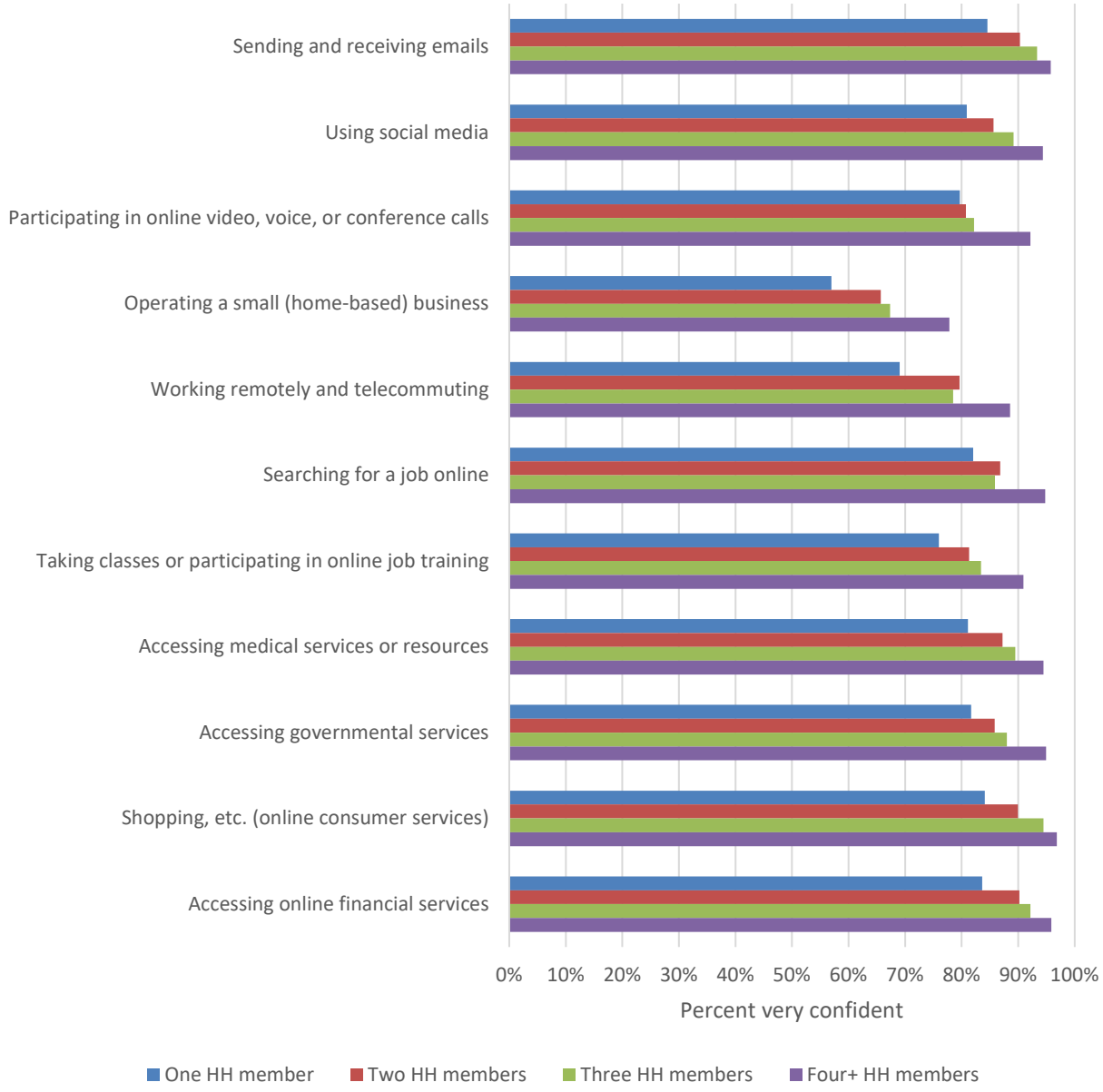


Table 47: Confidence in using the internet for various activities by student in household

		No student household	Student in household
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	2%	0%
	Slightly confident	10%	5%
	Very confident	88%	95%
	Total	2154	1362
Using social media?	Not confident	4%	2%
	Slightly confident	12%	6%
	Very confident	84%	92%
	Total	2024	1309
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	6%	3%
	Slightly confident	13%	9%
	Very confident	81%	88%
	Total	1858	1288
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	16%	6%
	Slightly confident	20%	21%
	Very confident	64%	73%
	Total	1147	976
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	10%	4%
	Slightly confident	14%	11%
	Very confident	76%	85%
	Total	1295	1161
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	6%	1%
	Slightly confident	9%	7%
	Very confident	85%	92%
	Total	1493	1099
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	7%	3%
	Slightly confident	14%	8%
	Very confident	79%	89%
	Total	1451	1104
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	4%	2%
	Slightly confident	11%	5%
	Very confident	85%	93%
	Total	1911	1252
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	4%	2%
	Slightly confident	11%	6%
	Very confident	85%	92%
	Total	1902	1273
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	3%	1%
	Slightly confident	8%	4%
	Very confident	89%	95%
	Total	2080	1328
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	3%	1%
	Slightly confident	9%	5%
	Very confident	88%	95%
	Total	2056	1318

Figure 112: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by student in household

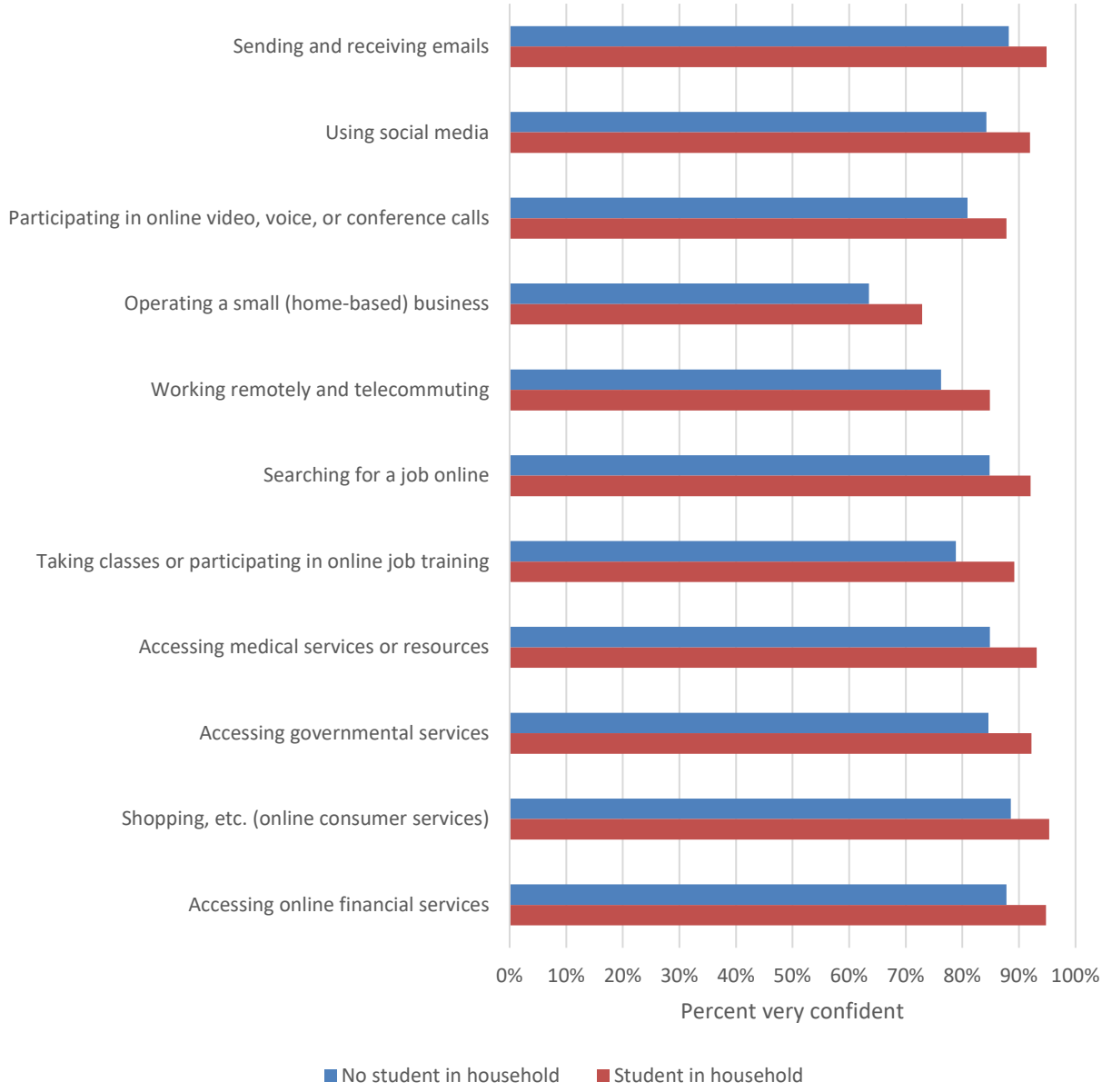


Table 48: Confidence in using the internet for various activities by ages of householders

		No child in household	Child in household	No aging individual in household	Aging individual in household
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	2%	0%	1%	3%
	Slightly confident	9%	5%	5%	14%
	Very confident	89%	95%	94%	84%
	Total	2017	1392	2574	835
Using social media?	Not confident	4%	2%	2%	8%
	Slightly confident	11%	6%	8%	14%
	Very confident	85%	92%	91%	77%
	Total	1881	1347	2484	744
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	6%	2%	2%	14%
	Slightly confident	13%	9%	10%	16%
	Very confident	81%	88%	88%	71%
	Total	1746	1310	2387	669
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	17%	6%	9%	21%
	Slightly confident	19%	22%	21%	18%
	Very confident	64%	72%	70%	61%
	Total	1066	996	1681	382
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	10%	3%	5%	15%
	Slightly confident	14%	12%	12%	16%
	Very confident	76%	85%	83%	70%
	Total	1233	1157	1967	423
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	6%	1%	2%	11%
	Slightly confident	9%	7%	7%	12%
	Very confident	85%	92%	90%	77%
	Total	1387	1143	2095	434
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	7%	3%	3%	13%
	Slightly confident	13%	9%	11%	16%
	Very confident	80%	88%	86%	71%
	Total	1369	1131	2071	428
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	4%	2%	2%	5%
	Slightly confident	11%	6%	7%	16%
	Very confident	85%	92%	91%	79%
	Total	1772	1289	2341	721
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	4%	1%	2%	5%
	Slightly confident	11%	6%	7%	17%
	Very confident	85%	92%	91%	78%
	Total	1784	1302	2351	734
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	3%	1%	1%	4%
	Slightly confident	9%	4%	5%	12%
	Very confident	88%	96%	94%	84%
	Total	1957	1358	2511	804
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	3%	1%	1%	5%
	Slightly confident	9%	5%	5%	13%
	Very confident	88%	94%	93%	82%
	Total	1931	1347	2505	773

Figure 113: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

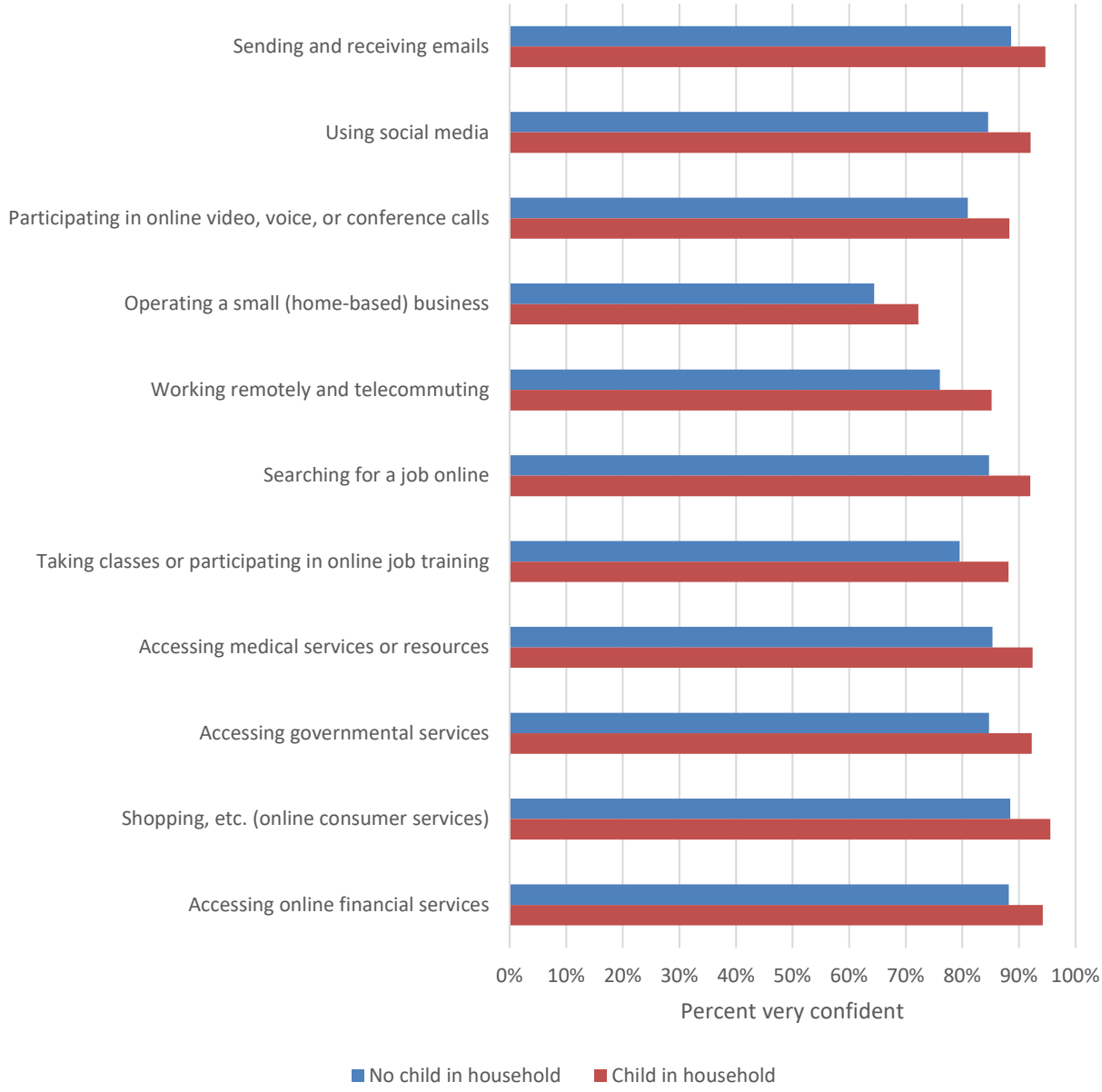


Figure 114: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by aging individuals in household

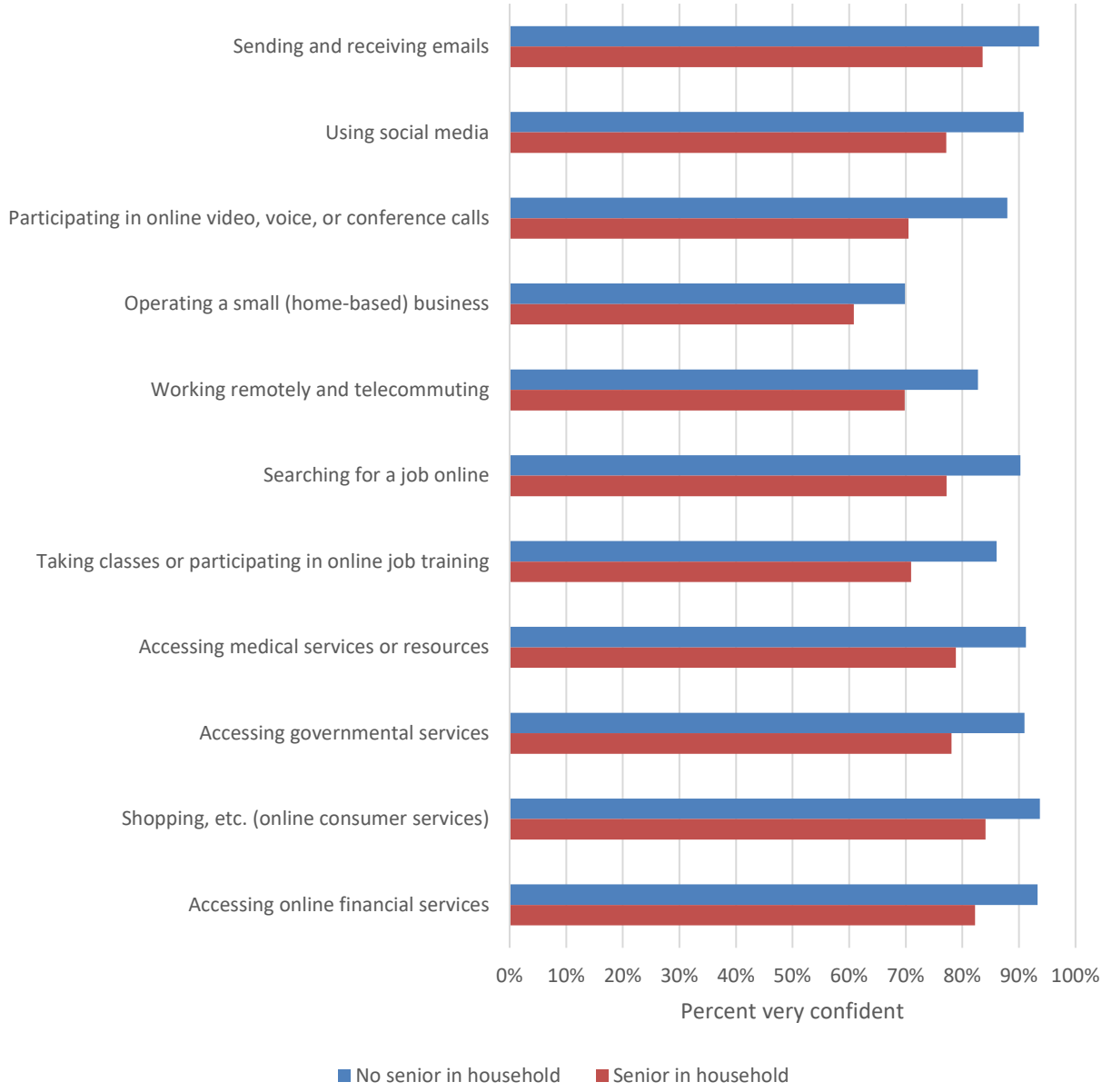
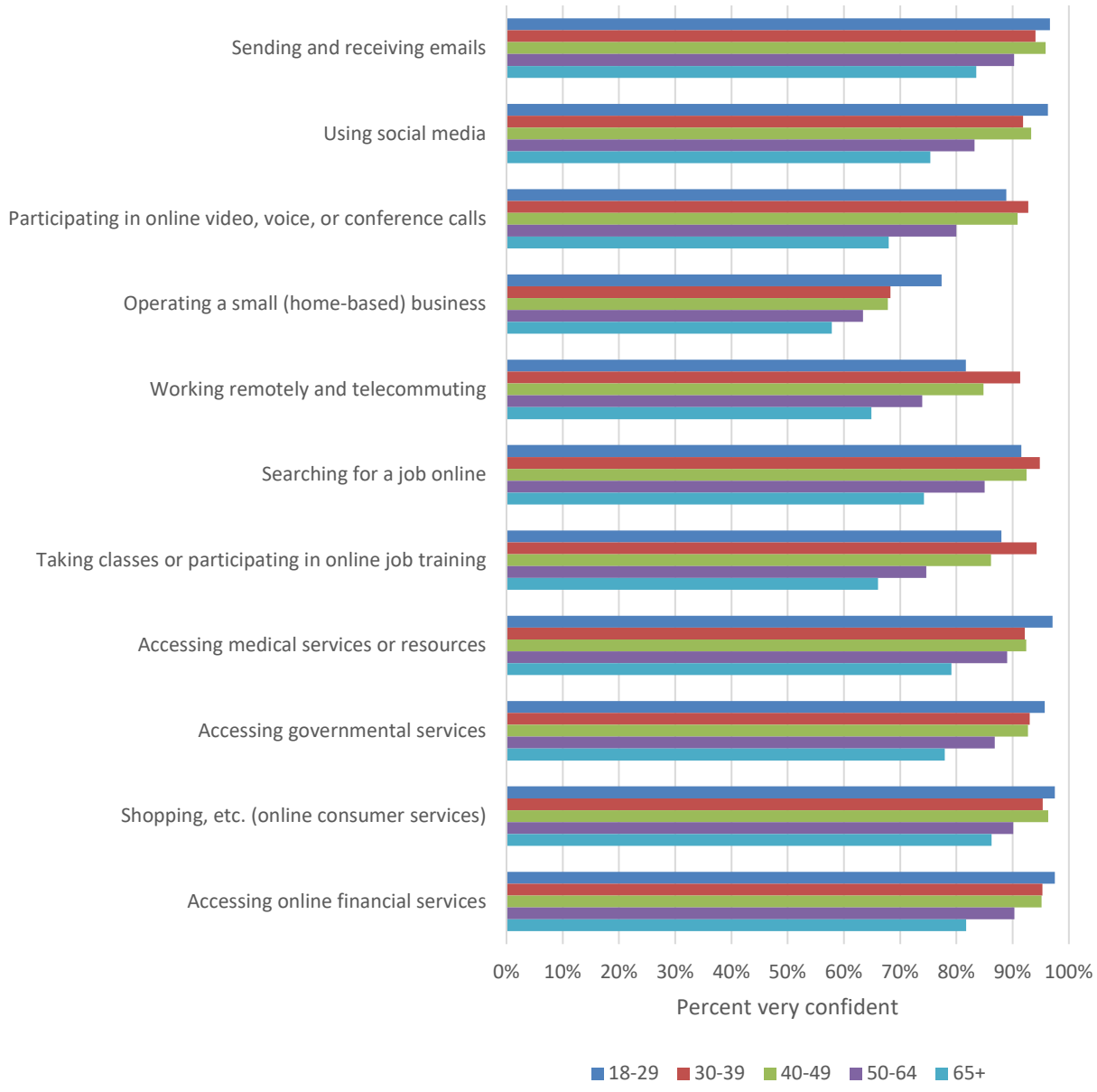


Table 49: Confidence in using the internet for various activities by respondent age

		18-29	30-39	40-49	60-64	65+
Sending and receiving emails?	Not confident	1%	0%	1%	2%	2%
	Slightly confident	3%	6%	4%	8%	15%
	Very confident	97%	94%	96%	90%	84%
	Total	525	417	421	664	542
Using social media?	Not confident	0%	0%	1%	3%	10%
	Slightly confident	4%	8%	6%	14%	15%
	Very confident	96%	92%	93%	83%	75%
	Total	518	409	407	630	477
Participating in online video, voice, or conference calls (such as Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime)?	Not confident	0%	1%	1%	5%	15%
	Slightly confident	11%	6%	8%	15%	17%
	Very confident	89%	93%	91%	80%	68%
	Total	499	388	395	557	411
Operating a small (home-based) business?	Not confident	2%	4%	11%	17%	25%
	Slightly confident	21%	27%	21%	20%	17%
	Very confident	77%	68%	68%	63%	58%
	Total	376	295	268	343	212
Working remotely and telecommuting?	Not confident	1%	3%	7%	9%	17%
	Slightly confident	17%	6%	9%	18%	18%
	Very confident	82%	91%	85%	74%	65%
	Total	440	320	320	442	228
Searching for a job online?	Not confident	1%	1%	2%	6%	12%
	Slightly confident	8%	4%	6%	9%	14%
	Very confident	92%	95%	92%	85%	74%
	Total	479	354	332	451	240
Taking classes or participating in online job training?	Not confident	2%	1%	5%	7%	16%
	Slightly confident	10%	5%	9%	18%	18%
	Very confident	88%	94%	86%	75%	66%
	Total	465	352	323	435	238
Accessing medical services or resources?	Not confident	1%	0%	1%	4%	4%
	Slightly confident	2%	7%	7%	7%	17%
	Very confident	97%	92%	92%	89%	79%
	Total	484	381	393	583	471
Accessing governmental services (such as DMV, benefits enrollment, etc.)?	Not confident	1%	1%	1%	4%	5%
	Slightly confident	3%	6%	6%	9%	17%
	Very confident	96%	93%	93%	87%	78%
	Total	483	389	391	573	466
Shopping, making travel reservations, or using other online consumer services?	Not confident	1%	0%	1%	3%	3%
	Slightly confident	2%	4%	3%	7%	11%
	Very confident	97%	95%	96%	90%	86%
	Total	518	412	410	639	523
Accessing online financial services such as banking and paying bills?	Not confident	0%	0%	1%	3%	4%
	Slightly confident	2%	4%	4%	7%	14%
	Very confident	98%	95%	95%	90%	82%
	Total	519	414	410	631	507

Figure 115: Very confident in using the internet for various activities by respondent age



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your internet and computer skills?

Figure 116: Agreement with statements about internet skills

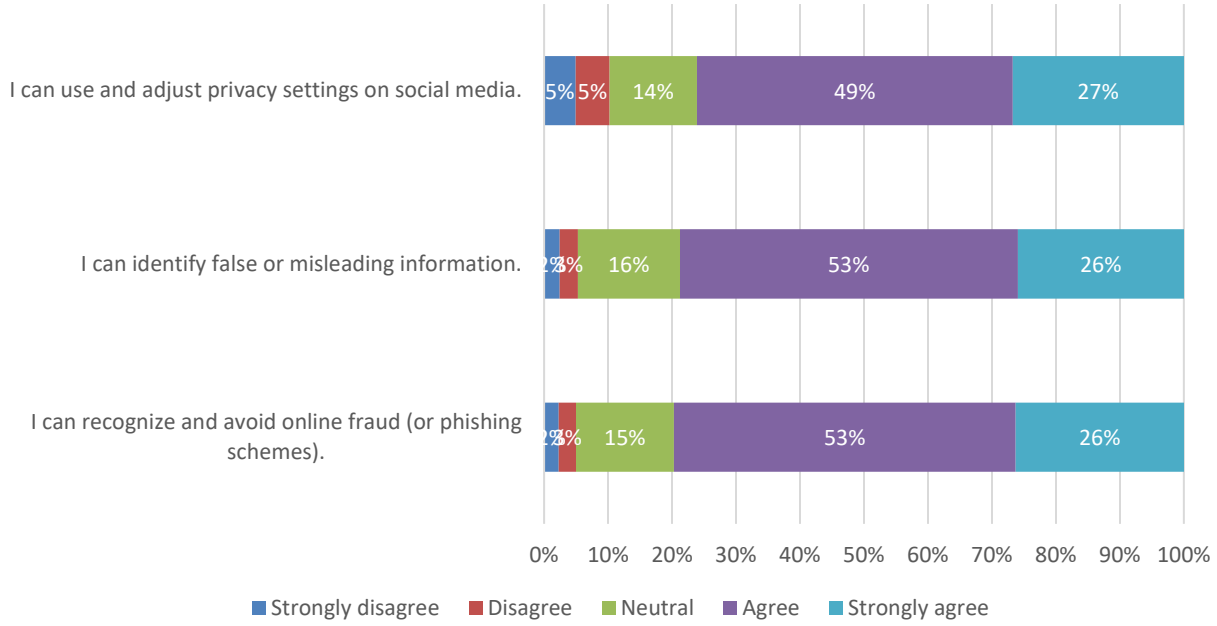


Figure 117: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by region

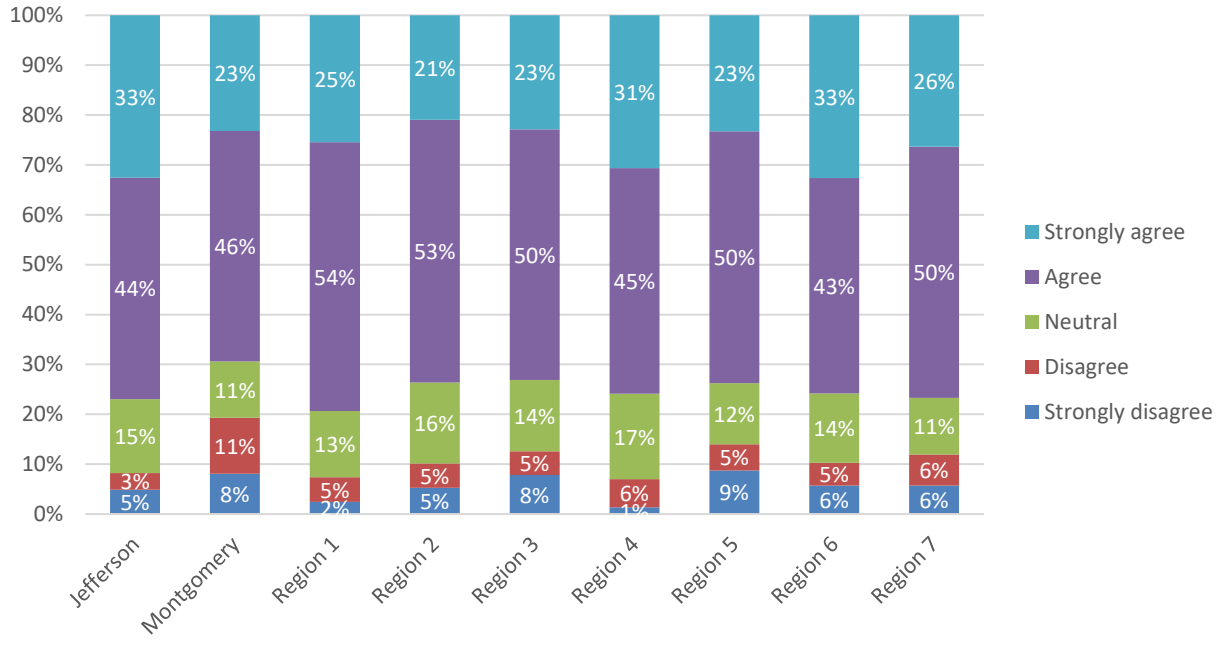


Figure 118: I can identify false or misleading information by region

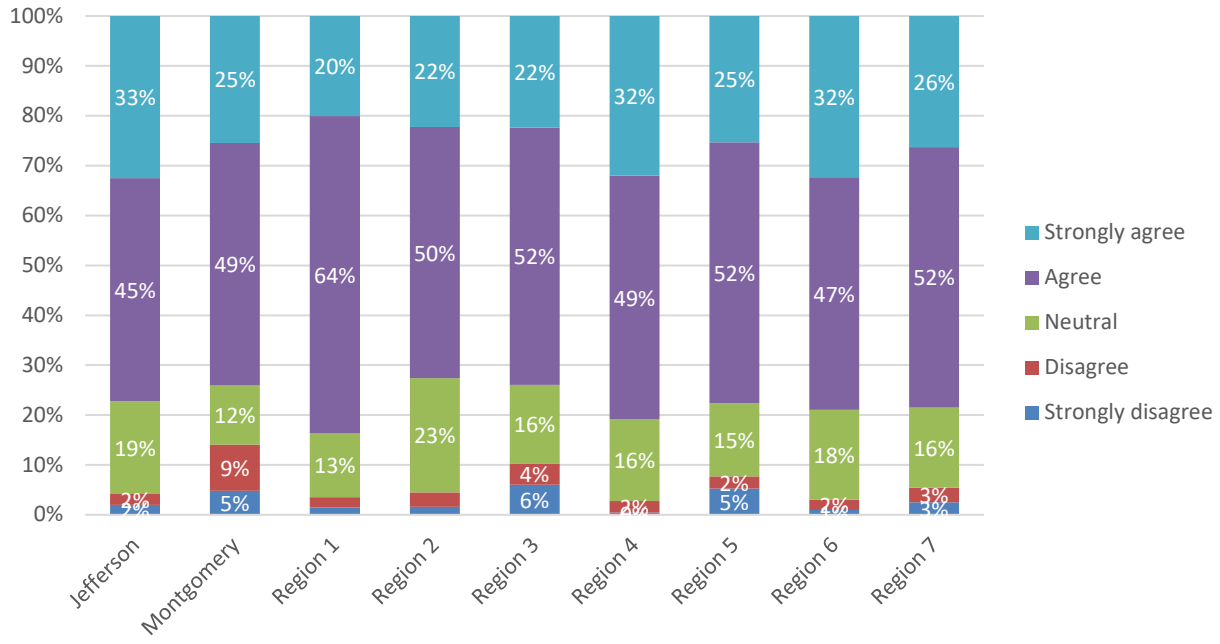


Figure 119: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by region

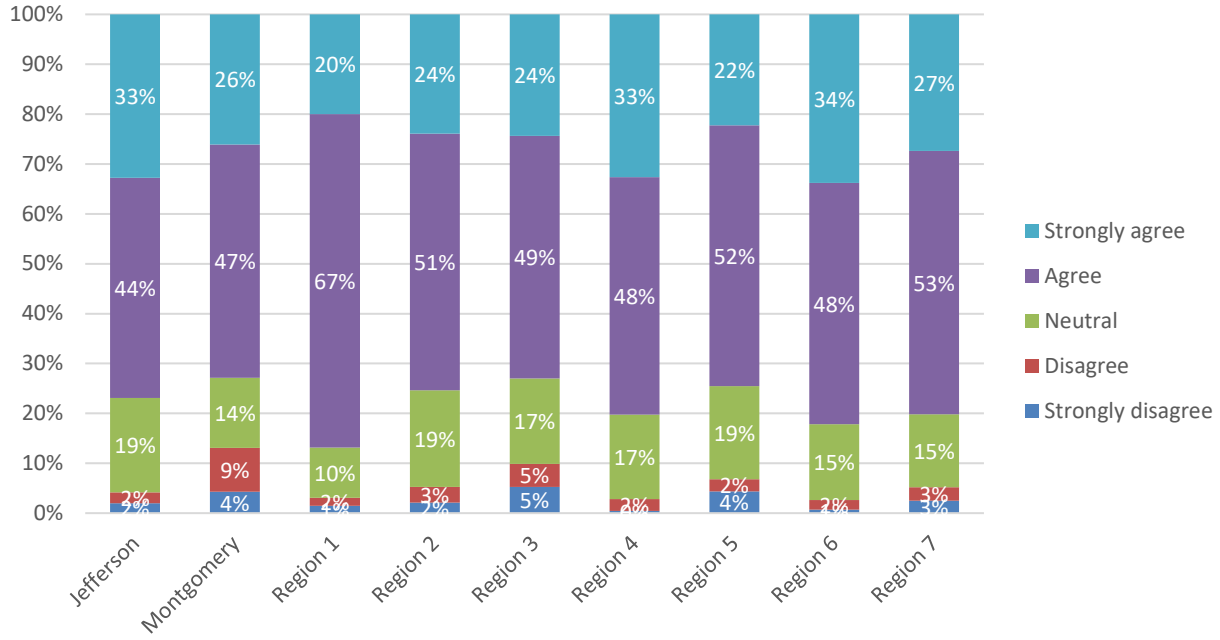


Figure 120: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by household income

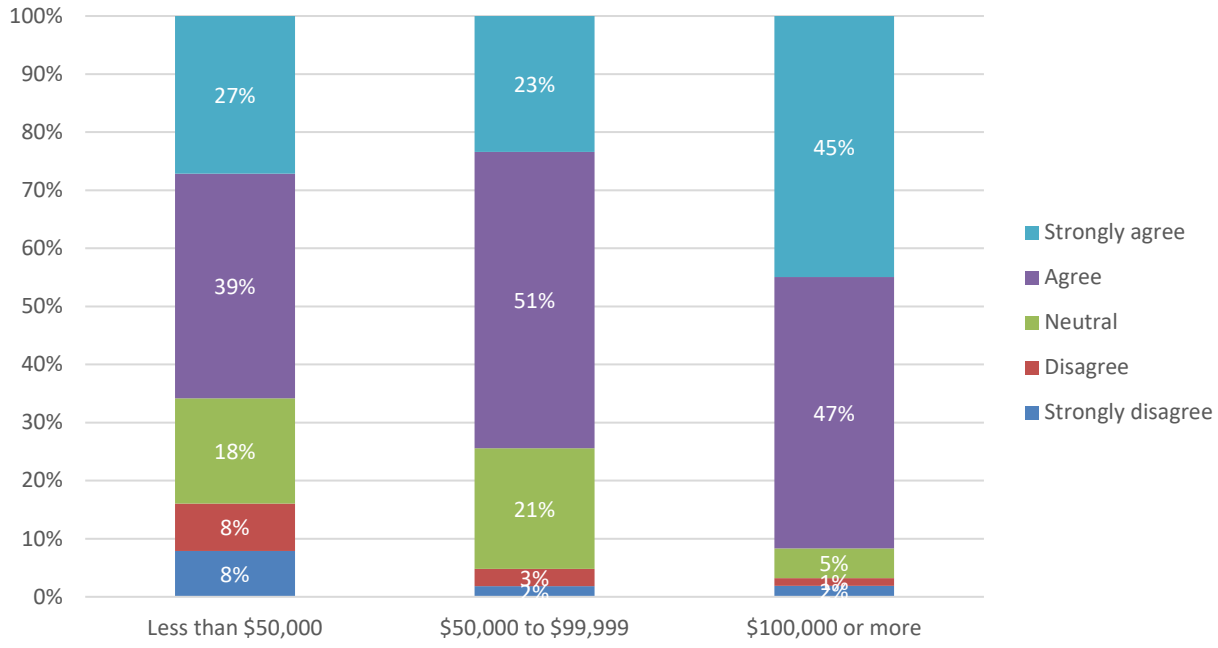


Figure 121: I can identify false or misleading information by household income

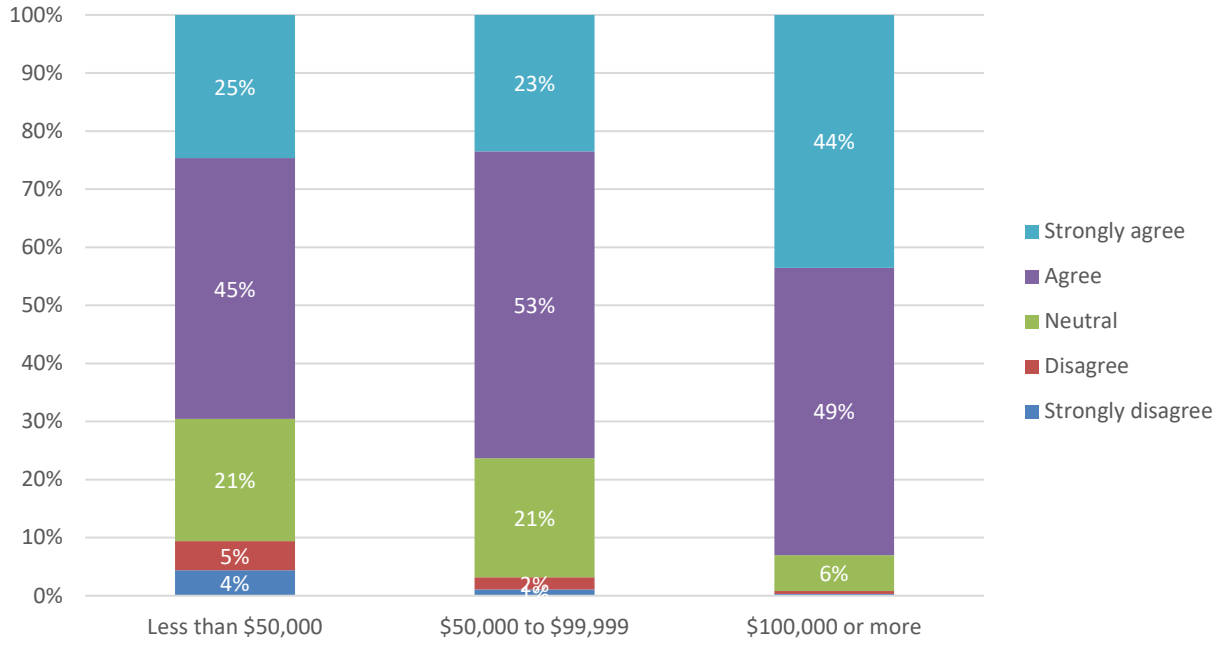


Figure 122: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by household income

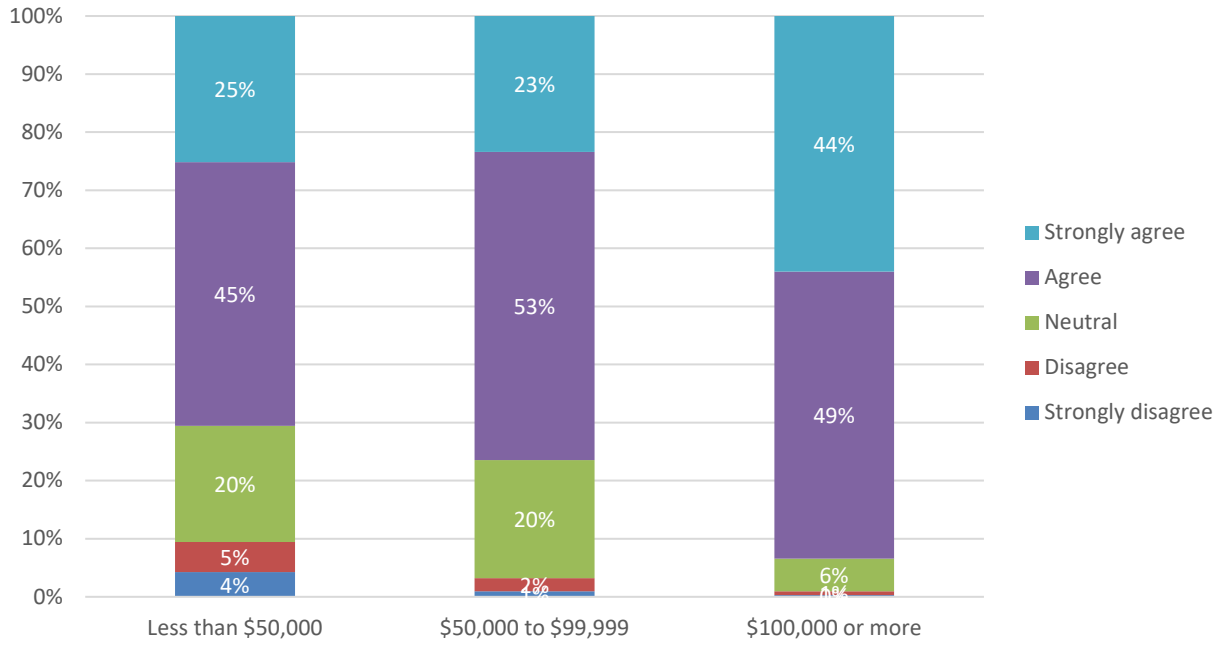


Figure 123: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by race/ethnicity

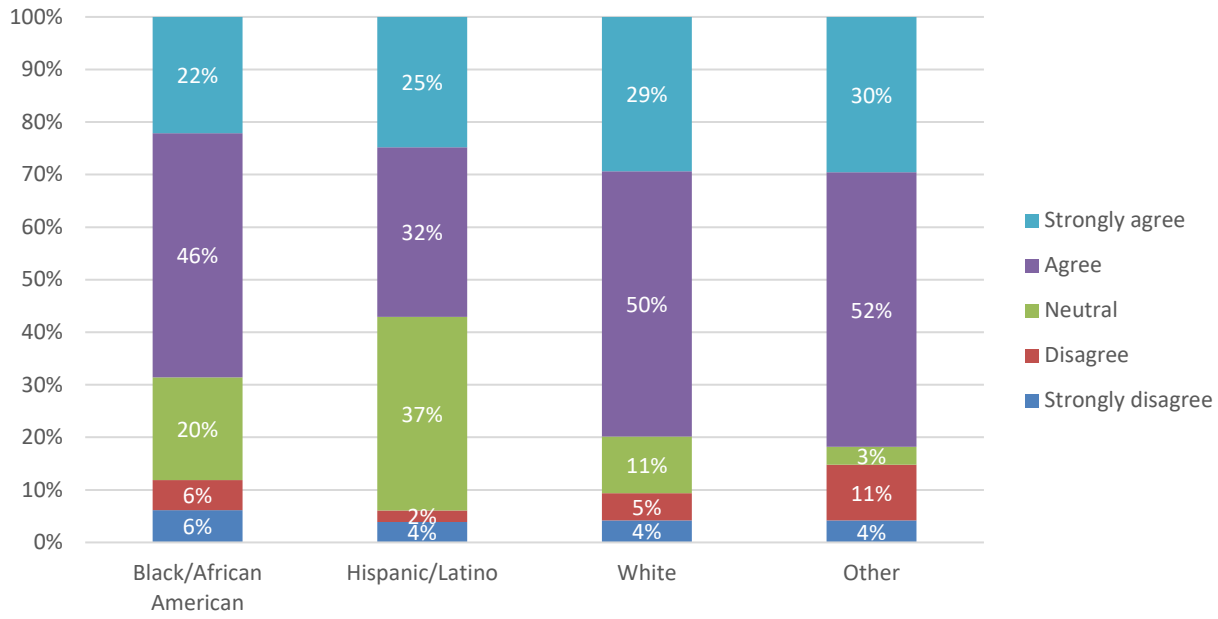


Figure 124: I can identify false or misleading information by race/ethnicity

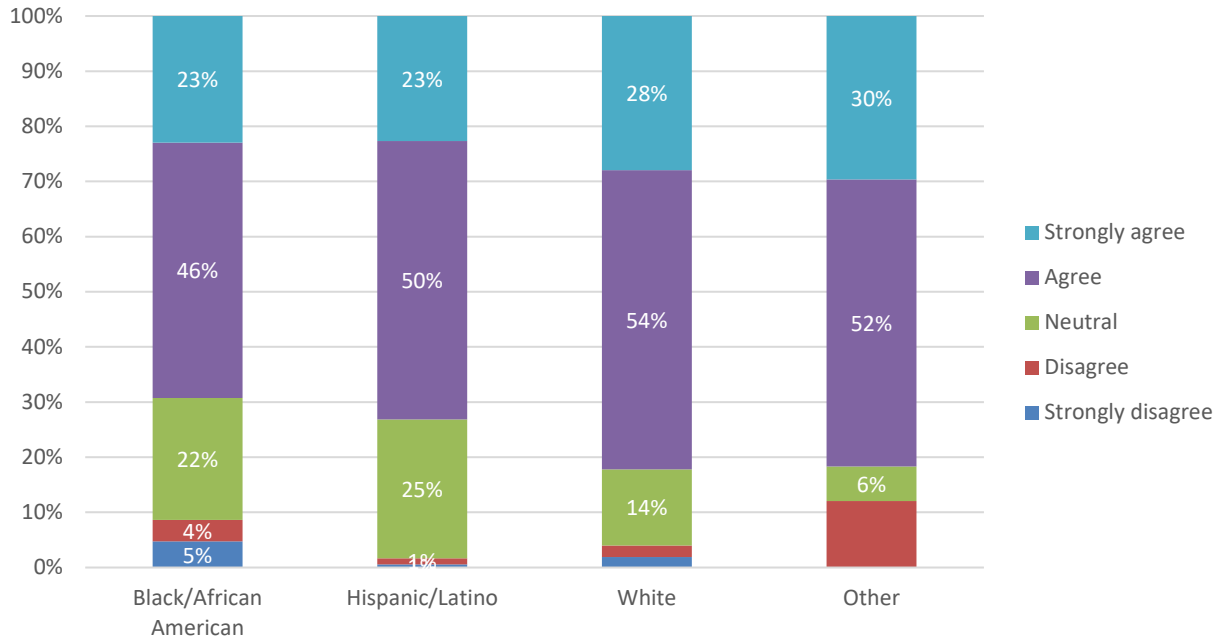


Figure 125: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by race/ethnicity

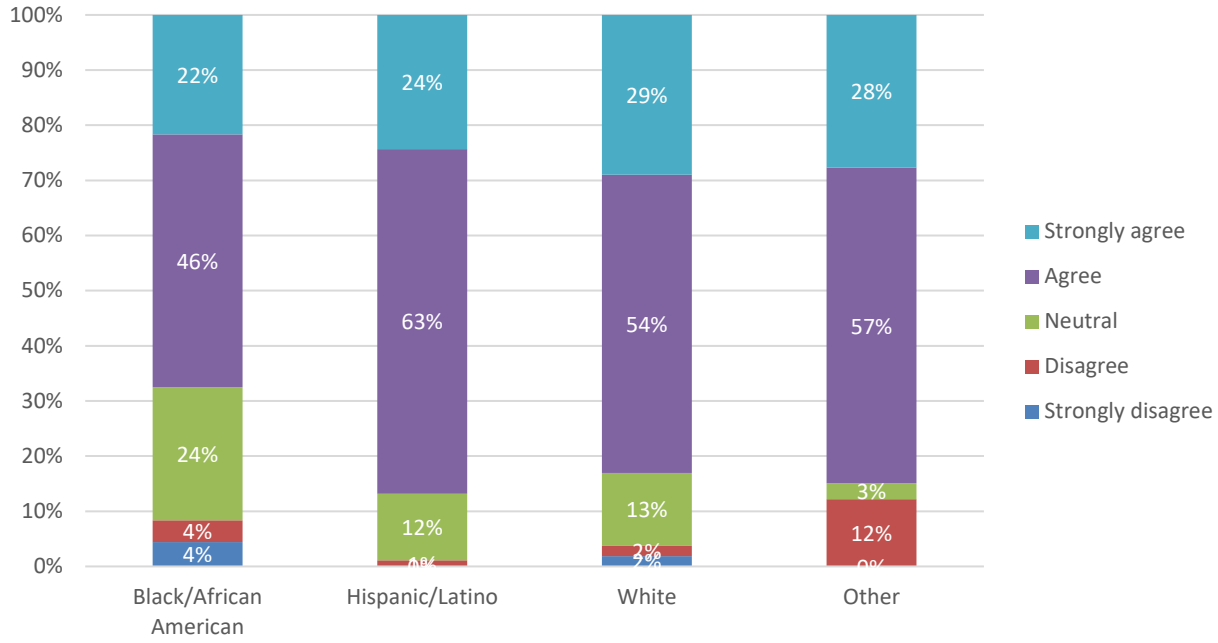


Figure 126: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by student in household

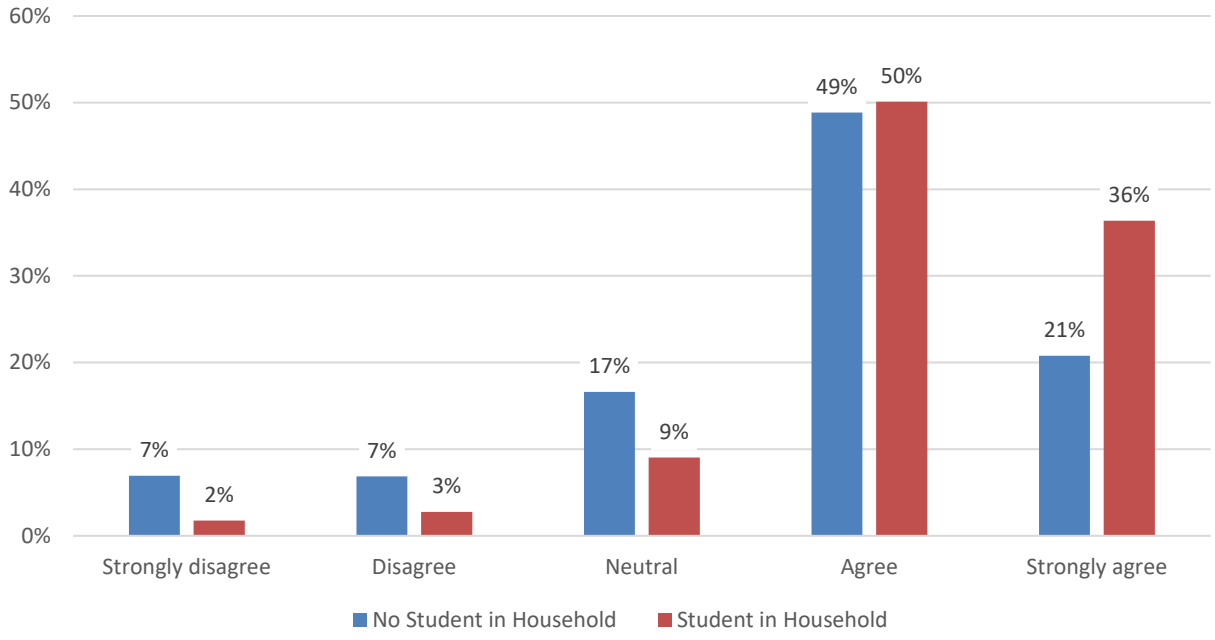


Figure 127: I can identify false or misleading information by student in household

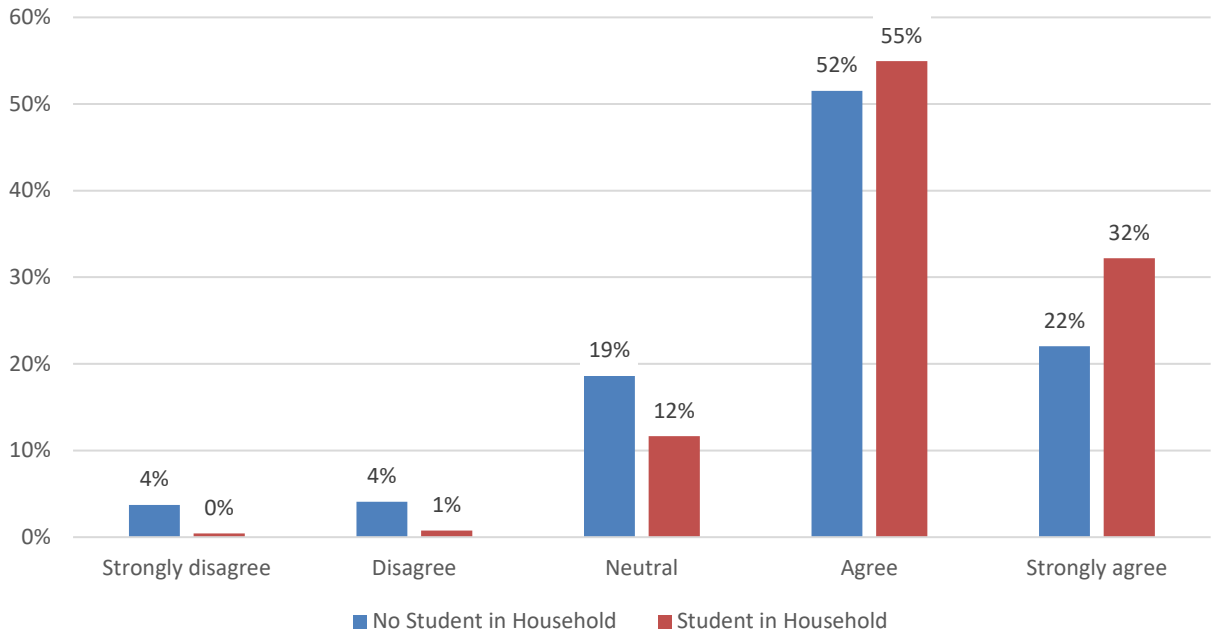


Figure 128: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by student in household

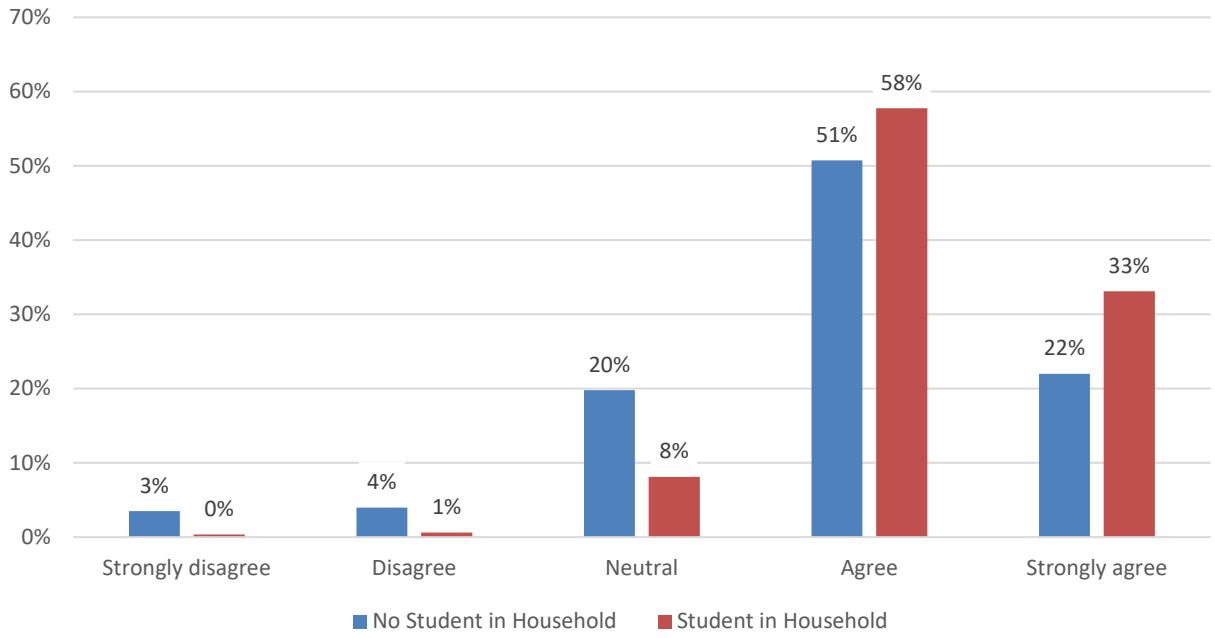


Figure 129: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by household size

Figure 130: I can identify false or misleading information by household size

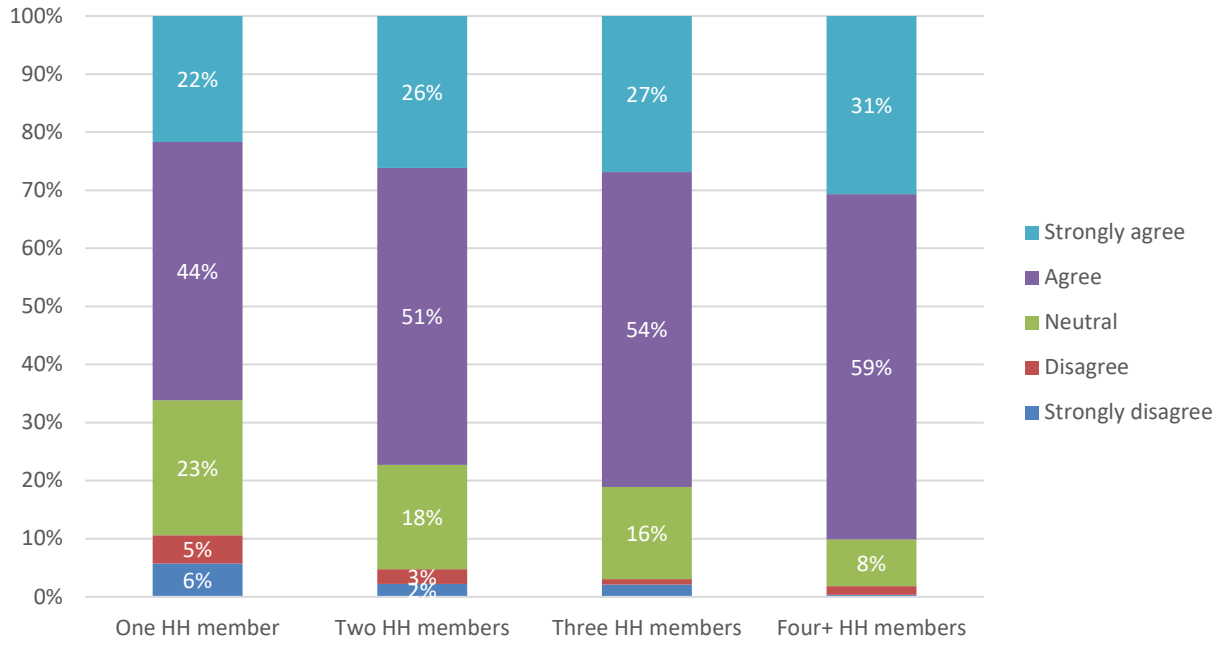


Figure 131: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by household size

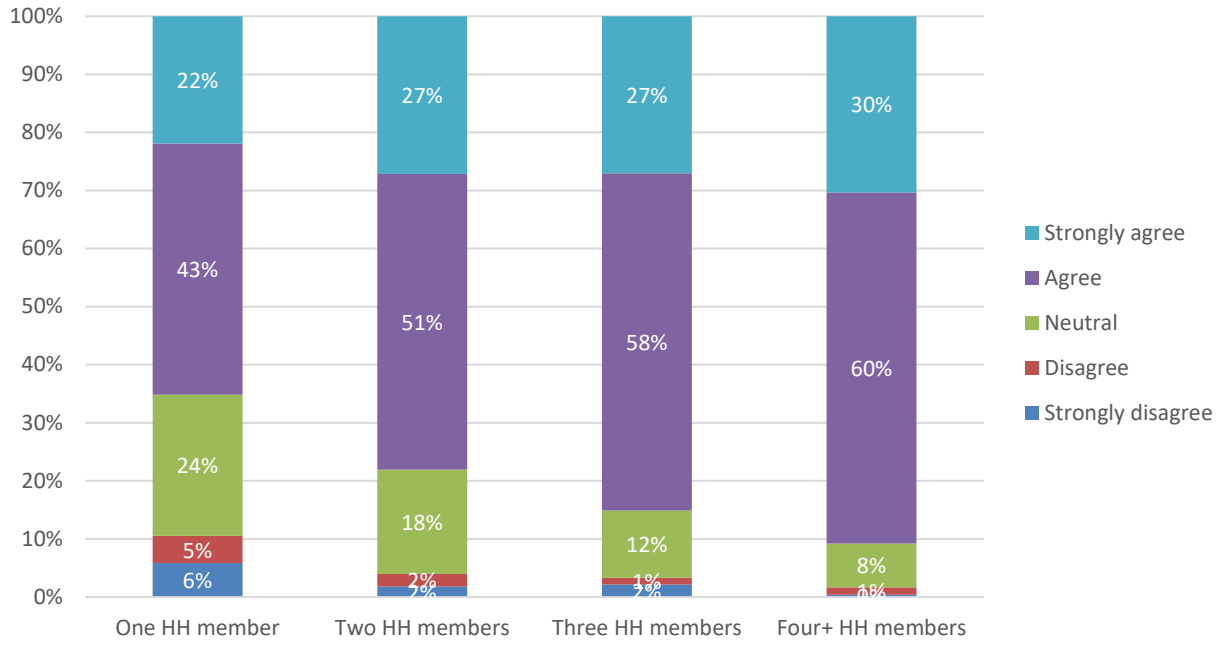


Figure 132: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

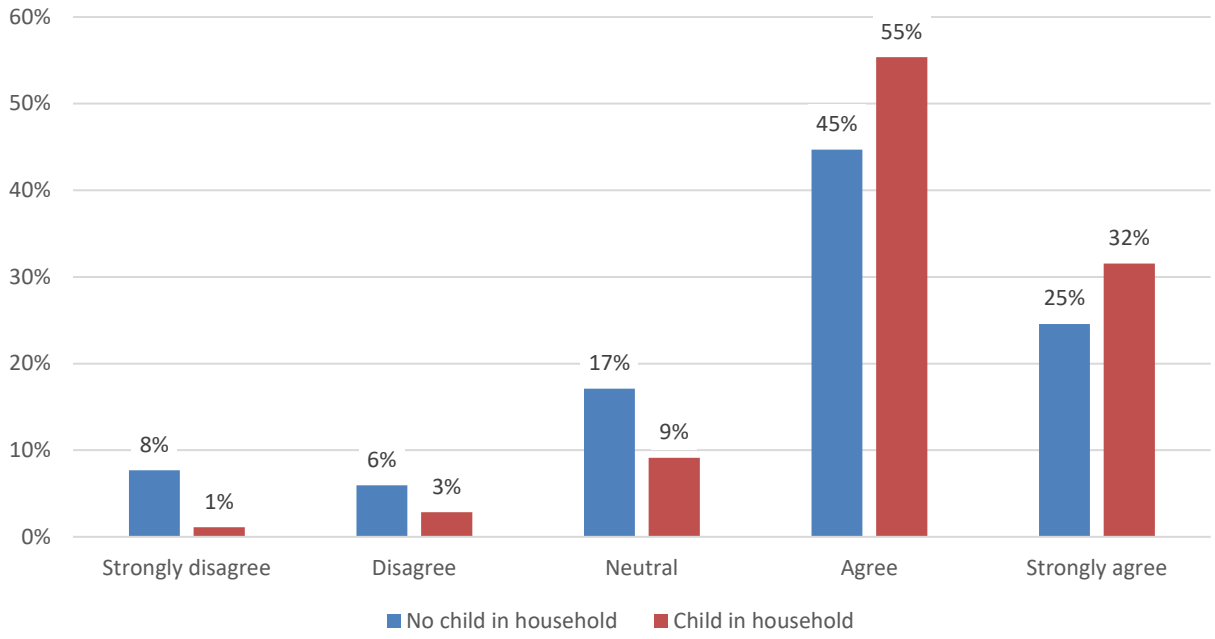


Figure 133: I can identify false or misleading information by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

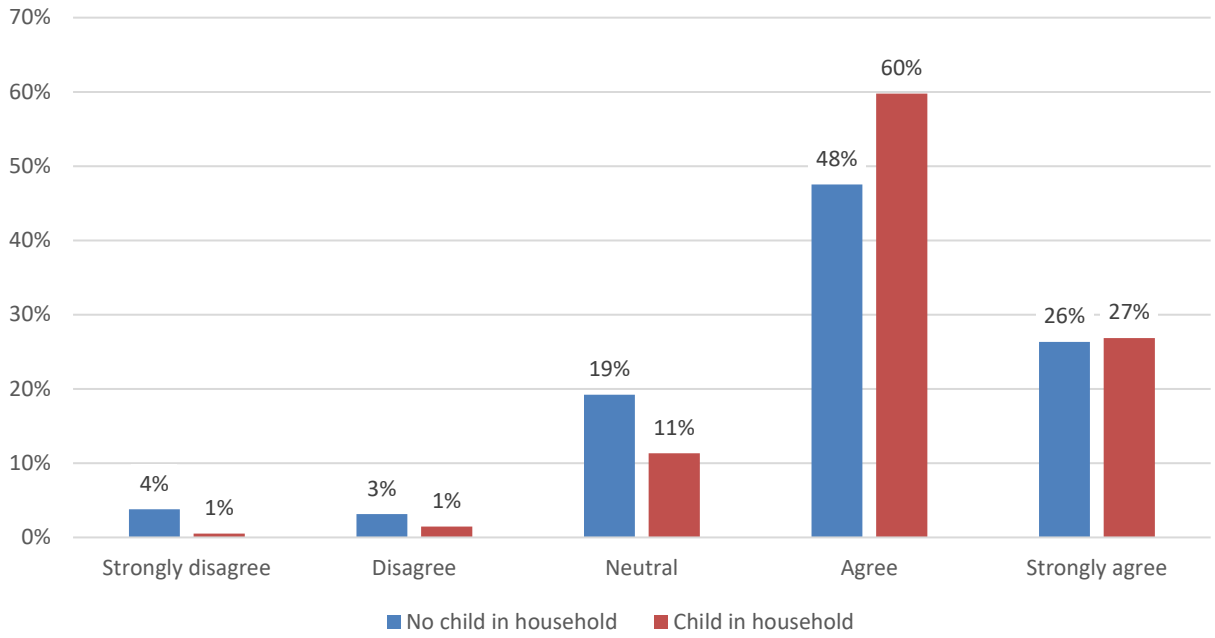


Figure 134: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by children in household (at least one household member under age 18)

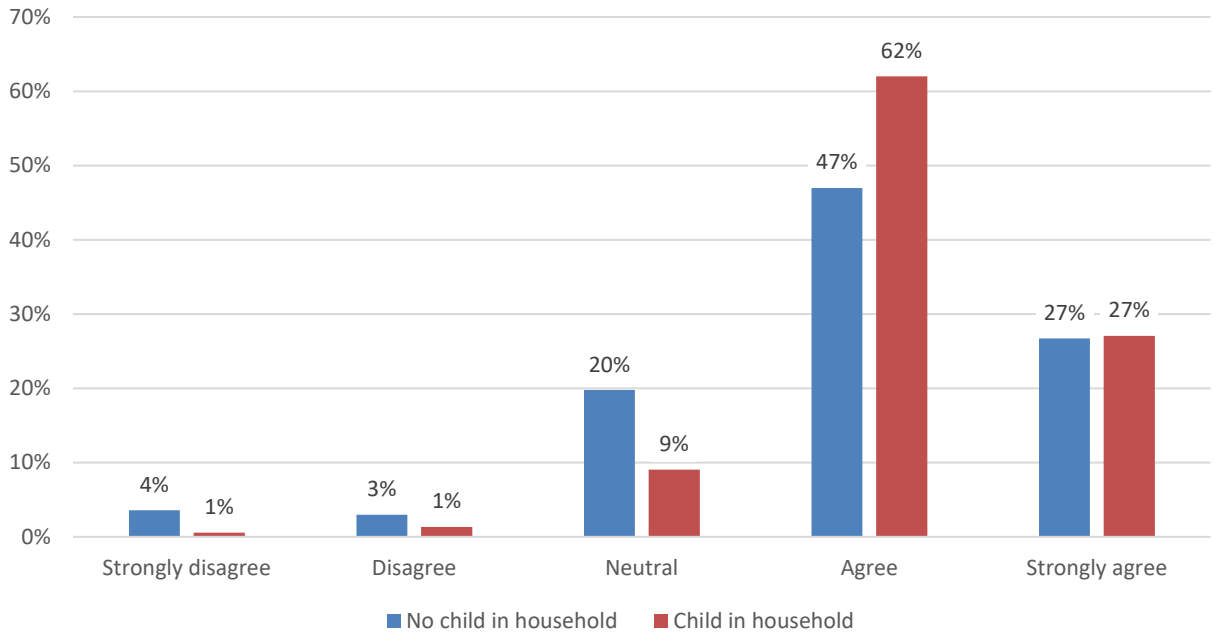


Figure 135: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by aging individuals in household

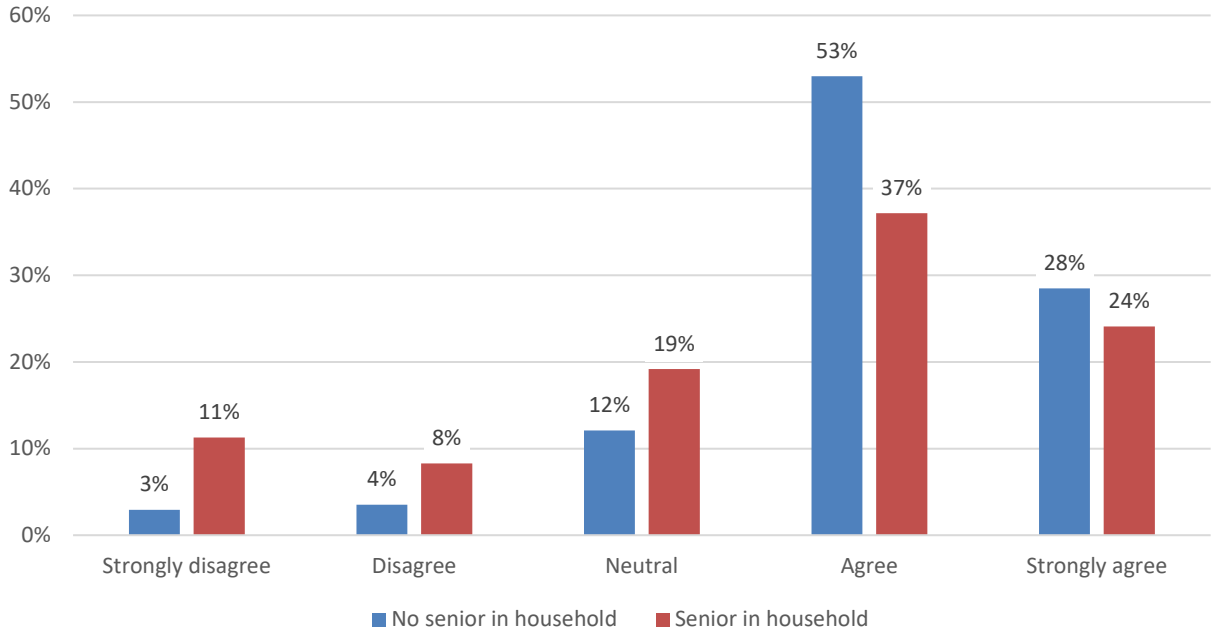


Figure 136: I can identify false or misleading information by aging individuals in household

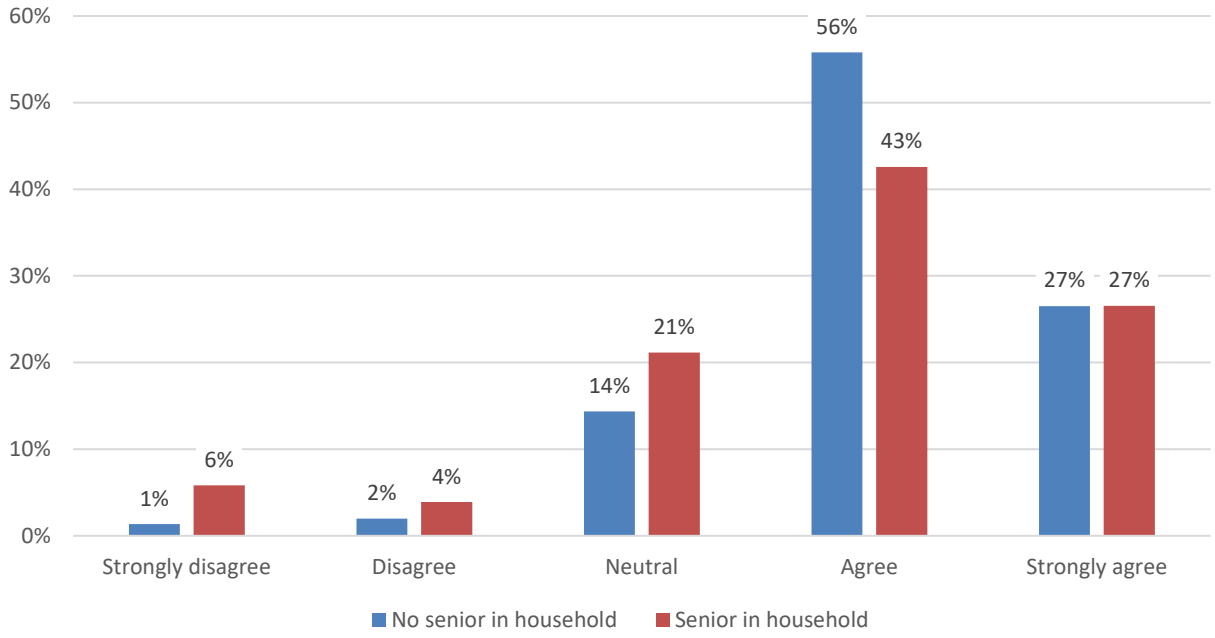


Figure 137: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by aging individuals in household

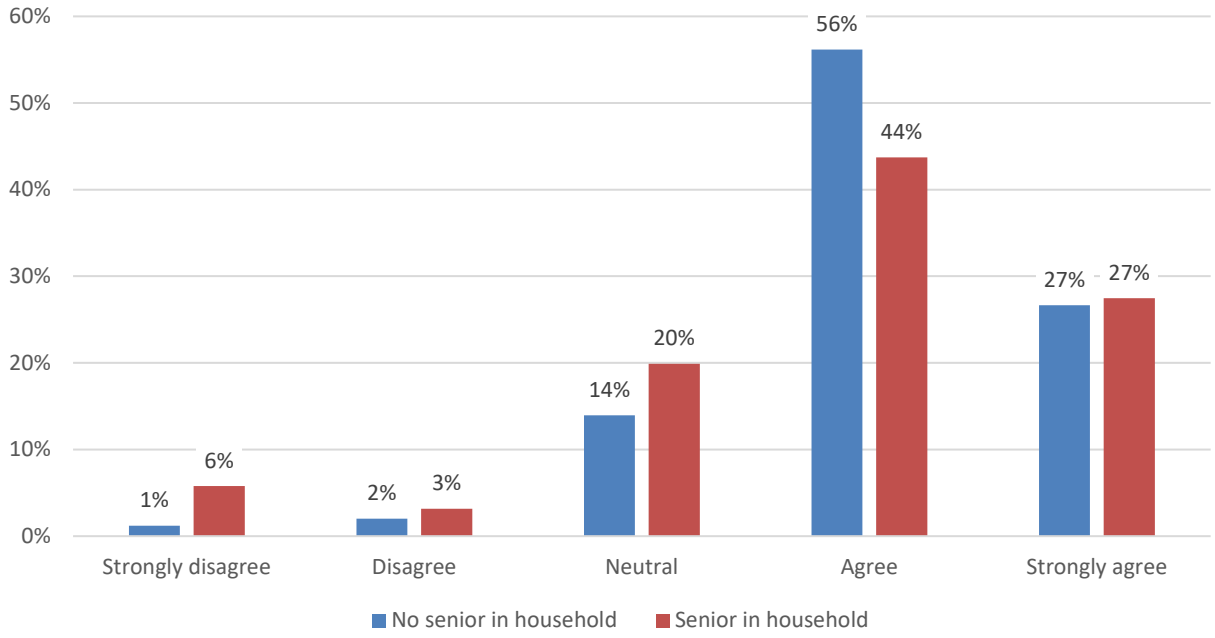


Figure 138: I can use and adjust privacy settings on social media by respondent age

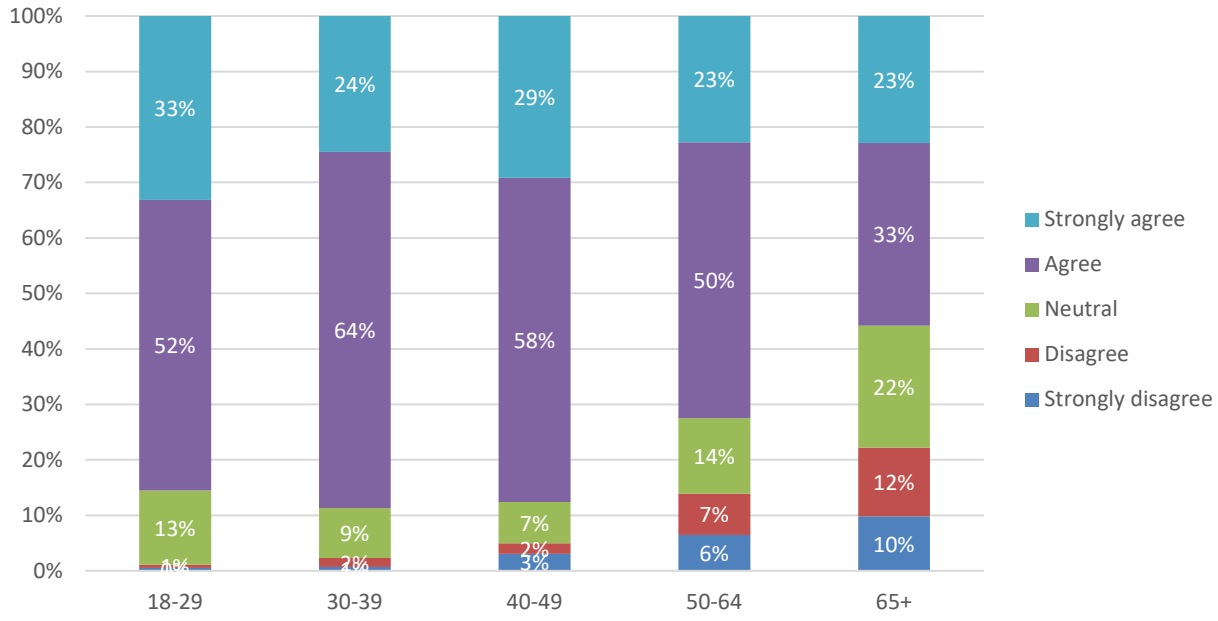


Figure 139: I can identify false or misleading information by respondent age

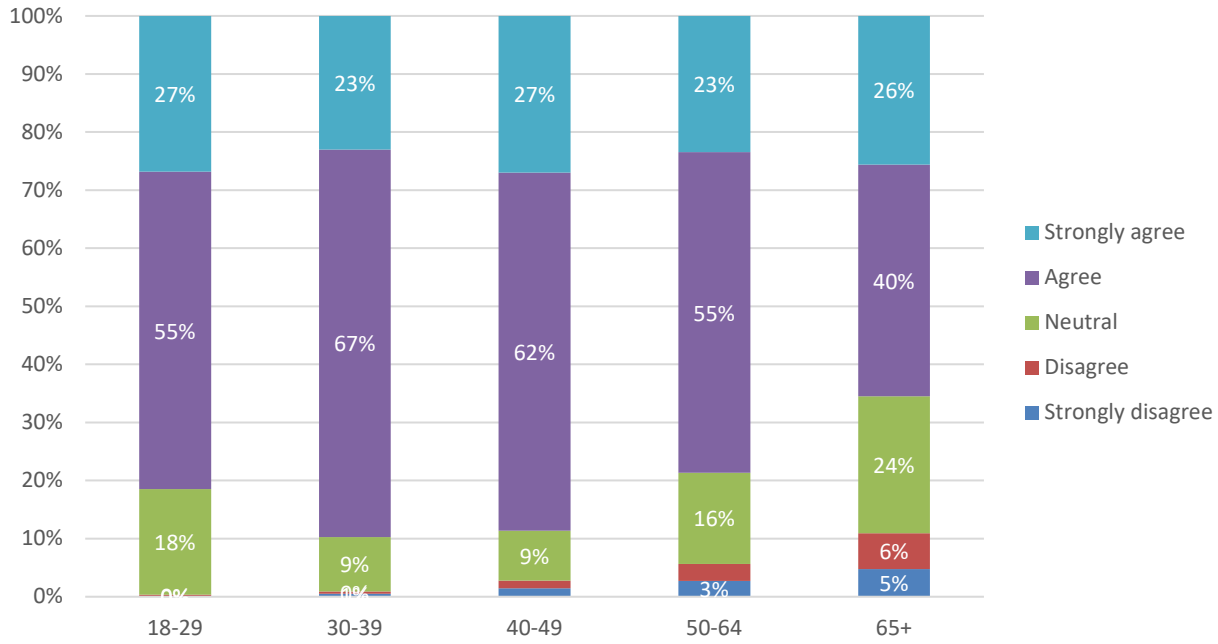
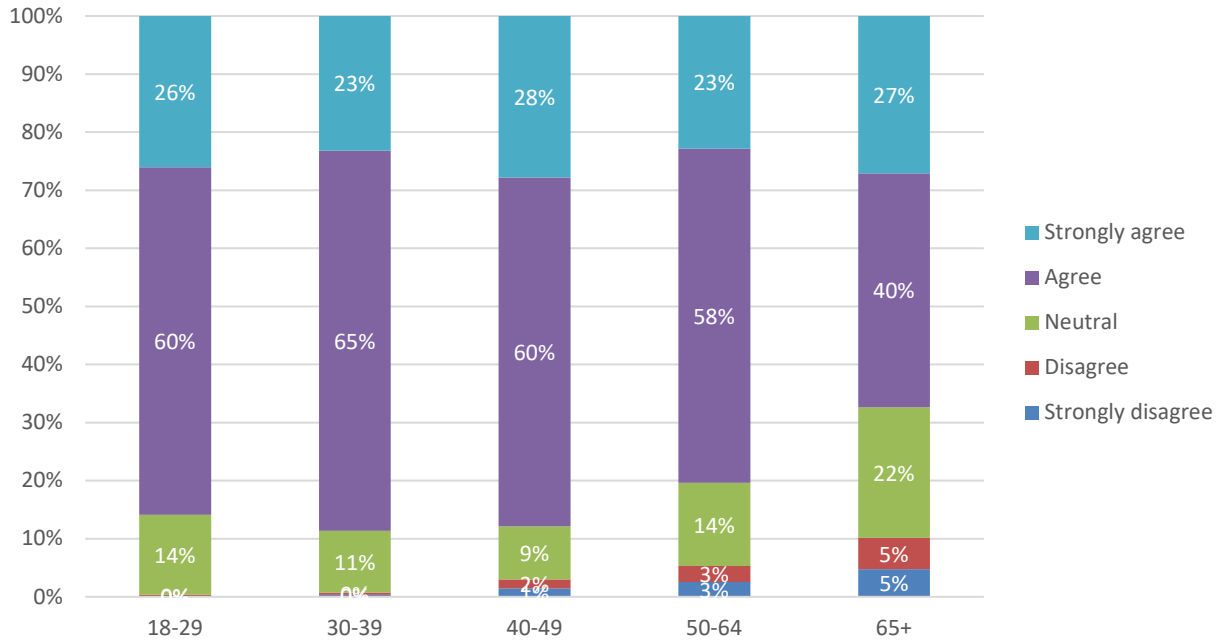
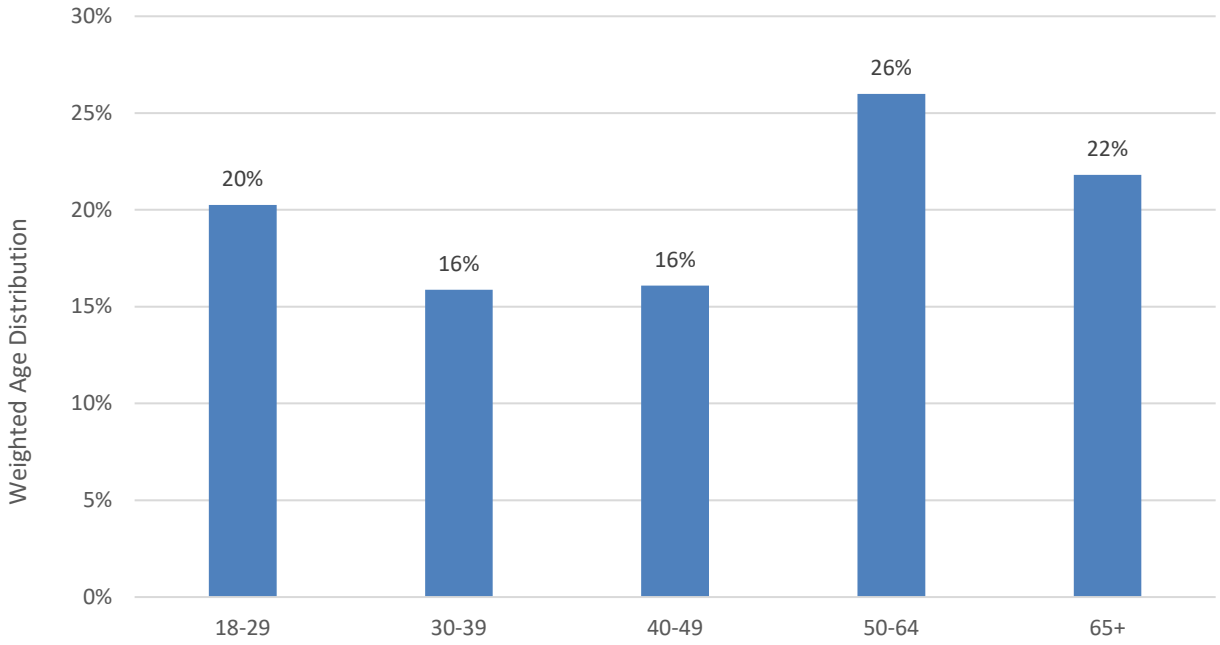


Figure 140: I can recognize and avoid online fraud by respondent age



What is your age?

Figure 141: Age of respondent



How many people live in your household, and what are their approximate ages?

Figure 142: Percent of households with at least one member in each age category

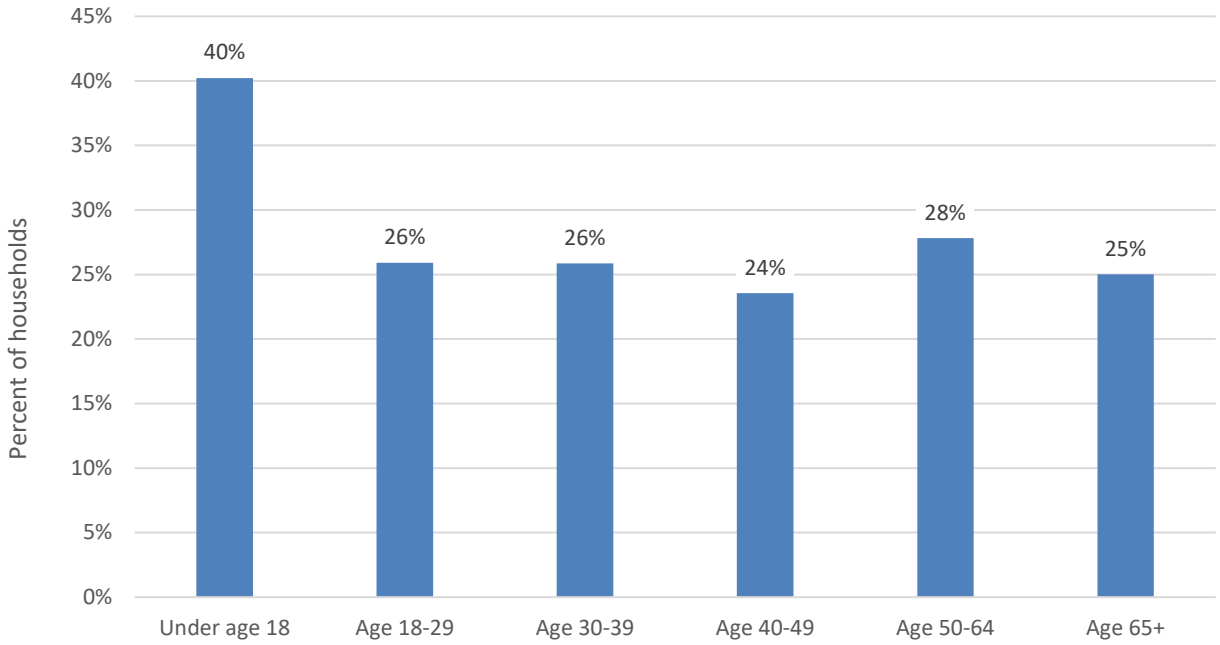


Figure 143: Average number of household members per age category (among households with at least one household member in that age group)

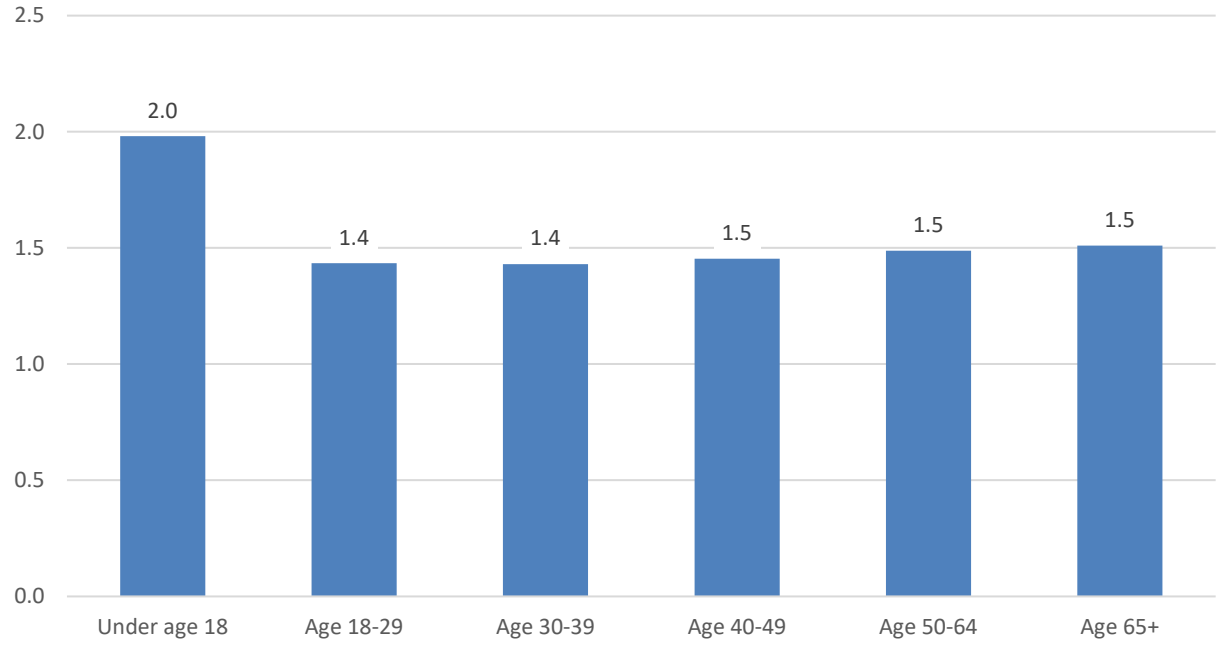
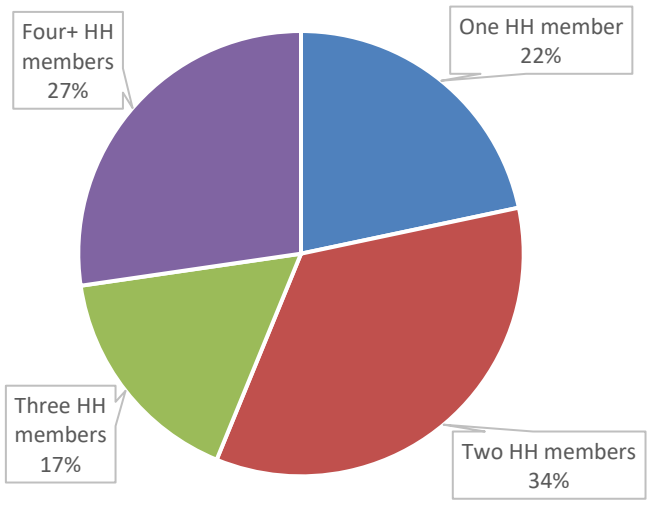
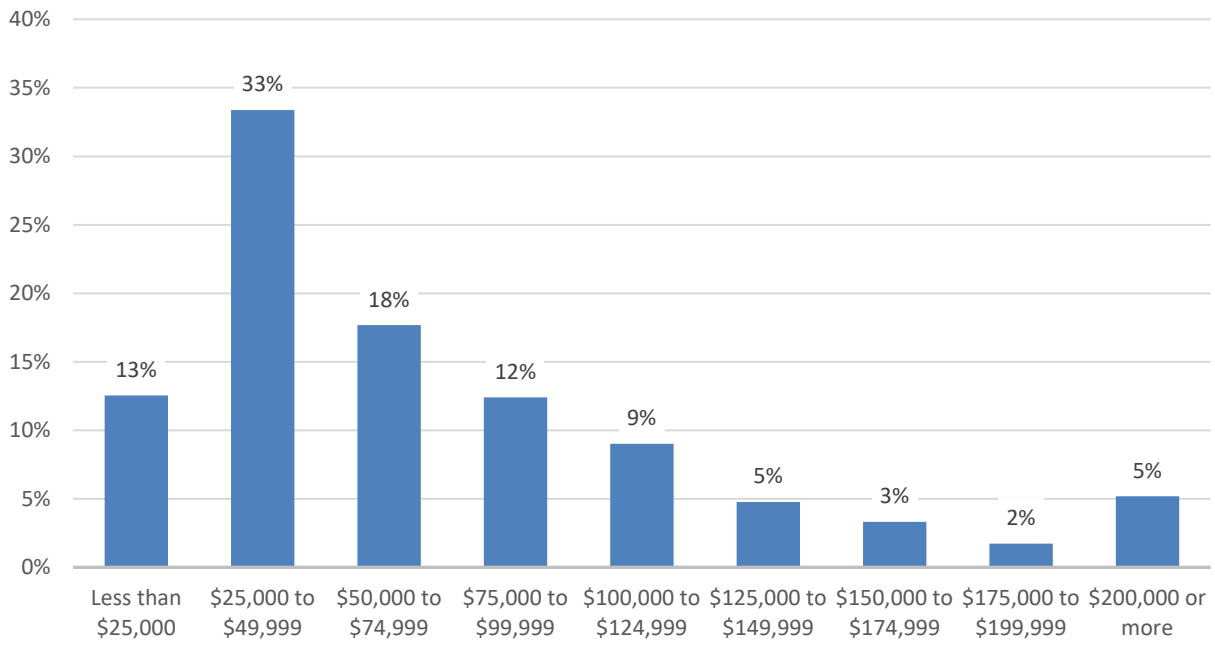


Figure 144: Number of household members (household size)



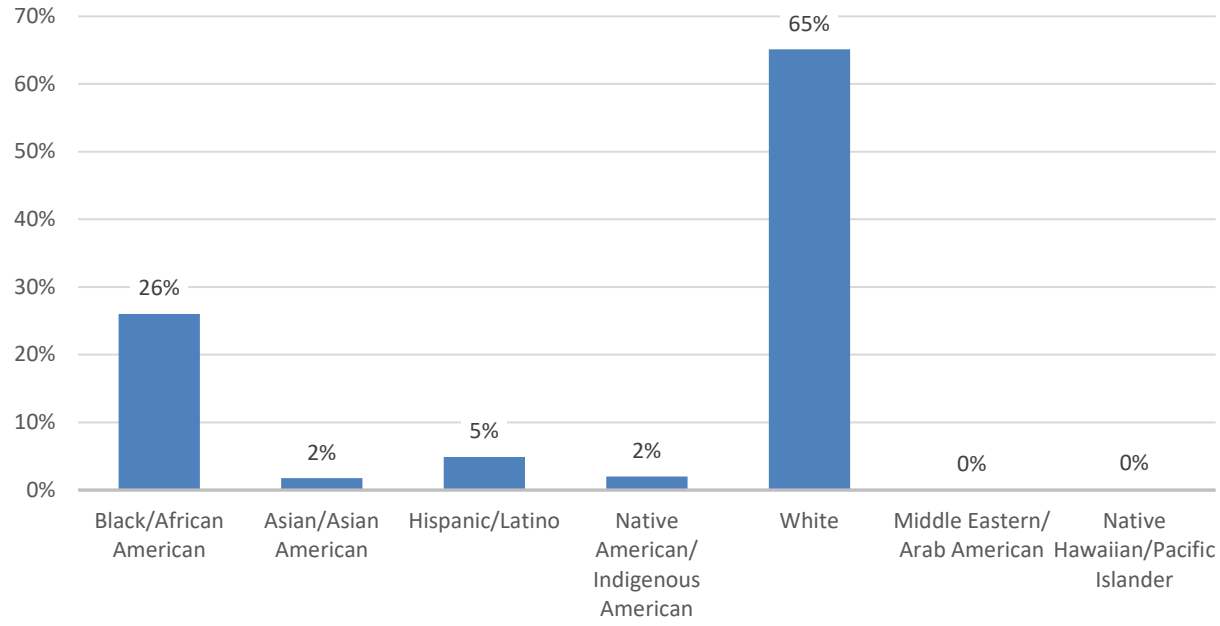
What is your approximate annual household income?

Figure 145: Approximate annual household income



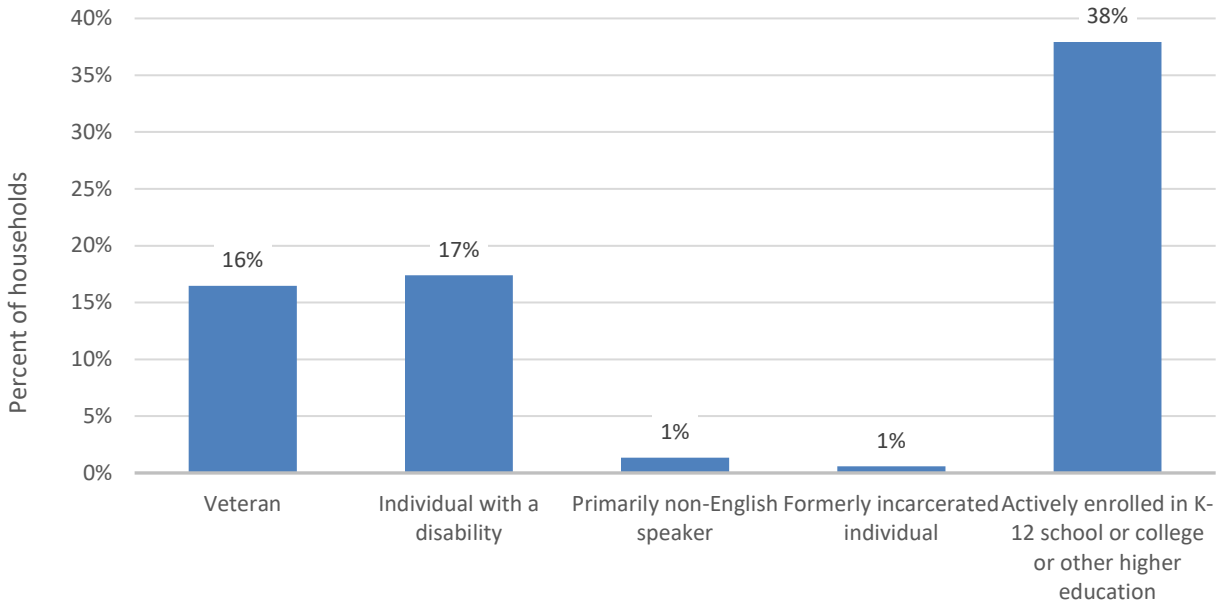
What race/ethnicities are represented in your household?

Figure 146: Race/ethnicity



Are you or anyone else living in your household a(n):

Figure 147: Percent of households with at least one household member in each at-risk group



Appendix F: Partner questionnaires

As a supplement to ADECA's extensive regional and local outreach, ADECA reached out to potential partners through three focused online questionnaires.

Alabama agency asset and programmatic inventory questionnaire

The Alabama agency asset and programmatic inventory questionnaire was provided via a direct link during the facilitated outreach sessions, posted to the state's website, and delivered through email to all partners.

ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

By completing this questionnaire, you will help the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) identify infrastructure, programmatic and planning assets, as well as workforce development opportunities, that may facilitate broadband deployment in Alabama. As the State engages with community partners to extend broadband access and availability, this information will support Alabama's goal of optimizing federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity planning funding to achieve statewide universal access to high-speed broadband.

1. Please provide your contact information

Agency name

Government level (State, regional, county, local, tribal)

First and last name

Title

Email

Phone number

Zip/Postal Code

Agency website URL (if any)

Next

ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

2. Does your agency own or manage physical assets (i.e. conduit, fiber, structures, real estate, poles, etc.) that are available for lease to Internet Service Providers (ISP) for broadband deployment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What information about these leasable assets would you like the State to include in its broadband planning and communications with ISPs?

3. Will your agency oversee capital construction projects between now and 2027 that include opportunities for the placement of communications facilities by your agency, other state or local agencies, regional or local consortia, or ISPs?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What information about these projects (i.e. scope, location, schedule) would you like included in State broadband planning and in communications with ISPs?

4. Are you aware of, or does your agency have reason to track and monitor frequent or widespread broadband or other communications outages that have significant impact on your community (or, if you represent a statewide organization, on the communities in Alabama)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please describe your agency's role in monitoring or tracking communications reliability in your community and discuss the impact of significant outages.

5. Has your agency developed any policies, regulations, or guidance regarding emergency communications, network redundancy, climate resilience for emergency communications, disaster preparedness, or disaster recovery planning applicable to the broadband and communications industry in Alabama?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide a URL link to any publicly available documents and briefly describe policies and other materials that you believe would be helpful to Alabama's broadband planning efforts, including climate and weather-related hazards. Please also provide a brief description of any internal policies that you believe would be helpful to Alabama's broadband planning efforts, including climate and weather-related hazards. You may email these materials to

6. Has your agency developed policies or strategic planning documents that will facilitate broadband access efforts in Alabama (e.g., publicly available information or internal policies that directly addresses digital equity, infrastructure deployment, economic development, network resilience, partnerships, business planning, or other related efforts)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please briefly summarize the material and provide a URL link or email information to [insert email address]

7. If you are aware, please share information regarding broadband-related planning efforts of other Alabama state and local agencies or contact information for agencies involved in broadband-related planning efforts that you believe would be helpful to ADECA's broadband planning efforts.

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Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

8. Does your agency offer programs that aim to ensure individuals and communities have the skills, technology, and capacity to fully engage in the digital economy, such as digital literacy, discounted devices, workforce training, discounted internet access services, community computing centers or homework centers?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

Broadband Access and Digital Inclusion Programs and Support

9. What is the name of the program or programs?

10. What aspect of broadband access or digital inclusion does this program(s) address? Please select at least one.

- ☐ Availability and affordability of internet
- ☐ Digital literacy
- ☐ Cybersecurity
- ☐ Devices and technical support
- ☐ Online accessibility and inclusivity
- ☐ Workforce development

11. Does the program(s) focus on certain populations? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Veterans or current military personnel
- ☐ Individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Aging individuals (60 and above)
- ☐ Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated
- ☐ Individuals in low-income households or without reliable housing
- ☐ Individuals with a language barrier including English learners
- ☐ Individuals with a low level of literacy
- ☐ Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group(s)
- ☐ Individuals living in rural communities
- ☐ No particular focus on a population or community
- ☐ Other (please specify)

12. What is the annual budget the program or combined budget if more than one?

- ○ $1 to $24,999

- ○ $25,000 to $49,999
- ○ $50,000 to $99,999
- ○ $100,000 to $249,999
- ○ $250,000 to $499,999
- ○ Over $500,000

13. Do any of the programs impose a cost on the participant? If so, how much?

14. How many people were served by the program or programs in the last fiscal year?

- ○ Under 25 people
- ○ 26 to 50 people
- ○ 51 to 100 people
- ○ More than 100 people

15. If you had the resources, would you want to scale your programs to serve more communities and people?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

16. Please describe how you can collaborate with ADECA, or what role ADECA can serve, to support expanded programs.

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Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

Programmatic Impact of Broadband Access

17. Please describe how access to affordable, reliable, and secure high-speed broadband by the communities that you serve may impact programmatic outcomes of your agency?

18. Do you have metrics to measure progress on your programmatic outcomes?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please describe or provide a URL link with documentation

Please provide examples or a discussion of metrics that you believe would be useful to track broadband related inputs and outcomes that are relevant to your mission, programs, and services.

19. Economic and workforce development outcomes - input and outcome metrics

20. Educational outcomes - input and outcome metrics

21. Health outcomes - input and outcome metrics

22. Civic and social engagement outcomes - input and outcome metrics

23. Delivery of other essential services outcomes - input and outcome metrics

24. If you do not currently provide or support a broadband access or digital inclusion program, is your agency in the process of developing such a program or does it have an interest in developing such a program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please describe

25. Please describe how you can collaborate with ADECA, or what role ADECA can serve, to support expanded programs.

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

Workforce Development

26. Has your agency analyzed workforce readiness (i.e., the availability of skilled labor) in Alabama as it may impact State broadband policies and deployment goals?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide a URL link where relevant documents, presentations, or analyses are located or send to the following email address: [insert email address]

27. Do you offer workforce development programs for job placement and training?

○ Yes

○ No

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

28. Does your agency have a role in workforce development that would support wired or wireless broadband deployment (including training and recruitment for equipment technicians, cable installation and repair, and construction jobs)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please describe programs or initiatives that your agency operates or supports or relevant programs operated by other agencies.

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Agency Asset and Programmatic Inventory

29. What type of workforce development programs do you offer? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ On-the-job training placement
- ☐ Standards certification and safety programs
- ☐ Training programs through a public or private K-12 school
- ☐ Training programs through a school of higher education
- ☐ Trade or vocational certificate programs
- ☐ Job placement and recruiting services
- ☐ Formal apprenticeship opportunities

30. Which of the following communications professional designations are included in your programs? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Construction laborers and heavy equipment operators
- ☐ Tower, line, equipment, maintenance, and testing specialists
- ☐ Supervisors / project managers
- ☐ Network design roles

31. Please describe barriers to developing a diverse, skilled workforce in your community that can fill employment opportunities in the communications industry. Additionally, please provide examples or ideas of incentives or programs that can mitigate those barriers to create a diverse pool of highly skilled workers.

32. Do you provide workforce development services in rural communities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What types of incentives do you believe would be effective to recruit both skilled and manual labor

to rural communities?

33. Do you offer training in any of the following industries that have transferable skills that can be applied to communications network deployment? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Utilities such as electricity
- ☐ HVAC
- ☐ Computer science
- ☐ Cybersecurity
- ☐ General electrician
- ☐ General construction
- ☐ Other

34. Are you interested in developing programs specifically targeted at employment opportunities in the communications industry?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please describe your interest in developing these programs

35. If you had the resources, would you want to scale your programs to serve more communities and people?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

36. Please describe how you can collaborate with ADECA, or what role ADECA can serve, to support expanded workforce programs.

37. Please describe how your agency can collaborate with the ADECA and participate in its efforts to achieve statewide universal access to high-speed broadband.

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Alabama community organization digital barriers and opportunities questionnaire

The Alabama community organization digital barriers and opportunities questionnaire was provided via a direct link during the facilitated outreach sessions, posted to the state's website, and delivered through email to all partners.

ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

Community anchor institutions and nonprofit organizations play a critical role in facilitating greater use of broadband by unserved and underserved populations as well as underrepresented communities. Your responses to this brief questionnaire will help the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) identify programs to advance residents' opportunities to use broadband to work, learn, receive health care, and participate in civic events. This information will be an important part of Alabama's work toward achieving statewide universal access to high-speed broadband with federal funding through the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity planning programs.

1. Contact information

Your name

Your job title

Your e-mail

Your phone number

Organization name

Organization address

Organization website URL

Organization's number of employees

Please indicate if your organization serves statewide, regionally, or locally

2. Choose the option that best describes your organization. Select the one that best applies.

- ○ K-12 school
- ○ Higher education entity
- ○ Library
- ○ Health clinic, health center, hospital, or other medical provider
- ○ Public safety entity
- ○ Public housing organization (including HUD-assisted housing and tribal housing organizations)
- ○ Neighborhood organization and community center
- ○ Faith-based organization

- ○ Community support organization that facilitates use of broadband service by low-income or other underserved populations
- ○ Tribal authority or entity or organization that serves primarily tribal populations
- ○ Workforce development (including organized labor)
- ○ Nonprofit organizations or community support organization that represents or serves vulnerable communities

3. Does your organization conduct outreach or tailor its services to the needs of any of the following communities or groups? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Veterans or current military personnel
- ☐ Individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Aging individuals (60 and above)
- ☐ Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated
- ☐ Individuals in low-income households
- ☐ Individuals with a language barrier including English learners
- ☐ Individuals with a low level of literacy
- ☐ Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group(s)

or without reliable housing

- [ ] Individuals living in rural communities
- [ ] No particular focus on a population or community
- [ ] Other (please specify)

4. Which of the following programs or services do you offer to facilitate the use of broadband services by your constituents or clients? Select all that apply.

- [ ] Support for applicants to broadband subsidy programs such as the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- [ ] Loans or donations of devices (computers, tablets) to access the internet
- [ ] Hotspots and free or subsidized internet access
- [ ] Cybersecurity training
- [ ] Other digital literacy training
- [ ] Training, equipment, subsidized services, or other resources to facilitate access to telehealth and telemedicine services

- [ ] Training teachers of broadband skills and digital literacy
- [ ] Developing and distributing accessible online content or devices designed for us by persons with disabilities
- [ ] Developing and distributing accessible online content directed at populations with specific needs, such as seniors, low-income residents, those with low-literacy, and those whose first language is not English
- [ ] Broadband internet access services at community centers or other gathering spaces used by clients and constituents
- [ ] Funding of programs that provide any of the above services, including broadband infrastructure, devices, and subsidies to support affordability
- [ ] Program development and planning of broadband-related services
- [ ] Advocacy for digital inclusion, affordability, and the broadband-related needs of vulnerable populations
- [ ] Emergency and disaster relief services such as evacuation centers, charging stations, replacement equipment, and information on grants, loans, and services to those impacted by disasters

☐ My organization does **not** offer programs that facilitate the use of broadband services

☐ Other (please specify)

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

5. What is the name(s) of the program or programs that you are referencing in Question #4?

6. What is the annual program budget, or combined budget if more than one program?

- ○ $1 to $24,999
- ○ $25,000 to $49,999
- ○ $50,000 to $99,999
- ○ $100,000 to $249,999
- ○ $250,000 to $499,999
- ○ Over $500,000

7. How many people were served by the program(s) in the last fiscal year?

- ◯ Under 25 people
- ◯ 26 to 50 people
- ◯ 51 to 100 people
- ◯ More than 100 people

8. Would your organization be interested in adding new programs to its current portfolio?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If yes, what types of resources do you believe would be necessary to add new programs to your current portfolio?

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

Programmatic Impact of Broadband Access

9. Please describe how access to affordable, reliable, and secure high-speed broadband by the communities that you serve may impact the programmatic outcomes of your organization.

10. Do you have metrics to measure progress on your programmatic outcomes?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If yes, please describe:

Please provide examples or a discussion of metrics that you believe would be useful to track broadband-related inputs and outcomes that are relevant to your mission, programs, and services, such as:

11. Economic and workforce development outcomes - input and outcome metrics

12. Educational outcomes - input and outcome metrics

13. Health outcomes - input and outcome metrics

14. Civic and social engagement outcomes - input and outcome metrics

15. Delivery of other essential services outcomes - input and outcome metrics

16. If you do not currently provide or support a broadband access or digital inclusion program, is your entity in the process of developing such a program or does it have an interest in developing such a program?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

17. Please describe how you can collaborate with ADECA, or what role ADECA can serve, to support expanded programs.

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

Barriers to Meaningful Access

Thinking about the services or resources that you provide your constituents, including both broadband and non-broadband related, please answer the following questions:

18. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population(s) you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as represented on this spectrum:

	1	2	3	4	5
Their households have access to some type of home internet service.	○	○	○	○	○
The available	○	○	○	○	○

	1	2	3	4	5
internet service is high-speed, sufficient for their needs, and reliable					
The available internet service is affordable.	○	○	○	○	○
Their households can choose from among more than one provider for high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband service	○	○	○	○	○

19. Are there any unique barriers to reliable, affordable, and high-speed internet service for the population(s) you serve?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please describe these barriers to accessing reliable, affordable, and high-speed internet service:

20. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing households from the population you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as represented on this spectrum:

	1	2	3	4	5
There are computers in the households of the populations we serve or represent	○	○	○	○	○
The households can troubleshoot computer issues	○	○	○	○	○
The households can afford computer	○	○	○	○	○

	1	2	3	4	5
repairs or service					
The households have enough devices to serve their needs	○	○	○	○	○
There are public computers that are convenient to use and close by to these households	○	○	○	○	○

21. Are there any unique barriers to accessing home computers for the population(s) you serve?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please describe these barriers to accessing computers and similar devices:

22. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population you

serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as represented on this spectrum:

	1	2	3	4	5
Individuals can find, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals can use technologies appropriately and effectively to retrieve information, interpret results, and judge the quality of that information	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals can use the internet to support education, employment, health, and personal needs	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals have access to	○	○	○	○	○

	1	2	3	4	5
convenient and comprehensive digital literacy training					

23. Are there any unique barriers to digital skills for the population(s) you serve?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please describe these barriers to acquiring necessary digital skills:

24. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population you serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as represented on this spectrum:

	1	2	3	4	5
Individuals have access to meaningful website content that is written in	○	○	○	○	○

	1	2	3	4	5
plain language and is appropriate for the targeted user or audience					
Individuals have access to meaningful website content that is accurately translated into necessary languages	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals have access to meaningful website content that can be read by a screen reader	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals have access to meaningful website content	○	○	○	○	○

	1	2	3	4	5
with closed captioning					
Individuals have access to adequate and appropriate assistive technologies to support access to the internet and use of website content by people with disabilities	○	○	○	○	○

25. Are there any unique barriers to inclusive and accessible content for the population(s) you serve?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please describe these barriers to inclusive and accessible content:

26. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements describing individuals from the population you

serve or represent. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree" as represented on this spectrum:

	1	2	3	4	5
Individuals know how to protect their information online	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals can recognize a phishing scam or other types of scams and illegal activity	○	○	○	○	○
Individuals use anti-virus and anti-malware software on their computers	○	○	○	○	○

27. Are there any unique barriers to data privacy and cyber security for the population(s) you serve?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please describe these barriers to data privacy and cyber security

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

Organization's Own Use and Need for Access to Broadband

28. Do all of your organization's locations, offices, or community centers have access to broadband internet services at speeds of at least 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) symmetrical (both upload and download)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

If no, please provide the addresses of the locations where your organization does not have access to broadband internet services of at least 1 Gbps symmetrical (both upload and download).

29. Does your current internet service meet the needs of your organization to deliver broadband-related programs to your clients and constituents? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, service is unavailable
- ☐ No, service is too slow
- ☐ No, service is unreliable
- ☐ No, service is too expensive
- ☐ No, customer service is inadequate
- ☐ No, service is too complicated to set up and/or maintain
- ☐ No, redundant connectivity necessary for our operations is too expensive/unavailable
- ☐ Other (please specify)

30. How essential is symmetrical Gigabit connectivity at your facilities to your ability to deliver your broadband-related services?

1 - Not important	2	3	4	5 - Critically important
○	○	○	○	○

31. Is it critical to your organization's mission and service delivery to maintain communications with **critical facilities** such as hospitals, schools, data centers, and public safety agencies during natural disasters and emergencies?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please briefly describe your organization's need to remain connected to critical facilities and whether you believe your organization's current communications services meet this need.

32. Would your organization offer additional broadband-related services or programs to its constituents or clients if it had additional resources?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes, please describe those additional broadband-related services and the additional resources your organization would need to offer them (e.g. funding, skilled workforce, access to broadband internet services with faster speeds or more capacity).

ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

Workforce Readiness and Programs

33. Has your organization analyzed workforce readiness (i.e., the availability of skilled labor) in Alabama as it may impact State broadband policies and deployment goals?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

34. Does your organization have a role in workforce development in the communications industry (including training and recruitment for equipment technicians, cable installation and repair, and construction jobs)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

35. Does your organization offer workforce development programs for job placement and training?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

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efforts to achieve statewide universal access to high-speed broadband

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ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Community Organization Digital Barriers and Opportunities Questionnaire

36. What type of workforce development programs related to the communications industry do you offer? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ On-the-job training placement
- ☐ Certification and standards programs
- ☐ Training programs through a public or private K-12 school
- ☐ Training programs through a school of higher education
- ☐ Trade or vocational programs
- ☐ Digital literacy trainings for specific employment opportunities
- ☐ Job placement and recruiting services
- ☐ Mentorship opportunities
- ☐ Internships

- [ ] Formal apprenticeship opportunities
- [ ] Other (please specify)

37. Which of the following communications professional designations are included in your programs? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Construction laborers and heavy equipment operators
- [ ] Tower, line, equipment, maintenance, and testing specialists
- [ ] Supervisors / project managers
- [ ] Network design roles
- [ ] Locators or similar pre-construction planning field work

38. Please describe barriers to developing a diverse, skilled workforce in your community that can fill employment opportunities in the communications industry. Additionally, please provide examples or ideas of incentives or programs that can mitigate those barriers to create a diverse pool of highly skilled workers.

39. Do you provide workforce development services in rural communities?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

40. What types of incentives do you believe would be effective to recruit both skilled and manual labor to rural communities?

41. Do you offer training in any of the following industries that have transferable skills that can be applied to communications network deployment? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Utilities such as electricity
- ☐ HVAC
- ☐ Computer science
- ☐ Cybersecurity
- ☐ General electrician
- ☐ General construction
- ☐ Other

42. Are you interested in developing programs specifically targeted at employment opportunities in the communications industry?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please describe your interest in developing these programs

43. If you had the resources, would you want to scale your programs to serve more communities and people?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

44. Please describe how you can collaborate with ADECA, or what role ADECA can serve, to support expanded workforce programs.

45. Please describe how your entity can collaborate with ADECA and participate in its

Alabama internet service provider engagement questionnaire

The Alabama internet service provider engagement questionnaire was provided via a direct link during the facilitated outreach sessions, posted to the state's website, and delivered through email to all partners.

Alabama Internet Service Provider Engagement Questionnaire

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) seeks your input on a range of broadband-related issues. Your responses to this brief questionnaire will be an important part of Alabama's work toward achieving statewide universal access to high-speed broadband with federal funding through the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity planning programs.

1. Contact information

Your name

Your job title

Your email

Your phone number

Organization name

Organization address

Organization website URL

Organization's number of employees

2. Choose the option that best describes your organization and the services it offers:

Internet service provider (ISP)

Provider type

3. What recruitment and hiring sources does your organization use to hire technicians, line workers, engineers, construction laborers and managers, and similar positions? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Internet-based employment posting sites
- ☐ Workforce development and community job placement centers
- ☐ Communications industry-specific training classes
- ☐ Third-party hiring and recruitment firms
- ☐ Advertisements in trade association publications and websites
- ☐ Incentivizing employee referrals

4. Does your organization offer, sponsor, or participate in any workforce development or apprenticeship programs?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

5. If you answered yes to Q.4, please specify the type of programs. (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Mentorship
- ☐ Certification programs

- [ ] Apprenticeship
- [ ] Internship
- [ ] Sponsorships/scholarships for third-party training and classes
- [ ] Other (please specify)

6. What other sources or programs in Alabama do you use to train and support workforce readiness among your employees? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Standards certification and safety programs
- [ ] Training programs through a public or private K-12 school
- [ ] Training programs through a school of higher education
- [ ] Trade or vocational certificate programs
- [ ] Formal apprenticeship programs

7. Do you have programs or incentives to support diversity among your employees when considering methods to attract, retain, and promote a skilled workforce?

- [ ] Yes

☐ No

If yes, what programs or incentives do you offer?

8. How would you propose to work with Alabama on workforce development issues related to broadband deployment, including programs to support readiness, recruitment, diversity and wrap around services?

9. Does your organization participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Next

ADECA
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

Alabama Internet Service Provider Engagement Questionnaire

10. What is the monthly post-subsidy price of your lowest-price ACP-eligible tier for participating subscribers?

- ○ $0
- ○ $1 - $10
- ○ $11 - $20
- ○ $21 - $30
- ○ More than $30

11. What is the speed of your lowest-price ACP-eligible tier?

- ○ 25/3 Mbps
- ○ Up to 50/5 Mbps
- ○ Up to 100/20 Mbps

○ Greater than 100/20 Mbps but less than 100/100 Mbps

○ 100/100 Mbps or more

12. How do you advertise or promote your participation in the ACP?

13. Does your organization offer other programs for low-income customers?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide service speeds, monthly pricing, and a description of your low-income or discounted offerings.

14. Does your organization have programs to support consumer broadband skills or use of the internet?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please describe and provide URL links to relevant materials.

15. Does your organization have programs to support internet adoption?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please describe and provide URL links to relevant materials.

16. Please describe how your organization can collaborate with local communities and workforce development organizations on efforts to close the digital divide and, if applicable, please provide specific examples where you have done this successfully.

17. What strategies has your organization used to deploy broadband in the areas of Alabama that are most expensive to serve?

18. Please discuss your continuity and disaster recovery plans in the event of a natural disaster or human error, such as a fiber cut, and whether any of your plans target specific geographic areas.

Prev Done

Appendix G: Broadband and digital equity community briefing – HBCU communities in the State of Alabama (Student Freedom Initiative)

Broadband and Digital Equity Community Briefing

HBCU communities in the State of Alabama

August 7, 2023

Prepared by: Student Freedom Initiative

Submitted to: Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs – Alabama Digital Expansion Division

Executive summary

Alabama is home to the most Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States. These HBCUs are cornerstones of their historically underserved and primarily Black communities, functioning as a trusted source for education, jobs, and economic resources. However, many of these HBCU communities still lack access to the digital and broadband resources they need to survive, let alone thrive, in the digital economy, a dynamic described as the "digital divide". As the world transitions to an even more tech-dependent and tech-fueled environment, it is more critical than ever for these HBCUs and their communities to receive funding to deploy affordable broadband internet, ensure access to internet-enabled devices, and build digital skills. Research estimates that household income among low-income families increases by $2,000 when they have access to high-speed internet and a 10% increase in broadband adoption could lead to an annual increase of 269K jobs across the US[416]. In addition, reliable broadband internet is critical to access state and local services that are shifting to an online model – notably, education, healthcare services, and government services (e.g., tax filing) which approximately 2 in 3 individuals in Alabama's HBCU communities use the internet to access (based on a survey of 5 communities[417]). As such, the economic case for expanding broadband access in these communities is more pressing than ever.

An analysis of the current state of broadband access and digital equity across all 14 HBCUs[418] and their surrounding communities[419] in Alabama reveals the following:

1. **These are diverse communities with high concentrations of vulnerable populations[420].** Approximately 440,000 people live in the communities surrounding these 14 HBCUs, most of whom are Black (~275K or 63% of the population) and many of whom live with a disability (~70K or 17% of the non-institutionalized population). In some communities, as many as 1 in 4 individuals are living with a disability, which increases the importance of digital accessibility initiatives for their populations.

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[416] Closing the Digital Divide in Black America, McKinsey & Company, January 2023.
[417] Based on a survey of residents in 5 HBCU communities: (i) Lawson State Community College in Birmingham, AL (ii) Miles College in Fairfield, AL (iii) Selma University in Selma, AL (iv) Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL and (v) Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, AL.
[418] (i) Alabama A&M University, Huntsville, AL (ii) Alabama State University, Montgomery, AL (iii) Bishop State Community College, Mobile, AL (iv) Gadsden State Community College, Gadsden, AL (v) H Councill Trenholm State Community College, Montgomery, AL (vi) J.F. Drake State Community and Technical College, Huntsville, AL (vii) Lawson State Community College, Birmingham, AL (viii) Miles College, Fairfield, AL (ix) Oakwood University, Huntsville, AL (x) Selma University, Selma, AL (xi) Shelton State Community College, Tuscaloosa, AL (xii) Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, AL (xiii) Talladega College, Talladega, AL (xiv)Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL.
[419] For analysis of publicly available data (e.g., US Census, National Broadband Access Maps), HBCU surrounding communities were defined to be the census tracts within a 2-mile radius of the institution.
[420] Includes communities defined as "Covered Populations" in the Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO: Covered households (income <150% of the poverty level), aging individuals, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with a language barrier, individuals who are a member of a racial or ethnic minority group, and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

2. **There is widespread concern over communities being overlooked for broadband expansion and digital equity initiatives.** Across multiple community meetings[421], a common thread was concern about broadband and digital equity programs not addressing the needs of people in the community. As one resident shared during a community meeting for Stillman College, **"**I'm really concerned about getting help for the Black Belt counties. At Stillman College, if you have expertise in broadband and Wi-Fi, you need to convene us in the Black Belt." Another said, "What measures for accountability are going to be made for those in this middle ground build out? I don't want my community to be overlooked."

3. **Residents are facing outsized affordability challenges.** Families in these communities are 2x as likely to be living within 200% of the federal poverty line and while the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefit is $30/month for most areas[422], the average cost of internet plans is $40-$74[417], partially due to lack of ISP competition (several neighborhoods only have 1 ISP available), and ACP uptake is variable (in some communities an estimated 77% of eligible households have not yet enrolled). The results of a community survey[417] echo this dynamic – even though 68% of respondents indicated that their internet service is not affordable, only 11% indicated that they are currently participating in the ACP. Surveys suggest that this delta could be both an issue of literacy and awareness of the process.

4. **Residential broadband availability is high, but gaps exist.** All of these communities could be considered highly "served" (89% to ~99% of locations are served); however, the locations that are still unserved and underserved are less likely to be covered by existing federal funding. Many households still do not have a broadband internet subscription (ranging from 25% to 54% of households), some are connected to the internet only through cellular data subscriptions (ranging from 8% to 23% of households), and dissatisfaction is high – only ~40% of survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their current internet service. One survey respondent shared, "Many in my community live more than 250 feet from the main road. Spectrum will only provide internet if they are no more than 250 feet off the road. We have a lot of trees in Dallas County, so satellite connections are not good."

5. **Clear challenges exist with accessing internet-enabled devices.** About 1 in 5 survey respondents do not have a working computer in their homes and ~80% of individuals indicated there aren't conveniently located and free-to-use public computers near their homes or workplace. Even if they do have a device, most do not have someone at home that can troubleshoot issues, and paying for computer repairs or service in case

[421] Based on community meetings in 5 HBCU communities: (i) Lawson State Community College in Birmingham, AL (ii) Miles College in Fairfield, AL (iii) Selma University in Selma, AL (iv) Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL and (v) Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, AL. See "Attachment B: Methodology" for more detail.
[422] The FCC announced on August 3, 2023, that consumers in "qualifying high-cost areas" can receive a subsidy of up to $75 a month. https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-395726A1.pdf

of any issues is not a viable option due to affordability challenges, indicating a need for help desk support.

6. **A limited range of workforce development programs and low awareness of existing options restrict the ability to build necessary skills; however, organizations are interested and willing to scale.** The ability to use digital information and protect oneself against cyber threats are significant gaps – 75% of organizations (that responded to the survey) do not agree that individuals in the community can effectively find, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information and 80% do not agree that individuals use anti-virus or malware software and can recognize online scams (e.g., phishing). And while survey results indicate that at least 13 organizations are currently offering workforce development programs in the five communities surveyed, there are gaps in awareness and program availability – about 70% of respondents are not aware of these programs and data indicates potential gaps in programs for digital literacy and general construction. Most of these organizations indicated a willingness to scale, which means access to funding and staff resources will be critical.

7. **Broadband service remains unreliable on HBCU campuses, in schools, and for community organizations, but funding gaps and insufficient staff inhibit expansion efforts.** Based on interviews with 4 HBCUs in Alabama, many still have unreliable service and dead spots across their campuses. And despite some receiving funding from the Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) program, they still anticipate a funding gap to address these needs. Survey data indicates that many community organizations face the same challenge, threatening their ability to provide critical services – for example, of the 17 organizations who indicated that maintaining emergency communications during natural disasters is critical, 10 stated that internet service is too slow or unreliable. Without reliable broadband service, their ability to serve as community anchor institutions and provide their communities with broadband-related resources and services remains restricted. During a Stillman College community meeting, someone shared that "[the internet is] choppy, you know. I figured out a way to teach my class without the best internet."

Based on the current state of broadband and digital equity in these communities, there are four potential priorities to increase digital equity in Alabama's HBCU communities:

Priority	Potential strategies to consider
Increase enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and other	• Fund efforts by trusted community organizations (e.g., schools, HBCUs, churches, radio stations) to increase awareness of the ACP

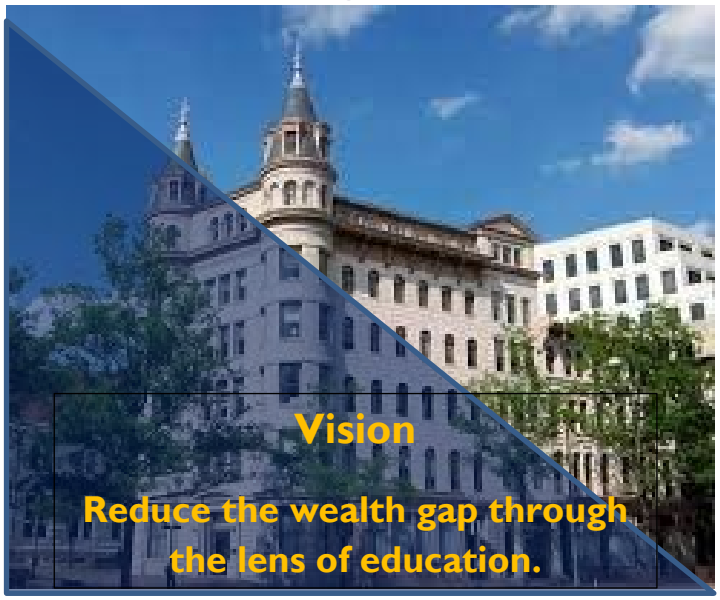
Priority	Potential strategies to consider
subsidy programs for the highest-need families	• Establish contact centers to increase awareness of the program and help eligible households complete the enrollment process • Increase incentives for ISPs to participate in the ACP • Allocate state funding in case ACP funding runs out
Reduce the average cost of broadband internet plans	• Fund the efforts of community organizations and local partnerships to increase awareness of existing low-cost offerings (e.g., door-to-door campaigns, text message alerts) • Sanction the development of solutions to increase ISP competition (e.g., municipal broadband networks)
Equip residents with the necessary tools and skill development programs to complete critical activities online	• Increase the budget available to community centers, libraries, and other public facilities to spend on computers and tablets, targeting neighborhoods with the highest need • Partner with device manufacturers and other organizations to provide low-/no-cost devices (e.g., refurbished) to those with the highest need • Fund and provide training programs to deploy Digital Navigators that offer digital support (e.g., learning to use critical online services, troubleshooting device issues) in-home and in community organizations, especially for older individuals and those with a disability
Invest in programming to grow and upskill the local workforce who can support broadband deployment; and increase employment rates in digital jobs	• Provide expertise and resources to establish community tech hubs (potentially on HBCU campuses, public libraries, and municipal buildings) to support tech skills training for job seekers and enable industry to develop and share best practices • Share best practices for implementing a "train the trainer" model that offers training and resources to community organizations to better equip them to train residents in necessary digital skills

Priority	Potential strategies to consider
	• Expand digital skills curriculum in K-12 education and after-school programs to build a stronger foundation for the future workforce • Spearhead the development of consortiums between local training providers, school systems, universities, and tech companies to enhance digital skills training and offer workforce development programs, including certifications • Fund local efforts to develop training programs focused on older individuals looking to upskill or re-enter the workforce

Implementing these strategies can reach the most underserved populations to provide new tools for jobs, education, and completing basic tasks such as health appointments online, thereby promoting inclusive growth in these communities for many years to come and supporting the overall growth of the Alabama economy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Background on the Student Freedom Initiative (SFI)



A single-purpose nonprofit organization, Student Freedom Initiative® ("SFI") was created to provide freedom in professional and life choices for students attending Minority Serving Institutions ("MSIs") by increasing their social and economic mobility using a student-centric, evidence-based, holistic, and collaborative approach.

We achieve our vision through four pillars and associated outcomes: (1) Commercial alternative to Parent PLUS loans (Reduce student debt burden), (2) Internships & Certifications (Increase job readiness), (3) Comprehensive Support (Increase student persistence), and (4) MSIs Capacity Building (Increase resilience and competitiveness). SFI collaborates with community-based organizations, businesses, and governmental entities through public-private partnerships to make sustainable, systemic changes to support the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), 82% of which are in Broadband Deserts, according to McKinsey & Company.

Attachment B: Methodology

SFI's executive leadership team held introductory and follow-up meetings with representatives from the state broadband office to understand the challenges in Alabama and solicit feedback and guidance on how SFI could be most effective in supporting the state timeline and requirement to obtain feedback on their Digital Equity Plan from HBCU-anchored communities and their stakeholders before submission to NTIA for approval.

SFI captured, aggregated, and analyzed publicly available sources of information for the state and HBCU-anchored community. This macro data and associated analysis initially characterized community needs, challenges/opportunities, and potential solutions to address the needs. This assessment was performed across the 14 HBCU communities in Alabama to identify high-level themes for i) current broadband and digital equity needs and ii) potential strategies to address current challenges. Deep-dive assessments of five HBCUs that partnered with SFI and their surrounding communities (each a "**community**" and combined "**communities**") were conducted to supplement this document:

- Lawson State Community College in Birmingham, AL
- Miles College in Fairfield, AL
- Selma University in Selma, AL
- Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL
- Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, AL

The combined analyses indicated that many of the HBCUs share similar demographics and broadband challenges. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to perform deep dives for only a select sample of the schools to support the funding request for HBCU communities across Alabama.

Insights from the assessment are summarized herein to demonstrate the need for increased broadband funding support in these communities. The assessment consisted of, but was not limited to, the following activities:

- Conducted data analyses of the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM), and other publicly available data to assess broadband adoption, infrastructure, and digital equity barriers (e.g., device access) of communities around HBCUs[423] in comparison to the state of Alabama overall *(see Exhibit 1 for a list of sources used)*

[423] Surrounding communities were defined to be census tracts within a 2-mile radius of the HBCU.

- Led interviews with HBCU stakeholders and surveyed key community leaders, broadband stakeholders, and impacted residents to get deeper views of underlying barriers and root causes (see section "Approach to community stakeholder engagement")
- Hosted community engagement meetings with State Broadband Office representatives to engage with residents and collect live feedback on the community's current state of broadband and digital equity

Approach to community stakeholder engagement

Working closely with the HBCUs in these unserved, underserved, or otherwise marginalized communities, SFI refined the characterization through joint town hall meetings and surveys from essential community stakeholders for the five deep-dive institutions. The lived experiences of residents, businesses, local government, faith-based, and other organizations provided a qualitative layer to the quantitative data analyses. They provided the insights that are reflected within this document.

Community stakeholder engagement was performed for the five HBCUs selected for deep-dive analyses. A diverse mix of community members (residents, college students, medical workers, and other professionals) provided their input on the current state of broadband and potential methods to address them in their communities through (1) in-person community meetings with ADECA and (2) surveys. Community meetings served as an open forum to introduce residents to the State's broadband expansion efforts and obtain their input on their current community needs and potential ways to address them. Following the community meetings, surveys were distributed to obtain honest, anonymized feedback from individuals and community organizations and provide community-specific quantitative data to support existing data analyses.

A range of community organizations were invited to attend these meetings, including:

- K-12 school board superintendent/board members/teachers.
- City/County government agencies
- Local Charter/Magnet School entities
- Economic Development entities
- Chamber of Commerce members
- Minority-Owned Businesses
- Higher education entities (including community colleges)
- Local Libraries
- Farming/Agricultural organizations
- Health clinic, health center, hospital, or other medical providers
- Public safety/first responders
- Public housing organizations (including HUD-assisted housing and tribal housing organizations)

- Neighborhood organization and community center (including homeless shelters, retirement centers, etc.)
- Faith-based organizations
- Community digital literacy support organizations
- Tribal authority or entity or organization that serves primarily tribal populations
- Workforce development organizations (including local organized labor unions)
- Nonprofit organizations or community support organizations that represent or serve vulnerable communities

Exhibit 1: Quantitative publicly-available sources of insight for the community current state assessment

Dimension	Available data	Data source	Level	Considerations
Broadband adoption	• Types of internet subscriptions in household	US Census Bureau via IPUMS	County PUMA	Data unavailable at the census tract or location-level
Infrastructure	• Service availability (unserved and underserved locations) • Broadband serviceable location fabric	CostQuest and FCC (BroadbandLab)	Location	n/a
	• Number of ISPs and service provided	FCC (BroadbandLab)	Census Tract	n/a
Device access	• Device access by household	US Census Bureau	Census tract	n/a
Affordability	• Eligibility for ACP	EducationSuperHighway	City; Location	n/a
	• Families by income ratio to federal poverty level	US Census Bureau	Census tract	n/a
	• ACP enrollment and claims	Universal Service Administrative Co.	County, Zipcode	Data unavailable at the location-level; no data by race/ethnicity
Digital literacy	• Share of population above age 25 without a HS degree, and with income 100-125% of federal poverty line	US Census Bureau	Census tract	n/a
Demographics	• Total population • % representation of Covered Population	US Census Bureau ACS	Census tract	n/a

Exhibit 2: Rubric for HBCU broadband and digital capabilities assessment

This rubric was used during interviews with HBCU stakeholders to understand their current role as community anchor institutions and assess key campus needs.

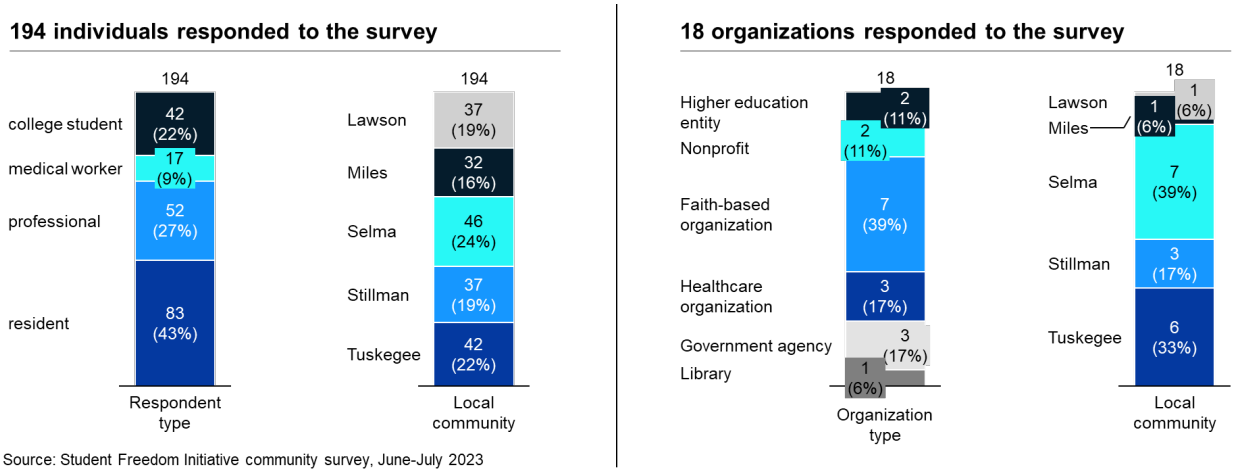
Area for future discussion and exploration
xx Priority areas tested

	Description	Key areas of focus
Vision and strategy	Degree to which the institution has clear goals, metrics, and mechanisms to achieve its broadband and digital equity vision	**Defined strategy, funding plans, tracking mechanisms, implementation plans,** governance, dedicated talent plan and resources
Campus connectivity	Degree to which the institution has broadband internet and IT infrastructure available in all campus buildings and areas	**Broadband availability and reliability, broadband infrastructure (e.g., 5G service, fiber), web hosting,** cybersecurity, cloud computing and data management
Technology support for students, faculty, and staff	Availability of financial and technical support to improve digital literacy and access for the institution's students, staff, and faculty	**Help desk services, hands-on software and hardware trainings, computing device loans and vouchers, home internet support (e.g., Wi-Fi hotspots),** user pain point resolution
Community engagement	Level of institutional engagement with the local community to strengthen digital literacy and broadband internet availability and affordability	**Public digital literacy programs, workforce development programs, small business broadband support, broadband equity programs**
Digitization of operational processes	Level of digitization in the institution's operational processes	Enrollment management software, retention management software, business intelligence software
Digitization of learning and student experience	Scale of the institution's portfolio of applications and tools for enhancing learning and student experience	Learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard), classroom response system and exercises (e.g., Top Hat), asynchronous learning (e.g., self-paced modules, online forums), classroom multimedia (e.g., videos), AR/VR, machine-learning teaching assistants, videoconferencing systems

Attachment C: Survey results

Two surveys were distributed across 5 Alabama HBCU communities[424] between June 27, 2023, and July 31, 2023 – one for individuals and another for community organizations. Approximately 600 individuals and organizations received the surveys, of which 194 individuals and 18 organizations responded (corresponding to an ~33% conversion rate).

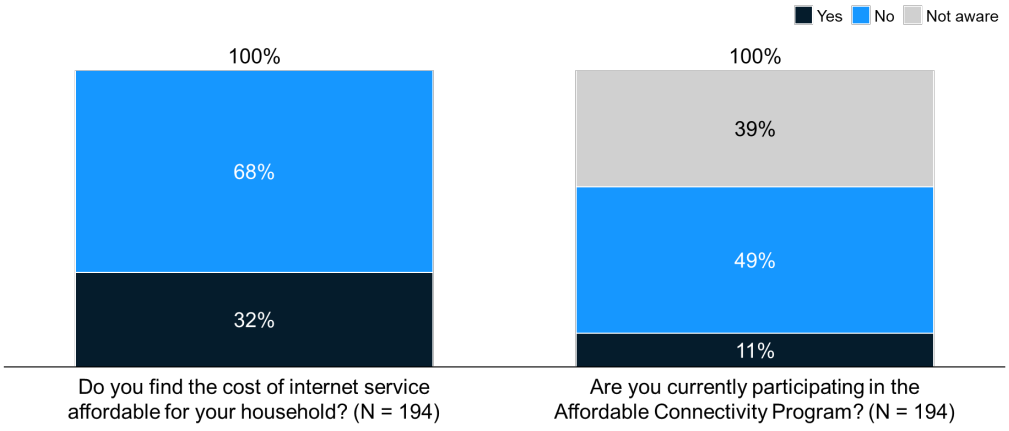
Exhibit 3: Summary of survey recipients in Alabama HBCU communities



Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

The following exhibits reflect the responses of the individuals and community organizations that responded to the survey as of July 31, 2023.

Exhibit 4a: Internet affordability and ACP uptake

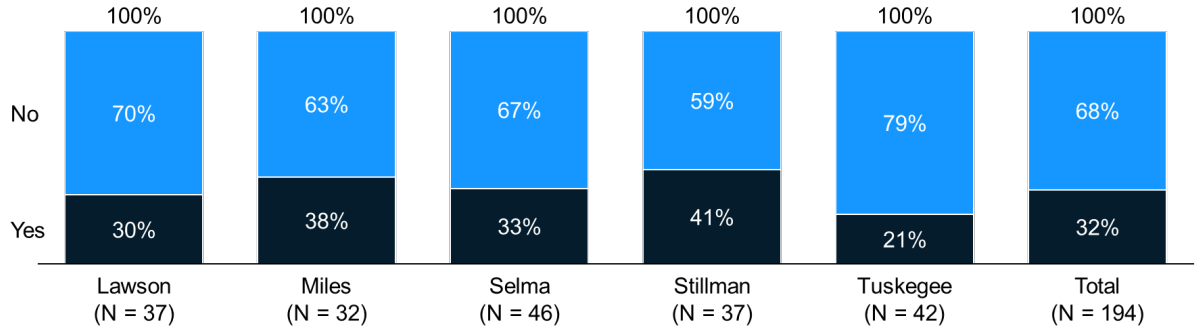


Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

[424] (i) Lawson State Community College in Birmingham, AL, (ii) Miles College in Fairfield, AL, (iii) Selma University in Selma, AL, (iv) Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL, and (v) Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, AL

Exhibit 4b: Internet affordability by community

Do you find the cost of internet service affordable for your household?

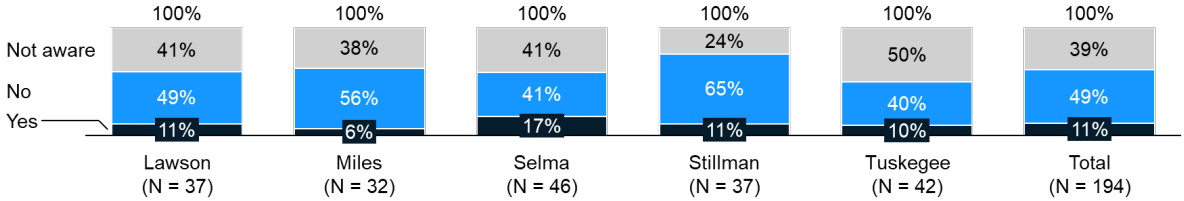


Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

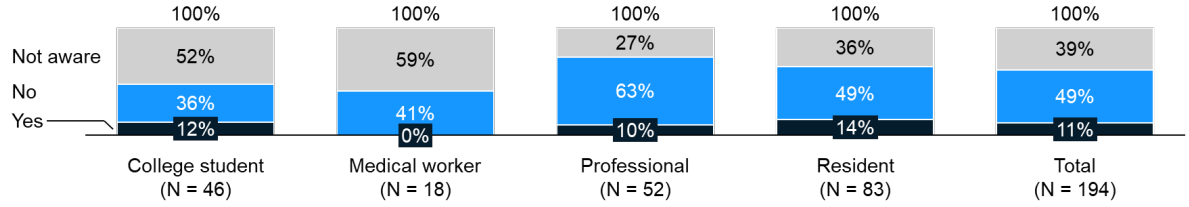
Exhibit 4c: ACP uptake by community and respondent type

Are you currently participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program?

Data by community



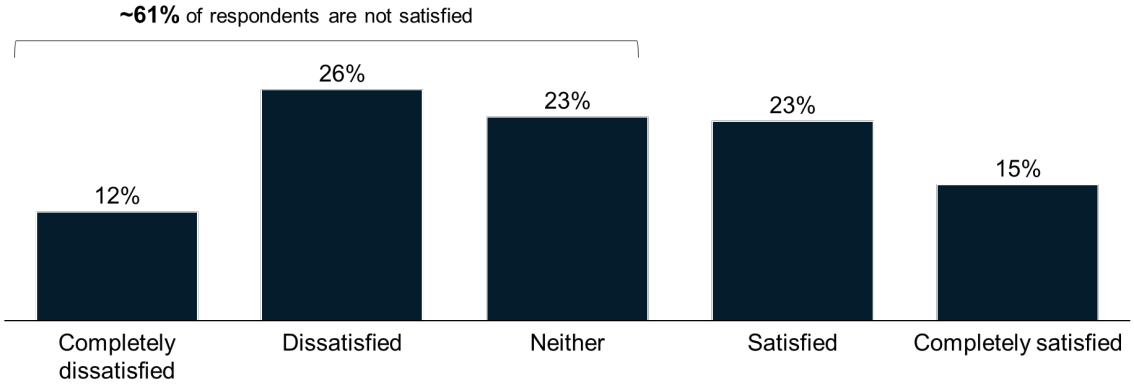
Data by respondent type



Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 5a: Level of satisfaction with internet service

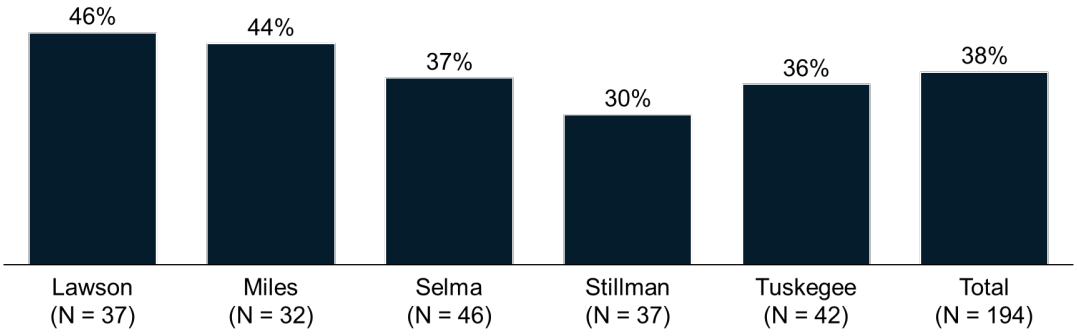
How satisfied are you with your internet? (N = 194)



Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 5b: Level of satisfaction with internet service by community

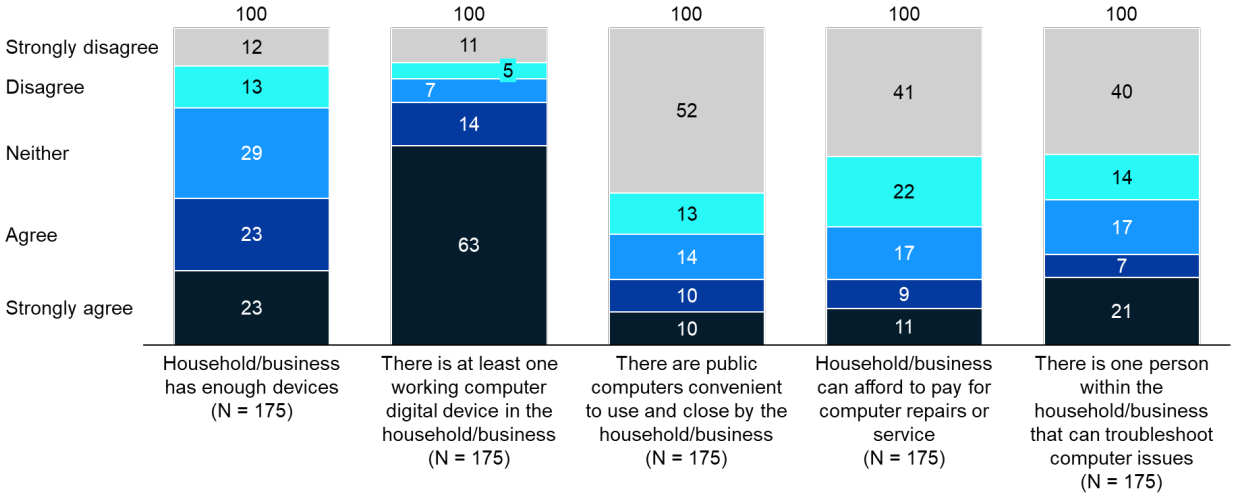
% of respondents that are satisfied with internet service



Note: Respondents were considered not satisfied if they selected 1, 2, or 3 where 5 = "completely satisfied".

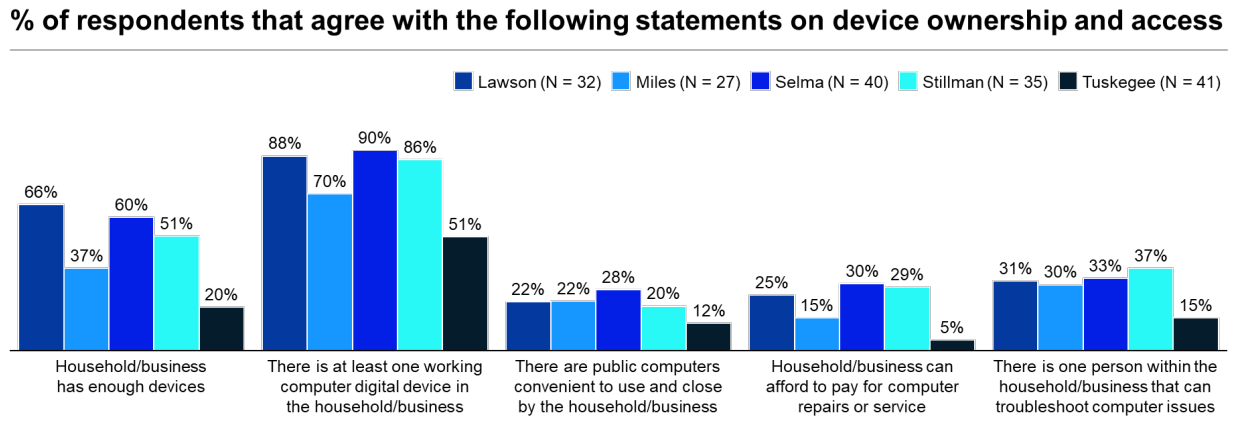
Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 6a: Device ownership and access



Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 6b: Device ownership and access by community

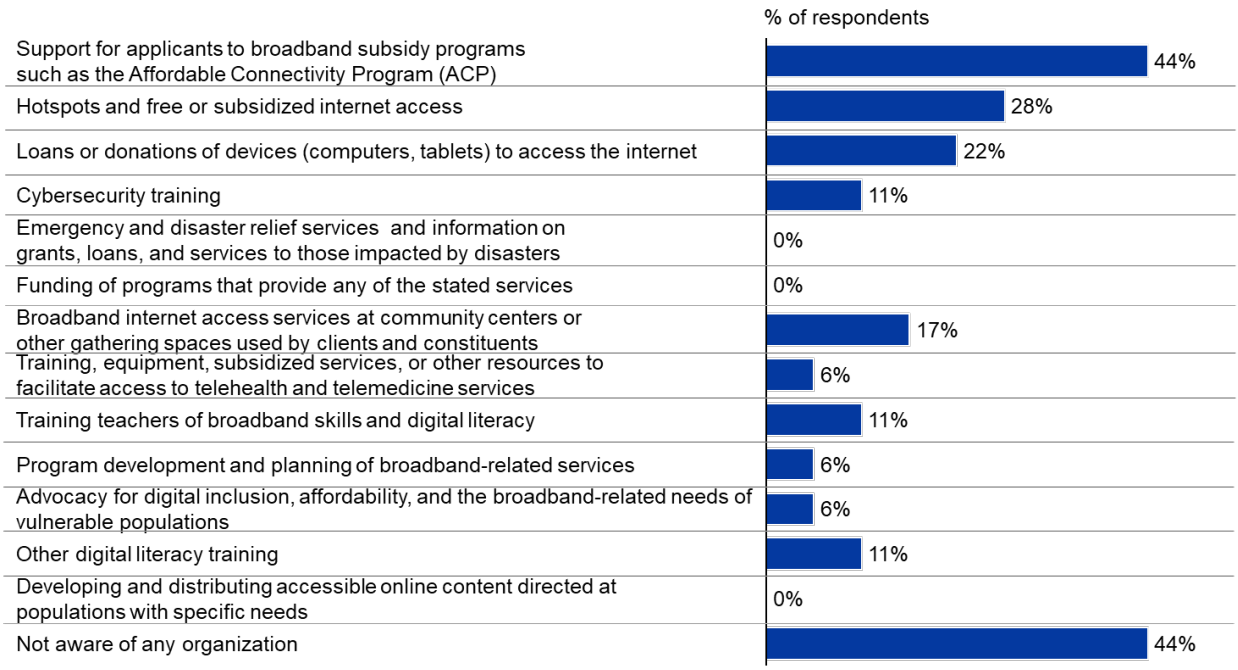


Note: Excludes responses where multiple answers were selected or left blank.

Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 7: Broadband services

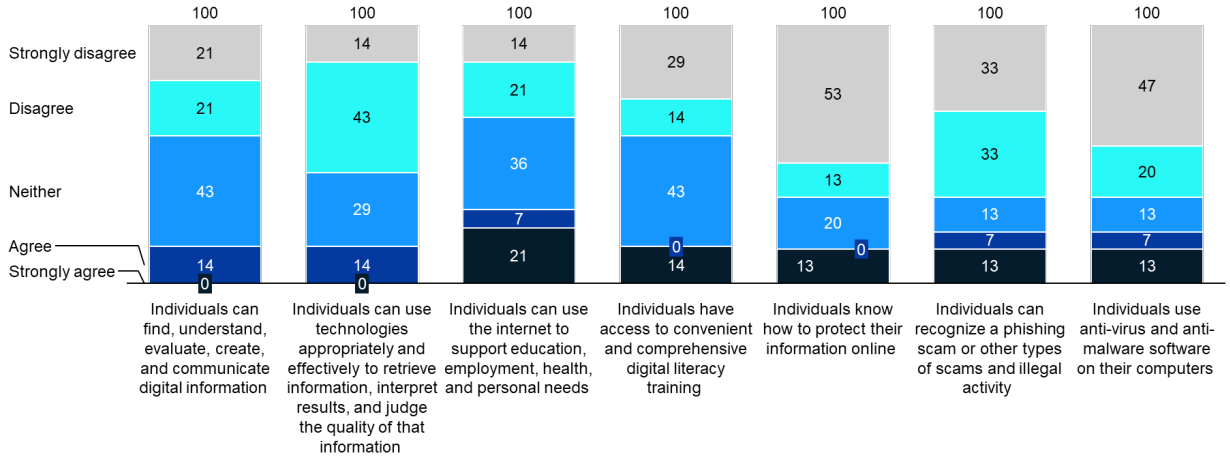
Which of the following programs or services are you aware of that offers the use of broadband services free to the public? (N = 18 organizations)



Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 8: Digital literacy

N = 15 organizations

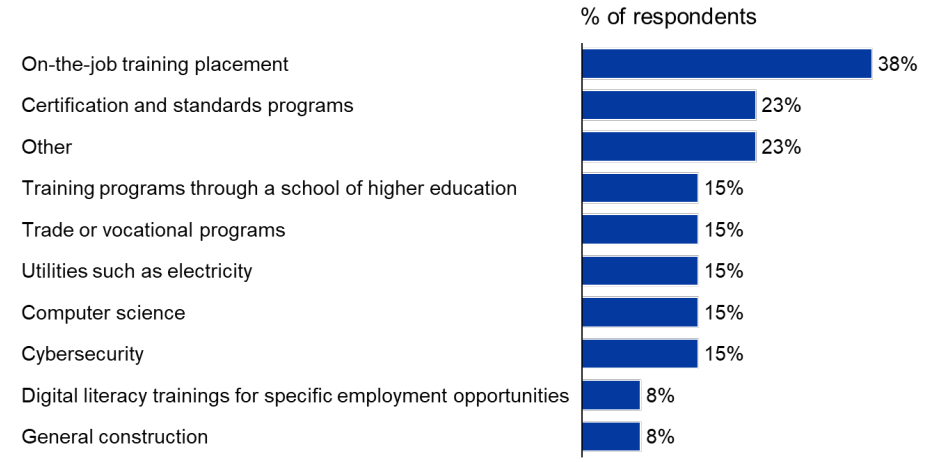


Note: Excludes responses where multiple answers were selected or left blank.

Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 9a: Availability of workforce development programs

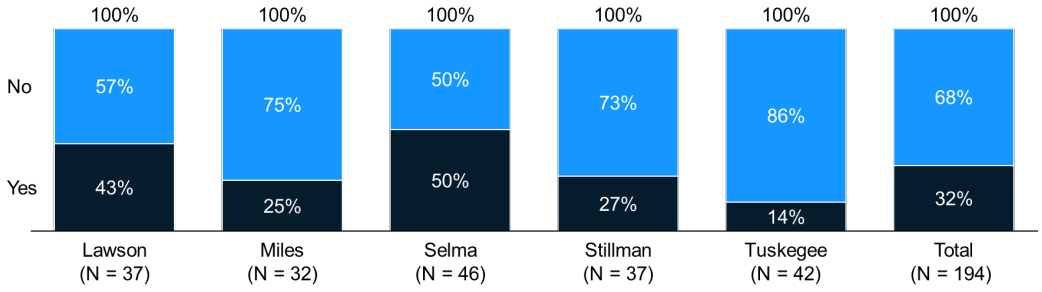
What type of workforce development programs related to the communications industry do you or your organization offer? (N = 13 organizations)



Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Exhibit 9b: Awareness of workforce development programs

Are you aware of any workforce development or training programs?



Source: Student Freedom Initiative community survey, June-July 2023

Attachment D: Summary of digital equity metrics in HBCU communities

Across several of the HBCU communities, many households do not have high-speed broadband subscriptions, highlighting the depth of the digital divide. Though the infrastructure for high-speed internet is technically available to many of the locations in these communities, the data shows that many residents likely cannot afford broadband subscriptions and devices to access the internet. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) was developed to help with this affordability issue by providing monthly subsidies to households in need, but enrollment in this program varies. These dynamics highlight the scale of the challenge and the importance of addressing the digital divide in these communities, **especially in partnership with trusted organizations (e.g., HBCUs, churches, schools).**

Exhibit 10a. Digital equity in HBCU communities (1 of 3)

As of May 2023

Not compared to state
On par with state (within +/- 5pp)
Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	Alabama A&M	Alabama State	Bishop State	Gadsden	H Councill	State	National
Broadband adoption	HHs with an internet subscription	78%	79%	71%	79%	62%	82%	87%
	HHs with broadband[1]	65%	64%	48%	56%	46%	61%	72%
Infrastructure	Share of served locations	99.8%	99.8%	99%	99%	99.8%	80%	-
	Unserved and underserved locations unfunded by federal programs[2]	93%	0%	100%	100%	0%	57%	-
	ISPs providing fiber technology[2]	3	4	4	1	5	-	-
Device access	HHs with access to ≥1 device[3]	89%	87%	84%	87%	79%	90%	93%
	HHs with a desktop or laptop	73%	59%	57%	57%	41%	70%	79%
Affordability	Families <200% FPL[4]	36%	47%	35%	40%	62%	28%	23%
	ACP-eligible HHs	36%	49%	52%	57%	49%	47%	42%
	ACP-eligible HHs enrolled	23%	69%	66%	62%	69%	38%	36%
Digital literacy	Families 100-125% FPL	5%	6%	5%	4%	6%	4%	3%
	Aged 25+ without high school degree	12%	18%	13%	16%	28%	13%	11%
Demographics	Racial/ethnic URP[5]	57%	66%	67%	50%	87%	34%	35%
	Black population	48%	59%	64%	41%	84%	26%	12%
	Living with a disability	15%	20%	14%	19%	26%	16%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet.
2. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.
3. Includes smartphones
4. FPL = federal poverty level
5. URP = Under-represented population

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Exhibit 10b. Digital equity in HBCU communities (2 of 3)

As of May 2023

Not compared to state | Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
On par with state (within +/- 5pp) | Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	JF Drake	Lawson	Miles	Oakwood	Selma	State	National
Broadband adoption	HHs with an internet subscription	80%	77%	76%	85%	77%	82%	87%
	HHs with broadband[1]	67%	57%	52%	75%	51%	61%	72%
Infrastructure	Share of served locations	99.8%	99%	94%	99%	96%	80%	-
	Unserved and underserved locations unfunded by federal programs[2]	93%	100%	100%	100%	0%	57%	-
	ISPs providing fiber technology[2]	3	4	2	4	3	-	-
Device access	HHs with access to ≥1 device[3]	89%	89%	89%	95%	79%	90%	93%
	HHs with a desktop or laptop	73%	55%	53%	79%	49%	70%	79%
Affordability	Families <200% FPL[4]	35%	41%	40%	34%	48%	28%	23%
	ACP-eligible HHs	36%	61%	65%	36%	60%	47%	42%
	ACP-eligible HHs enrolled	23%	81%	61%	23%	87%	38%	36%
Digital literacy	Families 100-125% FPL	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%	4%	3%
	Aged 25+ without high school degree	13%	11%	11%	11%	13%	13%	11%
Demographics	Racial/ethnic URP[5]	56%	94%	95%	64%	84%	34%	35%
	Black population	48%	89%	92%	53%	83%	26%	12%
	Living with a disability	16%	18%	18%	12%	17%	16%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet.
2. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.
3. Includes smartphones
4. FPL = federal poverty level
5. URP = Under-represented population

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Exhibit 10c. Digital equity in HBCU communities (3 of 3)

As of May 2023

Not compared to state | Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
On par with state (within +/- 5pp) | Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	Shelton	Stillman	Talladega	Tuskegee	State	National
Broadband adoption	HHs with an internet subscription	90%	74%	80%	73%	82%	87%
	HHs with broadband[1]	74%	52%	55%	51%	61%	72%
Infrastructure	Share of served locations	93%	89%	95%	99.8%	80%	-
	Unserved and underserved locations unfunded by federal programs[2]	74%	97%	74%	0%	57%	-
	ISPs providing fiber technology[2]	4	4	4	2	-	-
Device access	HHs with access to ≥1 device[3]	94%	82%	84%	83%	90%	93%
	HHs with a desktop or laptop	79%	60%	53%	59%	70%	79%
Affordability	Families <200% FPL[4]	20%	55%	49%	42%	28%	23%
	ACP-eligible HHs	49%	49%	52%	75%	47%	42%
	ACP-eligible HHs enrolled	40%	40%	63%	86%	38%	36%
Digital literacy	Families 100-125% FPL	2%	8%	6%	4%	4%	3%
	Aged 25+ without high school degree	6%	6%	25%	15%	13%	11%
Demographics	Racial/ethnic URP[5]	43%	66%	58%	94%	34%	35%
	Black population	39%	61%	49%	92%	26%	12%
	Living with a disability	10%	12%	23%	15%	16%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet.
2. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.
3. Includes smartphones
4. FPL = federal poverty level
5. URP = Under-represented population

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Attachment E: Individual community deep-dives

Attachment E.1: Lawson State Community College

Analysis indicates that there are three potential focus areas to increase broadband and digital equity on Lawson State Community College's campus and in the surrounding community:

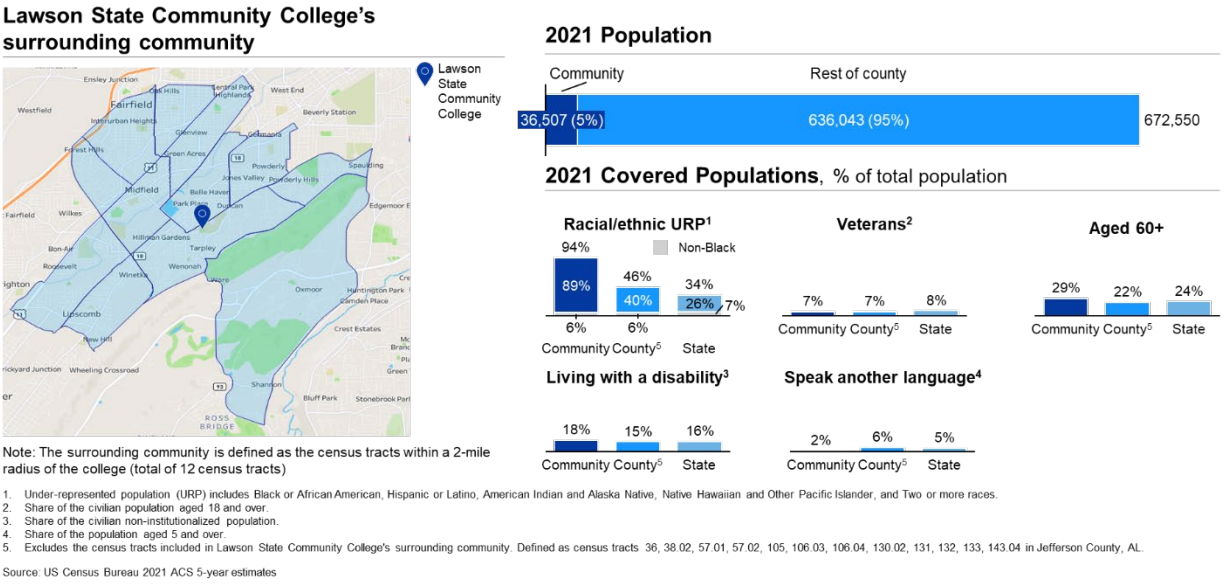
1. Address challenges with internet and device affordability, including through ACP uptake and increased ISP competition, particularly for vulnerable populations
2. Increase broadband internet adoption in areas considered served by federal and state broadband availability maps
3. Expand digital literacy outreach with potentially underserved groups

Needs in Lawson State's community

Lawson State Community College has a diverse, majority Black surrounding community (89% of the community is Black, ~63 percentage points (pp.) higher than the state's Black population), where up to 10% of Jefferson County's vulnerable populations reside.

Many of the community's most vulnerable populations, including ethnic and racial minorities, are undersubscribed to broadband internet (for example, the ethnic minority household ownership rate is ~20pp lower vs. AL state) and are less likely to own internet-enabled devices (the racial minority household ownership rate is ~7pp lower vs. AL state) which places them at a disadvantage for accessing essential services and performing basic daily activities online. The disparity in access is likely related to the fact that this community has a higher percentage of households with income <200% of the federal poverty line and that are eligible for ACP compared to the state (+13pp and +14pp higher respectively) and therefore cannot afford to purchase such items.

Exhibit 11. Demographics of Lawson State Community College's community



1. Under-represented population (URP) includes Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Two or more races.
2. Share of the civilian population aged 18 and over.
3. Share of the civilian non-institutionalized population.
4. Share of the population aged 5 and over.
5. Excludes the census tracts included in Lawson State Community College's surrounding community. Defined as census tracts 36, 38.02, 57.01, 57.02, 105, 106.03, 106.04, 130.02, 131, 132, 133, 143.04 in Jefferson County, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates

Broadband adoption

43% of households do not have a broadband internet subscription (a higher share than in both Jefferson County and the state), and ~16% only have a cellular data plan, which is challenging to use for work and accessing social and government services; broadband adoption is especially low among Covered Populations – all these populations are less likely to have a broadband subscription.

Infrastructure

While almost all the community's broadband serviceable locations would be considered served (99%), none of the unserved and underserved locations have yet received funding from federal programs, according to the FCC DATA Maps.[425]

Device access

While most households own at least one computing device, only about 1 in 2 households have access to a laptop or desktop computer; Hispanic individuals and those living with a disability are potentially less likely to own a laptop/desktop than the rest of the community.

Affordability

Households in this community are more likely to be facing affordability challenges – 3 in 5 households in Birmingham City are ACP-eligible compared to approximately 1 in 2 households in Alabama – and while ACP uptake is high, ~19% of eligible households have not yet enrolled.

[425] As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Reflects federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.

In addition, the average cost to get 100/20 Mbps internet (~$45, exclusive of promotions) is higher than the monthly ACP subsidy, potentially due to limited ISP competition – for example, in some neighborhoods, only 1 ISP is available and offering 3 Mbps download speeds at $70/month.

Digital literacy

On par with the rest of Jefferson County and Alabama, between 6-19% of the community's population could be a priority for digital literacy outreach – this includes aging individuals, those above the age of 25 with less than a high school degree, and those with income at the poverty level.

Exhibit 12. Initial findings for Lawson State Community College's surrounding community and comparison to Jefferson County and Alabama

Not compared to state | Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
On par with state (within +/- 5pp) | Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	Initial findings for the surrounding community		County[3]	State
Demo-graphics	Total population	5%	Jefferson County population living in the surrounding community	-	-
	Covered populations	94%	Racial/ethnic underrepresented population (URP)	46%	34%
		29%	Aged 60+	22%	24%
		7%	Veterans	7%	8%
		18%	Living with a disability	15%	16%
		2%	Speak another language	6%	5%
Broad-band adoption	Broadband subscription[1]	77%	Households with an internet subscription	86%	82%
		57%	Households with a broadband subscription	69%	61%
		16%	Households with only a cellular subscription	13%	16%
		56%	**Racial URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	60%
		37%	**Ethnic URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	57%
		47%	**Population aged 60+** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	56%
		51%	**Veterans** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
		45%	**Population living with a disability** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	53%
		48%	**Population that speak another language** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
Infra-structure	Broadband availability	99%	Share of served locations in the surrounding community	96%	79%
		100%	Share of underserved and unserved locations unfunded by federal programs[4]	18%	46%
	Fiber infrastructure	4	ISPs providing fiber technology (out of 7 total)[4]	-	-
Device access	Device access	89%	Households with access to ≥1 computing device	91%	90%
		55%	Households with a desktop/laptop computer	74%	70%
		57%	**Racial URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		36%	**Ethnic URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		47%	**Population aged 60+** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		61%	**Veterans** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	75%
		43%	**Population living with a disability** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	58%
		50%	**Population that speak another language** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	72%
Afford-ability	Covered households	29%	Covered Households (families with income <150% federal poverty line)	18%	19%
	Population <200% FPL	41%	Of families with income <200% of federal poverty line (FPL)	26%	28%
	ACP enrollment vs. eligibility[5]	61%	Households eligible for ACP	-	47%
		81%	Of eligible households enrolled in ACP	-	38%
	Internet subscription price	44.61	Average advertised, non-promotional price for at least 100Mbps internet ($)	-	-
Digital literacy	Priority populations for digital literacy	19%	Share of **population aged 65+**	16%	17%
		6%	Share of **families with income at poverty level** (100-125% of FPL)	4%	4%
		11%	Share of **population 25+ with education below high school degree**	9%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet
2. "Surrounding community" is defined as PUMA 1301 in Alabama (based on 2010 Census areas).
3. Excludes the census tracts in the HBCU's surrounding community
4. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.U's surrounding community
5. "Surrounding community" is defined as Birmingham, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Attachment E.2: Miles College

Analysis indicates that there are five potential focus areas to increase broadband and digital equity on Miles College's campus and in the surrounding community (in order of likely priority):

1. Address challenges with internet and device affordability, including through ACP uptake and increased ISP competition, particularly for vulnerable populations
2. Increase broadband internet adoption in areas considered served by federal and state broadband availability maps
3. Expand broadband availability to the remaining underserved and unserved locations in the community (none of which appear to be funded by federal programs yet)
4. Grow digital skills outreach with potentially underserved groups, including through providing funding to expand Miles College's role as a community anchor institution into digital equity initiatives
5. Upgrade broadband infrastructure on Miles College's campus to eliminate dead spots and reduce downtime/outages

Needs on Miles College's campus

Miles College's campus needs for broadband and digital infrastructure were determined across four dimensions – (1) vision and strategy, (2) campus connectivity, (3) technology support for students, faculty, and staff, and (4) role as a community anchor institution.

Miles College may be considered served as a community anchor institution by FCC standards, but the school has goals for expanding service and community programming that are hard to achieve due to gaps in funding and limited staff resources:

- There is no overall broadband vision or implementation plan, which limits the school's ability to proactively plan for long-term future initiatives
- The school has limited ability to implement broadband enhancement programs due to funding gaps
- Miles College has 10Gbps service across campus and is installing fiber, but still has several dead spots that need to be addressed
- There is an opportunity to increase student participation in tech and coding classes offered by the university to bridge digital skills gaps
- Miles is interested in offering public digital skills programs but requires funding and partnerships with community organizations that have access to target populations to move forward (e.g., veterans)

Exhibit 13. Synthesis of initial finding for Miles College's broadband and digital capabilities assessment

Best in class | Good performance with room for improvement | Clear plan and progress to get to good performance | Uneven performance | Baseline capabilities needed

Dimension	Initial findings	Sample evidence
Vision and strategy	• There is **currently no defined strategy, roadmap or implementation plan** for broadband expansion • There are **several desired initiatives to expand broadband service** (e.g., upgrading bandwidth from 10GB to 20GB), but **funding and staffing remain a huge barrier** • **IT funding is primarily sourced from student fees and Title III**, but there are significant gaps (~$300k) in funding to implement broadband initiatives.	"We don't have an IT roadmap…there isn't a clear path of what needs to be done and what the long-term strategy is
Campus connectivity	• **Campus would be considered served** according to FCC definition (Gigabit symmetrical service), but **there are still dead spots on campus** • Investments have been made to upgrade to 10Gbps and 1Gbps connections across campus, but **wireless service does not reach target speeds** • Work has started to upgrade IT servers and extend access points across campus, but **there is still a need for extensive enhancements to strengthen service**	"Wireless [download] speed capacity is 10G and the [upload] is 1G… we just did a speed test and the wireless network isn't where it needs to be, but on the wired network is
Technology support for students, faculty, and staff	• **There is opportunity to raise awareness about tech class offerings** and benefits as many students do not register for coding classes offered by the school • The school is **considering offering digital literacy courses that could teach basic IT skills** and serve as an entry point for the higher-level coding & IT classes, but there are no definite plans	"The school offers classes to teach students to code, but student don't register for it… I'd like to offer digital literacy courses to teach basic IT skills and could serve as an entry point for the higher-level coding & IT classes
Role as a community anchor institution	• **Miles does not currently offer digital literacy or workforce development programs** for community residents due to lack of funding and resources	"There are no digital literacy or workforce development programs – funding has been the real reason why these programs are not in place, in addition to limited staff capacity

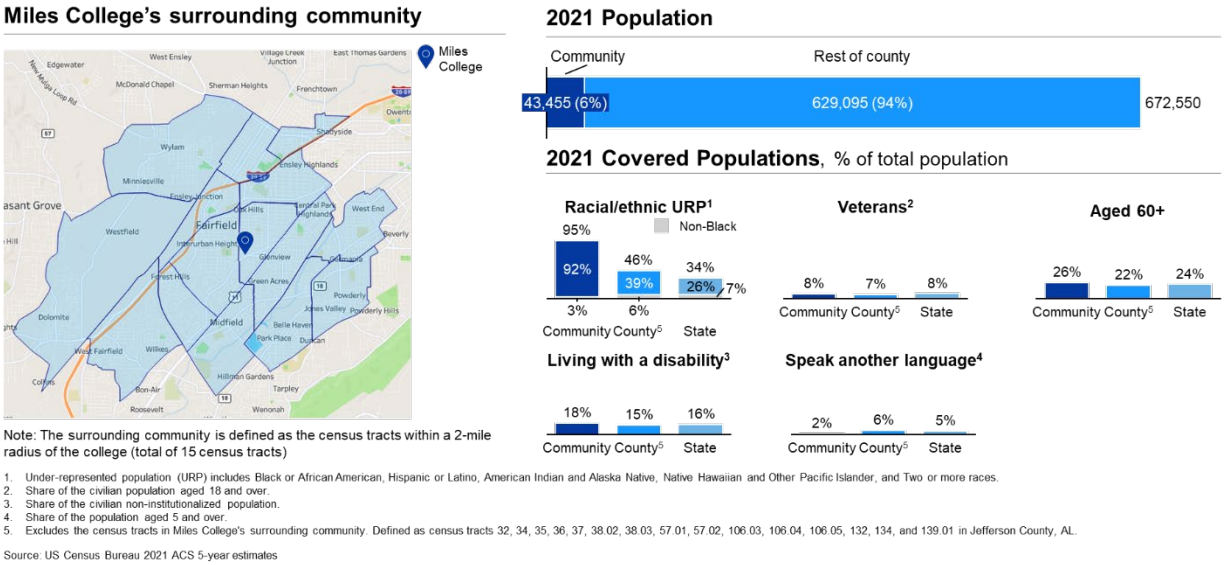
Source: Stakeholder interviews

Needs in Miles College's community

Miles College has a diverse, majority Black surrounding community (92% of the community is Black, ~66pp. higher than the state's Black population), where up to 13% of Jefferson County's vulnerable populations reside.

Many of the community's most vulnerable populations, including ethnic and racial minorities, are undersubscribed to broadband internet (for example, the ethnic minority household ownership rate is ~20pp lower compared vs. AL state) and are less likely to own internet-enabled devices (the racial minority household ownership rate is ~7pp lower vs. AL state) which places them at a disadvantage for accessing essential services and performing basic daily activities online. The disparity in access is likely related to the fact that this community has a higher percentage of households with income <200% of the federal poverty line and that are eligible for ACP compared to the state (+12pp and +18pp higher respectively) and therefore cannot afford to purchase such items.

Exhibit 14. Demographics of Miles College's community



1. Under-represented population (URP) includes Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Two or more races.
2. Share of the civilian population aged 18 and over.
3. Share of the civilian non-institutionalized population.
4. Share of the population aged 5 and over.
5. Excludes the census tracts in Miles College's surrounding community. Defined as census tracts 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38.02, 38.03, 57.01, 57.02, 106.03, 106.04, 106.05, 132, 134, and 139.01 in Jefferson County, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates

Broadband adoption

1 in 2 households do not have a broadband internet subscription (higher than Jefferson County and the state), and ~19% only have a cellular data plan, which is challenging to use for work and accessing social and government services; broadband adoption is especially low among Covered Populations – all these populations are less likely to have a broadband subscription.

Infrastructure

While almost all the community's broadband serviceable locations would be considered served (94%), none of the unserved and underserved locations have yet received funding from federal programs, according to the FCC DATA Maps.[426]

Device access

While most households own at least one computing device, only about 1 in 2 households have access to a laptop or desktop computer; Hispanic individuals and those living with a disability are potentially less likely to own a laptop/desktop than the rest of the community.

Affordability

Households in this community are more likely to be facing affordability challenges – an estimated 65% of households in Fairfield are ACP-eligible compared to approximately 1 in 2 households in Alabama – and while ACP uptake is high, an estimated ~40% of eligible households have not yet enrolled as of May 2023.

[426] As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Reflects federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.

In addition, the average cost to get 100/20 Mbps internet is likely prohibitive to most families. At an average price of ~$74 a month (exclusive of promotions), the cost is more than 2x the monthly ACP subsidy. These high prices reflect that in some neighborhoods, only 300 Mbps internet is offered at prices between $60-$100 a month.

Digital literacy

On par with the rest of Jefferson County and Alabama, between 6-17% of the community's population could be a priority for digital literacy outreach – this includes aging individuals, those above the age of 25 with less than a high school degree, and those with income at the poverty level.

Exhibit 15. Initial findings for Miles College's surrounding community and comparison to Jefferson County and Alabama

Not compared to state | Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
On par with state (within +/- 5pp) | Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	Initial findings for the surrounding community		County[3]	State
Demo-graphics	Total population	6%	Jefferson County population living in the surrounding community	-	-
	Covered populations	95%	Racial/ethnic underrepresented population (URP)	46%	34%
		26%	Aged 60+	22%	24%
		8%	Veterans	7%	8%
		18%	Living with a disability	15%	16%
		2%	Speak another language	6%	5%
Broad-band adoption	Broadband subscription[1]	76%	Households with an internet subscription	86%	82%
		52%	Households with a broadband subscription	70%	61%
		19%	Households with only a cellular subscription	13%	16%
		56%	**Racial URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	60%
		37%	**Ethnic URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	57%
		47%	**Population aged 60+** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	56%
		51%	**Veterans** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
		45%	**Population living with a disability** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	53%
		48%	**Population that speak another language** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
Infra-structure	Broadband availability	94%	Share of served locations in the surrounding community	96%	79%
		100%	Share of underserved and unserved locations unfunded by federal programs[4]	18%	46%
	Fiber infrastructure	2	ISPs providing fiber technology (out of 5 total)[4]	-	-
Device access	Device access	89%	Households with access to ≥1 computing device	92%	90%
		53%	Households with a desktop/laptop computer	75%	70%
		57%	**Racial URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		36%	**Ethnic URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		47%	**Population aged 60+** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		61%	**Veterans** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	75%
		43%	**Population living with a disability** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	58%
		50%	**Population that speak another language** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	72%
Afford-ability	Covered households	28%	Covered Households (families with income <150% federal poverty line)	18%	19%
	Population <200% FPL	40%	Of families with income <200% of federal poverty line (FPL)	26%	28%
	ACP enrollment vs. eligibility[5]	65%	Households eligible for ACP	-	47%
		61%	Of eligible households enrolled in ACP	-	38%
	Internet subscription price	73.56	Average advertised, non-promotional price for at least 100Mbps internet ($)	-	-
Digital literacy	Priority populations for digital literacy	17%	Share of **population aged 65+**	16%	17%
		6%	Share of **families with income at poverty level** (100-125% of FPL)	4%	4%
		11%	Share of **population 25+ with education below high school degree**	9%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet
2. "Surrounding community" is defined as PUMA 1301 in Alabama (based on 2010 Census areas).
3. Excludes the census tracts in the HBCU's surrounding community
4. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.U's surrounding community
5. "Surrounding community" is defined as Fairfield, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Attachment E.3: Selma University

Analysis indicates that there are five potential focus areas to increase broadband and digital equity on Selma University's campus and in the surrounding community (in order of likely priority):

1. Address challenges with internet and device affordability, especially through ACP uptake, particularly for vulnerable populations
2. Increase broadband internet adoption in areas considered served by federal and state broadband availability maps
3. Expand broadband availability to the remaining underserved and unserved locations (all of which appear to be already funded by federal programs)
4. Upgrade broadband infrastructure on Selma University's campus to ensure connectivity in all campus buildings, eliminate dead spots, and reduce downtime/outages
5. Expand digital literacy outreach with potentially underserved groups

Needs on Selma University's campus

Selma University's campus needs for broadband and digital infrastructure were determined across four dimensions – (1) vision and strategy, (2) campus connectivity, (3) technology support for students, faculty, and staff, and (4) role as a community anchor institution.

Most of Selma University's campus is not connected to broadband, but the school encounters challenges with expanding service due to funding gaps and limited staff resources. Selma University representatives explained, "There is weak internet service. The internet goes out occasionally and has slow speeds, especially on the Wi-Fi.":

1. There is no overall broadband vision, and there is an outdated implementation plan, which limits the school's ability to proactively plan for long-term future initiatives
2. The school needs approximately $2.8M in funding to implement planned broadband enhancement programs
3. Selma University still needs broadband access in most of its campus buildings and has several dead spots that need to be addressed
4. There is a potential demand for reliable on-campus devices and technology support
5. Selma University is offering public digital literacy programs and has been in contact with ADECA but lacks the funding and resources to move forward

Exhibit 16. Synthesis of initial finding for Selma University's broadband and digital capabilities assessment

Best in class | Good performance with room for improvement | Clear plan and progress to get to good performance | Uneven performance | Baseline capabilities needed

Dimension	Initial findings	Sample evidence
Vision and strategy	• There are several desired initiatives to expand broadband service for the school and community, but **funding and staffing remain a huge barrier** • There was a 3-year implementation plan for broadband expansion, but **little progress has been made to complete initiatives** • Selma is self-funded, but **there are significant gaps (~$2.8M) in funding to implement broadband initiatives** and they were not awarded a CMC grant	"We have about a $2.8M gap. We applied for the CMC grant but did not receive the grant. We have no support.
Campus connectivity	• **Less than 40% of buildings on campus have broadband access,** primarily due to limited funding for upgrades • Fiber infrastructure is in place, but **service is unreliable, as the internet has slow speeds and is unavailable at times** • There are issues with accessing and retrieving data backups from the data management cloud at times, **which could result in operational delays**	"There is weak internet service. The internet goes out every so often and has slow speeds, especially on the Wi-Fi
Technology support for students, faculty, and staff	• The computer labs are not fully operational due to limited internet access, suggesting **that there is likely a demand for reliable on-campus devices and tech support** • There are no at-home devices or internet support available, indicating that **students are fully responsible for meeting their basic IT needs** even if they cannot afford it	"Only the college's computer labs are available, but because of limited internet access, they are not fully operational
Role as a community anchor institution	• **Selma does not currently offer digital literacy or workforce development programs** for community residents due to lack of funding and resources • The school may be positioned to serve as a CAI based on its **ability to provide hosting facilities and build relationships with its community members through counseling** • Selma has connected with ADECA and is now working on a proposal for funding	"There are some programs that offer some assistance, but we are not aware of who they are. We don't currently have a community outreach liaison to facilitate this.

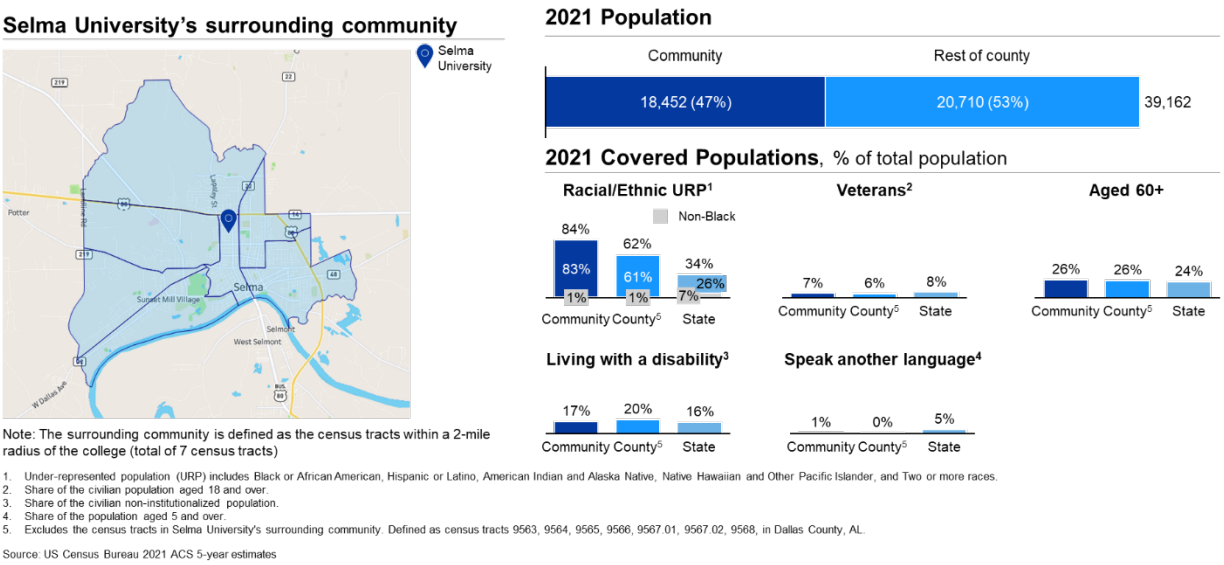
Source: Stakeholder interviews

Needs in Selma University's community

Selma University has a diverse, majority Black surrounding community (83% of the community is Black, ~57pp. higher than the state's Black population), where the majority (43-90%) of Dallas County's vulnerable populations reside.

Many of the community's most vulnerable populations, including ethnic and racial minorities, are undersubscribed to broadband internet (for example, the ethnic minority household ownership rate is ~15pp lower vs. AL state) and are less likely to own internet-enabled devices (the racial minority household ownership rate is ~12pp lower vs. AL state) which places them at a disadvantage for accessing essential services and performing basic daily activities online. The disparity in access is likely related to the fact that this community has a higher percentage of households with income <200% of the federal poverty line and that are eligible for ACP compared to the state (+20pp and +13pp higher respectively) and therefore cannot afford to purchase such items. Obtaining funding to close this financial gap will be critical to providing much-needed access to this community.

Exhibit 17. Demographics of Selma University's community



1. Under-represented population (URP) includes Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Two or more races.
2. Share of the civilian population aged 18 and over.
3. Share of the civilian non-institutionalized population.
4. Share of the population aged 5 and over.
5. Excludes the census tracts in Selma University's surrounding community. Defined as census tracts 9563, 9564, 9565, 9566, 9567.01, 9567.02, 9568, in Dallas County, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates

Broadband adoption

1 in 2 households do not have a broadband internet subscription (a higher share than the state), and ~23% only have a cellular data plan, which is challenging to use for work and accessing social and government services; broadband adoption is especially low among Covered Populations – all these populations are less likely to have a broadband subscription.

Infrastructure

According to the FCC DATA Maps, almost all the community's broadband serviceable locations would be considered served (96%), and all of the unserved and underserved locations have already received funding from federal programs.[427]

Device access

While most households own at least one computing device, only about 1 in 2 households have access to a laptop or desktop computer; of individuals in a Covered Population in the broader region[428], only Hispanic individuals are more likely to own a laptop/desktop compared to the state broadly.

[427] As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Reflects federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.
[428] Defined as Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) 1700 in Alabama.

Affordability

Households in this community are more likely to be facing affordability challenges – 3 in 5 households in Selma are ACP-eligible compared to approximately 1 in 2 households in Alabama – and while ACP uptake is high, ~13% of eligible households have not yet enrolled.

While the average price of 100/20 Mbps internet in this community is amongst the lowest of the communities where this analysis was conducted (~$40 a month), lack of ISP competition appears to be a significant challenge. For example, there are several neighborhoods where only 1 ISP is available and only offers internet plans with speeds below 25 Mbps for $70 a month (exclusive of promotions).

Digital literacy

On par with the rest of Dallas County and Alabama, between 6-18% of the community's population could be a priority for digital literacy outreach – this includes aging individuals, those above the age of 25 with less than a high school degree, and those with income at the poverty level.

Exhibit 18. Initial findings for Selma University's surrounding community and comparison to Dallas County and Alabama

Not compared to state | Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
On par with state (within +/- 5pp) | Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	Initial findings for the surrounding community		County[3]	State
Demo-graphics	Total population	47%	Dallas County population living in the surrounding community	-	-
	Covered populations	84%	Racial/ethnic underrepresented population (URP)	62%	34%
		26%	Aged 60+	26%	24%
		7%	Veterans	6%	8%
		17%	Living with a disability	20%	16%
		1%	Speak another language	<1%	5%
Broad-band adoption	Broadband subscription[1]	77%	Households with an internet subscription	69%	82%
		51%	Households with a broadband subscription	37%	61%
		23%	Households with only a cellular subscription	18%	16%
		42%	**Racial URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	60%
		42%	**Ethnic URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	57%
		33%	**Population aged 60+** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	56%
		43%	**Veterans** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
		32%	**Population living with a disability** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	53%
		48%	**Population that speak another language** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
Infra-structure	Broadband availability	96%	Share of served locations in the surrounding community	52%	79%
		0%	Share of underserved and unserved locations unfunded by federal programs[4]	100%	46%
	Fiber infrastructure	3	ISPs providing fiber technology (out of 6 total)[4]	-	-
Device access	Device access	79%	Households with access to ≥1 computing device	77%	90%
		49%	Households with a desktop/laptop computer	53%	70%
		52%	**Racial URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		91%	**Ethnic URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		46%	**Population aged 60+** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		59%	**Veterans** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	75%
		44%	**Population living with a disability** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	58%
		61%	**Population that speak another language** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	72%
Afford-ability	Covered households	35%	Covered Households (families with income <150% federal poverty line)	27%	19%
	Population <200% FPL	48%	Of families with income <200% of federal poverty line (FPL)	37%	28%
	ACP enrollment vs. eligibility[5]	60%	Households eligible for ACP	-	47%
		87%	Of eligible households enrolled in ACP	-	38%
	Internet subscription price	39.99	Average advertised, non-promotional price for at least 100Mbps internet ($)	-	-
Digital literacy	Priority populations for digital literacy	18%	Share of **population aged 65+**	19%	17%
		6%	Share of **families with income at poverty level** (100-125% of FPL)	7%	4%
		13%	Share of **population 25+ with education below high school degree**	15%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet
2. "Surrounding community" is defined as PUMA 1700 in Alabama (based on 2010 Census areas).
3. Excludes the census tracts in the HBCU's surrounding community
4. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.U's surrounding community
5. "Surrounding community" is defined as Selma, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Attachment E.4: Stillman College

Analysis indicates that there are five potential focus areas to increase broadband and digital equity on Stillman College's campus and in the surrounding community (in order of likely priority):

1. Address challenges with internet and device affordability, including through ACP uptake and increased ISP competition, particularly for vulnerable populations
2. Increase broadband internet adoption in areas considered served by federal and state broadband availability maps
3. Deploy fiber connections to offer faster internet speeds
4. Expand broadband availability to the remaining underserved and unserved locations (most of which have not yet received funding from federal programs)
5. Provide funding to support Stillman College's broadband upgrades and expansion of digital literacy programs

Needs on Stillman College's campus

Stillman College's campus needs for broadband and digital infrastructure were determined across four dimensions – (1) vision and strategy, (2) campus connectivity, (3) technology support for students, faculty, and staff, and (4) role as a community anchor institution.

Stillman College has a vision to address community digital literacy gaps and expand the college's role as a community anchor institution, but funding and staffing limitations hamper its ability to play that role fully. For example, Stillman College representatives shared that "we purchased 150 devices for students in greatest need to keep. But now we need to identify additional funding to purchase more for students.":

- The school is currently updating its overall vision and broadband plan, which indicates there is some proactive planning for long-term future initiatives
- Though the school's broadband and IT initiatives have received internal and external funding, there are still gaps
- Stillman currently has 4Gbps service across campus and is upgrading to 10Gbps, but still has several dead spots
- Stillman has a vision to bridge digital literacy gaps via public cybersecurity clinics but may need to strengthen relationships with local organizations to create deeper impact
- Stillman currently offers take-home devices to students in need but needs additional funding to build a sustainable take-home device program

Exhibit 19. Synthesis of initial finding for Stillman College's broadband and digital capabilities assessment

Best in class | Good performance with room for improvement | Clear plan and progress to get to good performance | Uneven performance | Baseline capabilities needed

Dimension	Initial findings	Sample evidence
Vision and strategy	• Stillman is updating its broadband **strategy with an implementation plan and milestones** for broadband expansion • There are **several desired initiatives to expand broadband service** (e.g., provide WiFi coverage to older buildings), but **funding and staffing remain barriers** • **The budget is funded from external sources**, but there are significant gaps (~$5-7M over 5 years) despite receiving CMC funding	"Our current annual spending is ~$1.4M but would need to double funding to $2.5M-$3M to maintain reserves and respond proactively to issues
Campus connectivity	• **Campus would be considered served** according to FCC definition (Gigabit symmetrical service), but **there are still dead spots on campus** • Work is underway to upgrade the network from 4Gbps to 10Gbps, but it **is challenging to execute updates due to roadwork and building infrastructure restrictions**	"All of our broadband infrastructure needs upgrades, but road infrastructure and historic building restrictions sometimes prevent us from completing needed upgrades
Technology support for students, faculty, and staff	• Stillman **recently purchased devices for students with the greatest need to use off-campus**, but is hoping to expand the program to reach more students and provide hotspots • A **long-term goal is to expand the technology center** to serve as an IT and cyber training center for community members including minority owned small businesses	"We purchased 150 devices for students in greatest need to keep.. But now we need to identify additional funding to purchase more for students and place some of those devices in common areas for widespread usage
Role as a community anchor institution	• **There is an initiative underway to offer a cybersecurity clinic** to bridge digital literacy gaps amongst community residents • Organizations like Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Association and the Boys and Girls Club offer digital equity programs, but there is **no formal partnership**	"We are starting a cybersecurity clinic that will be taught by students and free of charge to residents… we think interest will be high, but we won't have enough resources to support it .

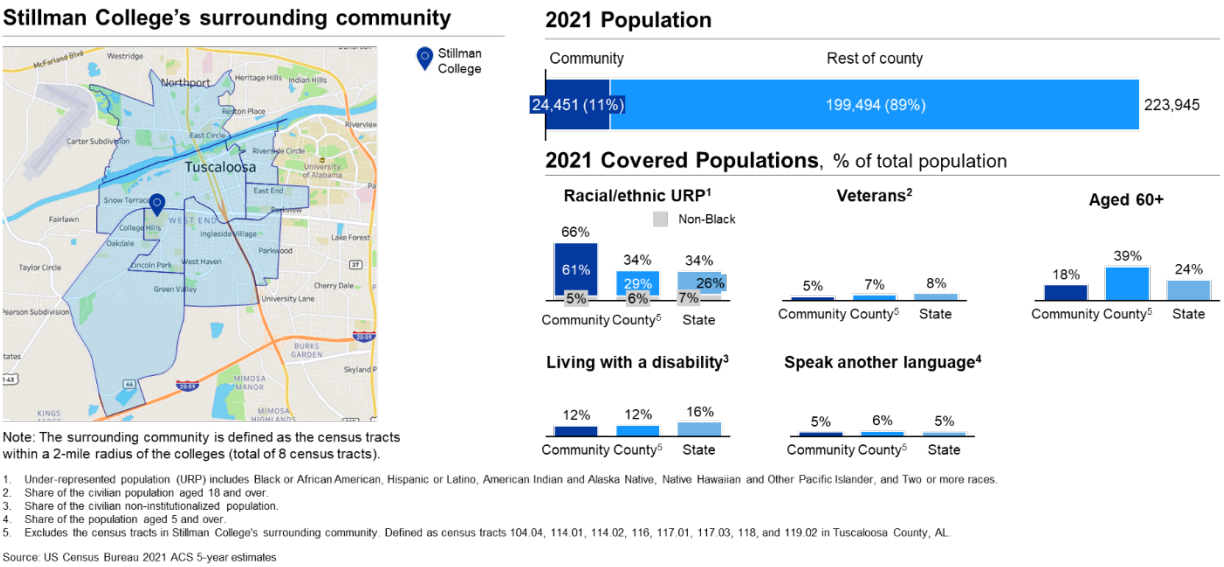
Source: Stakeholder interviews

Needs in Stillman College's community

Stillman College has a diverse, majority Black surrounding community (61% of the community is Black, ~35pp. higher than the state's Black population), where up to 20% of Tuscaloosa County's vulnerable populations reside.

Most of the community's population has inadequate access to internet subscriptions (the broadband subscription rate is ~9pp lower vs. AL state) and devices (the rate of household device ownership is ~10pp lower vs. AL state) which places them at a disadvantage for accessing essential services and performing basic daily activities online. The disparity in access is likely related to the fact that this community has a higher percentage of households with income <200% of the federal poverty line compared to the state (+27pp) and therefore cannot afford such items. Obtaining funding to close this financial gap will be critical to providing much-needed access to this community.

Exhibit 20. Demographics of Stillman College's community



1. Under-represented population (URP) includes Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Two or more races.
2. Share of the civilian population aged 18 and over.
3. Share of the civilian non-institutionalized population.
4. Share of the population aged 5 and over.
5. Excludes the census tracts in Stillman College's surrounding community. Defined as census tracts 104.04, 114.01, 114.02, 116, 117.01, 117.03, 118, and 119.02 in Tuscaloosa County, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates

Broadband adoption

About 1 in 2 households still do not have a broadband internet subscription (a higher share than both the state and the rest of Tuscaloosa County), and ~19% only have a cellular data plan to connect to the internet, which is challenging to use for work and accessing social and government services.

Infrastructure

While almost all the community's broadband serviceable locations would be considered served (89%), 97% of the unserved and underserved locations have not yet received funding from federal programs, according to the FCC DATA Maps.[429]

Device access

While most households own at least one computing device, ~40% do not have access to a laptop or desktop computer; in the broader region[430], Hispanic individuals, those living with a disability, and individuals aged 60+ are potentially less likely to own a laptop/desktop compared to the rest of the community, which could be relevant challenges in Stillman College's surrounding community.

Affordability

About half of the households in this community are likely to be facing affordability challenges – about 1 in 2 households in Tuscaloosa City are ACP-eligible, comparable to the state overall –

[429] As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Reflects federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.
[430] Defined as Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) 1600 in Alabama.

and ACP uptake is lacking (about 60% of eligible households have not yet enrolled as of May 2023).

In addition, the average cost to get 100/20 Mbps internet (~$45, exclusive of promotions) is higher than the monthly ACP subsidy, partially because the ISPs in some neighborhoods only offer 300 Mbps internet plans at ~$60 a month. Otherwise, most of the analyzed neighborhoods had access to 100/20 Mbps internet plans for $35 a month.

Digital literacy

Between 6-12% of the community's population could be a priority for digital literacy outreach – this includes aging individuals, those above the age of 25 with less than a high school degree, and those with income at the poverty level.

Exhibit 21. Initial findings for Stillman College's surrounding community and comparison to Tuscaloosa County and Alabama

Not compared to state | Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
On par with state (within +/- 5pp) | Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	Initial findings for the surrounding community		County[3]	State
Demo-graphics	Total population	11%	Tuscaloosa County population living in the surrounding community	-	-
	Covered populations	66%	Racial/ethnic underrepresented population (URP)	34%	34%
		18%	Aged 60+	39%	24%
		5%	Veterans	7%	8%
		12%	Living with a disability	12%	16%
		5%	Speak another language	6%	5%
Broad-band adoption	Broadband subscription[1]	74%	Households with an internet subscription	87%	82%
		52%	Households with a broadband subscription	68%	61%
		19%	Households with only a cellular subscription	14%	16%
		66%	**Racial URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	60%
		58%	**Ethnic URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	57%
		58%	**Population aged 60+** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	56%
		72%	**Veterans** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
		57%	**Population living with a disability** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	53%
		72%	**Population that speak another language** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
Infra-structure	Broadband availability	89%	Share of served locations in the surrounding community	85%	79%
		97%	Share of underserved and unserved locations unfunded by federal programs[4]	141%	46%
	Fiber infrastructure	4	ISPs providing fiber technology (out of 8 total)[4]	-	-
Device access	Device access	82%	Households with access to ≥1 computing device	93%	90%
		60%	Households with a desktop/laptop computer	74%	70%
		65%	**Racial URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		63%	**Ethnic URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		61%	**Population aged 60+** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		77%	**Veterans** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	75%
		53%	**Population living with a disability** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	58%
		75%	**Population that speak another language** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	72%
Afford-ability	Covered households	46%	Covered Households (families with income <150% federal poverty line)	17%	19%
	Population <200% FPL	55%	Of families with income <200% of federal poverty line (FPL)	24%	28%
	ACP enrollment vs. eligibility[5]	49%	Households eligible for ACP	-	47%
		40%	Of eligible households enrolled in ACP	-	38%
	Internet subscription price	45.00	Average advertised, non-promotional price for at least 100Mbps internet ($)	-	-
Digital literacy	Priority populations for digital literacy	12%	Share of **population aged 65+**	27%	17%
		8%	Share of **families with income at poverty level** (100-125% of FPL)	7%	4%
		6%	Share of **population 25+ with education below high school degree**	3%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet
2. "Surrounding community" is defined as PUMA 1600 in Alabama (based on 2010 Census areas).
3. Excludes the census tracts in the HBCU's surrounding community
4. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.U's surrounding community
5. "Surrounding community" is defined as Tuscaloosa, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Attachment E.5: Tuskegee University

Analysis indicates that there are six potential focus areas to increase broadband and digital equity on Tuskegee University's campus and in the surrounding community (in order of likely priority):

1. Address challenges with internet and device affordability, including through ACP uptake and increased ISP competition, particularly for vulnerable populations
2. Increase broadband internet adoption in areas considered served by federal and state broadband availability maps
3. Deploy fiber connections to offer faster internet speeds
4. Upgrade broadband infrastructure on Tuskegee University's campus to eliminate dead spots and reduce downtime/outages
5. Provide funding for digital equity initiatives for campus stakeholders and the community
6. Expand broadband availability to the remaining underserved and unserved locations (all of which appear to be already funded by federal programs)

Needs on Tuskegee University's campus

Tuskegee University's campus needs for broadband and digital infrastructure were determined across four dimensions – (1) vision and strategy, (2) campus connectivity, (3) technology support for students, faculty, and staff, and (4) role as a community anchor institution.

Tuskegee University's campus would be considered served by FCC standards (i.e., Gigabit-symmetrical internet). However, there are still gaps in service and the school has goals for expanding service and community programming that are difficult to achieve due to funding gaps and limited staff resources. For example, representatives at Tuskegee University shared, "We have limited resources to work on the broadband plan… so we'll need funds … to move initiatives forward.":

- The school is currently updating its overall vision and broadband plan, which indicates there is some proactive planning for long-term future initiatives
- Though the school's broadband and IT initiatives are solely funded by external sources, there are still significant funding gaps
- Tuskegee has 10Gbps service across campus and is making fiber upgrades, but still has several dead spots
- Tuskegee does not offer at-home device or Wi-Fi support to students, suggesting there is still an unmet need for off-campus technology support for underserved students
- There is an initiative underway to offer STEM summer courses to high school students to bridge digital literacy gaps among campus members

Exhibit 22. Synthesis of initial finding for Tuskegee University's broadband and digital capabilities assessment

Best in class | Good performance with room for improvement | Clear plan and progress to get to good performance | Uneven performance | Baseline capabilities needed

Dimension	Initial findings	Sample evidence
Vision and strategy	• The school is working with Infotech Research to **update its broadband strategy with an implementation plan and milestones** for broadband expansion by end of summer • There are **several desired initiatives to expand broadband service** (e.g., provide WiFi coverage to older buildings), but **funding and staffing remain a huge barrier** • **Funding is primarily sourced from external parties**, but there are significant gaps (~$3.5M-$4.5M) despite receiving CMC funds	"We have limited internal staff resources to work on the broadband plan… so I'm unsure if we will have capacity and will need to hire contractors to move the initiatives forward
Campus connectivity	• **Campus would be considered served** according to FCC definition (Gigabit symmetrical service), but **there are still dead spots on campus** • Work is underway to build two backup/redundant data centers, complete the 2nd phase of wireless upgrades, and upgrade classroom technology using CMC funding	"We have $2.5M in single mode fiber upgrades, but we still need to provide wireless hotspot coverage to students where they do research and hang out
Technology support for students, faculty, and staff	• Tuskegee does not offer at-home device or WiFi support to students, suggesting **there is still an unmet need for off-campus tech support for underserved students** • There is an opportunity to **improve 39 computing facilities on campus to offer tech devices to students in need** and strengthen help desk support availability	"There was a program during COVID that provided devices like laptops that was funded by Title III funding..
Role as a community anchor institution	• **There is an initiative underway to offer STEM summer courses to high school students** to bridge digital literacy gaps amongst community residents • Tuskegee will sponsor upgrades for 15 high school classrooms in Tuskegee City using CMC funding	"Historically, there was a gulf between the community and university but now we are working the Macon County superintendent to offer STEM courses

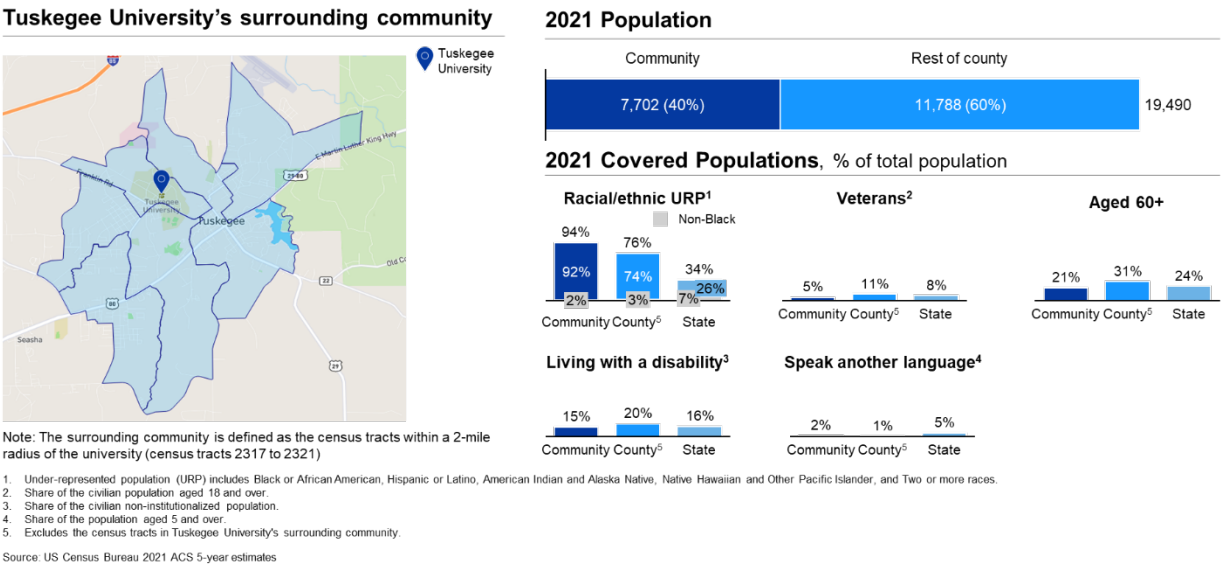
Source: Stakeholder interviews

Needs in Tuskegee University's community

Tuskegee University has a diverse, majority Black surrounding community (92% of the community is Black, ~66pp. higher than the state's Black population) where 26-54% of Macon County's vulnerable populations reside.

Many of the community's most vulnerable populations, including ethnic and racial minorities, are undersubscribed to broadband internet (for example, the ethnic minority household ownership rate is ~14pp lower vs. AL state) and are less likely to own internet-enabled devices (the racial minority household device ownership rate is ~7pp lower vs. AL state) which places them at a disadvantage for accessing essential services and performing basic daily activities online. The disparity in access is likely related to the fact that this community has a higher percentage of households with income <200% of the federal poverty line and that are eligible for ACP compared to the state (+14pp and +28pp higher respectively) and therefore cannot afford to purchase such items. Obtaining funding to close this financial gap will be critical to providing much-needed access to this community.

Exhibit 23. Demographics of Tuskegee University's community



Broadband adoption

About 1 in 2 households still do not have a broadband internet subscription (a higher share than Macon County but lower than the state), and ~13% only have a cellular data plan, which is challenging to use for work and accessing social and government services.

Infrastructure

According to the FCC DATA Maps, almost all the community's broadband serviceable locations would be considered served (99.8%), and all of the unserved and underserved locations have already received funding from federal programs.[431] Point Broadband has also announced plans to extend its fiber network into the region.[432]

Device access

While most households own at least one computing device, ~41% do not have access to a laptop or desktop computer; in the broader region[433], Hispanic individuals, those living with a disability, and individuals aged 60+ are potentially less likely to own a laptop/desktop compared to the rest of the community.

[431] As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Reflects federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.
[432] https://www.point-broadband.com/new-areas/tuskegee
[433] Defined as Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) 2400 in Alabama.

Affordability

Households in this community are more likely to be facing affordability challenges – 3 in 4 households in Tuskegee City are ACP-eligible compared to approximately 1 in 2 households in Alabama – and while ACP uptake is high, ~14% of eligible households have not yet enrolled.

The average cost to get 100/20 Mbps internet (~$42, exclusive of promotions) is higher than the monthly ACP subsidy, partially because the ISPs in some neighborhoods only offer 300 Mbps internet plans at ~$50 a month. Otherwise, most of the analyzed neighborhoods had access to 100/20 Mbps internet plans for ~$30 a month.

Digital literacy

On par with the rest of Macon County and Alabama, between 4-17% of the community's population could be a priority for digital literacy outreach – this includes aging individuals, those above the age of 25 with less than a high school degree, and those with income at the poverty level.

Exhibit 24. Initial findings for Tuskegee University's surrounding community and comparison to Macon County and Alabama

Not compared to state | Lower than state (>5pp in negative direction)
On par with state (within +/- 5pp) | Higher than state (>5pp in positive direction)

Digital equity dimension	Metric	Initial findings for the surrounding community		County[3]	State
Demo-graphics	Total population	40%	Macon County population living in the surrounding community	-	-
	Covered populations	94%	Racial/ethnic underrepresented population (URP)	76%	34%
		21%	Aged 60+	31%	24%
		5%	Veterans	11%	8%
		15%	Living with a disability	20%	16%
		2%	Speak another language	1%	5%
Broad-band adoption	Broadband subscription[1]	73%	Households with an internet subscription	68%	82%
		51%	Households with a broadband subscription	32%	61%
		13%	Households with only a cellular subscription	16%	16%
		48%	**Racial URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	60%
		43%	**Ethnic URP** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	57%
		44%	**Population aged 60+** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	56%
		60%	**Veterans** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
		40%	**Population living with a disability** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	53%
		52%	**Population that speak another language** subscribed to broadband[2]	-	65%
Infra-structure	Broadband availability	99.8%	Share of served locations in the surrounding community	34%	79%
		0%	Share of underserved and unserved locations unfunded by federal programs[4]	100%	46%
	Fiber infrastructure	2	ISPs providing fiber technology (out of 5 total)[4]	-	-
Device access	Device access	83%	Households with access to ≥1 computing device	81%	90%
		59%	Households with a desktop/laptop computer	52%	70%
		57%	**Racial URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		64%	**Ethnic URP** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		54%	**Population aged 60+** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	64%
		75%	**Veterans** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	75%
		53%	**Population living with a disability** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	58%
		64%	**Population that speak another language** with a desktop/laptop computer[2]	-	72%
Afford-ability	Covered households	30%	Covered Households (families with income <150% federal poverty line)	26%	19%
	Population <200% FPL	42%	Of families with income <200% of federal poverty line (FPL)	38%	28%
	ACP enrollment vs. eligibility[5]	75%	Households eligible for ACP	-	47%
		86%	Of eligible households enrolled in ACP	-	38%
	Internet subscription price	41.99	Average advertised, non-promotional price for at least 100Mbps internet ($)	-	-
Digital literacy	Priority populations for digital literacy	17%	Share of **population aged 65+**	22%	17%
		4%	Share of **families with income at poverty level** (100-125% of FPL)	5%	4%
		15%	Share of **population 25+ with education below high school degree**	17%	13%

1. Broadband defined as fiber, cable, or DSL internet
2. "Surrounding community" is defined as PUMA 2400 in Alabama (based on 2010 Census areas).
3. Excludes the census tracts in the HBCU's surrounding community
4. As of May 2023, based on the FCC DATA maps; does not account for any challenges. Federal funding awarded to ISPs as part of CAF II, RDOF, RBE, Reconnect, NTIA BIP, and RUS.U's surrounding community
5. "Surrounding community" is defined as Tuskegee, AL.

Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-year estimates, US Census ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), CostQuest, FCC DATA Maps May 2023, USAC, Education Superhighway ACP Enrollment Dashboard

Appendix H: Alignment of Plan with NOFO requirements

The following table identifies this Plan's alignment with the 15 requirements outlined in NTIA's State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

	Requirement	Details	Section
Requirement 1			
1	Identification of barriers to digital equity faced by covered populations in the State	Individuals who live in covered households	3.2
		Aging individuals	3.2
		Incarcerated individuals	3.2
		Veterans	3.2
		Individuals with disabilities	3.2
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	3.2
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	3.2
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	3.2
Requirement 2			
2a	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting, among each Covered Population located in that State – • the availability of, and affordability of access to, fixed and wireless broadband technology	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.1
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.1
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.1
		Veterans	2.3.2.1
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.1
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	2.3.2.1
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.1
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	2.3.2.1
2b	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting, among each Covered Population located in that State –	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.3
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.3
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.3

	Requirement	Details	Section
	• the online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services	Veterans	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	2.3.2.3
2c	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting among each Covered Population located in that State – • digital literacy	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.3
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.3
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.3
		Veterans	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	2.3.2.3
2d	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting among each Covered Population located in that State – • awareness of and use of, measures to secure the online privacy of, and cybersecurity with respect to an individual	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.3
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.3
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.3
		Veterans	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.3
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	2.3.2.3
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.3

	Requirement	Details	Section
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	2.3.2.3
2e	Measurable objectives for documenting and promoting, among each Covered Population located in that State – • The availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support for those devices	Individuals who live in covered households	2.3.2.2
		Aging individuals	2.3.2.2
		Incarcerated individuals	2.3.2.2
		Veterans	2.3.2.2
		Individuals with disabilities	2.3.2.2
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	2.3.2.2
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	2.3.2.2
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	2.3.2.2
	Measurable objectives are all:	Future focused	2.3.2
		Quantifiable	2.3.2
Requirement 3			
3	An assessment of how the measurable objectives identified in item 2 of NOFO Section IV.C.1.b.i. will impact and interact with State's:	Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes	2.2 2.2.1
		Educational outcomes	2.2 2.2.2
		Health outcomes	2.2 2.2.3
		Civic and social engagement	2.2 2.2.4
		Delivery of other essential services	2.2 2.2.5
		All five items are mentioned for each covered population	2.2
Requirement 4			
4	In order to achieve the measurable objectives identified in item 2 of NOFO Section IV.C.1.b.i., a description of how the State plans to collaborate with key stakeholders in the State, which may include:	Community anchor institutions	4.1 4.2
		County and municipal governments	4.1.6 4.2
		Local educational agencies	5.1
		Where applicable, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities,	4.1.6.1

	Requirement	Details	Section
		or Native Hawaiian organizations	
		Nonprofit organizations	4.1 4.2
		Organizations that represent:	
		Individuals with disabilities, including organizations that represent children with disabilities	4.1 4.1.6.3 4.2
		Aging individuals	4.1 4.1.6.3 4.2
		Individuals with language barriers, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	4.1 4.1.6.3 4.2
		Veterans	4.1 4.1.6.3 4.2
		Individuals in Alabama who are incarcerated in facilities other than Federal correction facilities	4.1 4.1.6.3 4.2
		Civil rights organizations	4.1 4.2
		Entities that carry out workforce development programs	4.2
		Agencies of the State that are responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities in the State	4.1.6 4.2
		Public housing authorities in Alabama	4.1 4.2
		A partnership between any of the above entities	4.2
Requirement 5			
5	A list of organizations with which ADECA collaborated in developing the Plan		Appendix B
Additional requirements			

	Requirement	Details	Section
1	A stated vision for digital equity	Vision is stated and defines digital opportunity within Alabama	2.1.1
2	A digital equity needs assessment, including:	A comprehensive assessment of the baseline from which the State is working	3.2
		The State's identification of the barriers to digital equity faced generally and by each of the covered populations in the State	3.2
	The State's identification of the barriers to digital equity faced by:	Individuals who live in covered households	3.2.1
		Aging individuals	3.2.1
		Incarcerated individuals	3.2.1
		Veterans	3.2.1
		Individuals with disabilities	3.2.1
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	3.2.1
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	3.2.1
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	3.2.1
3	An asset inventory, including current resources, programs, and strategies that promote digital equity for each of the covered populations, whether publicly or privately funded, as well as existing digital equity plans and programs already in place among municipal, regional, and Tribal governments (Section 3.1)	Individuals who live in covered households	3.1.1 3.1.3
		Aging individuals	3.1.1
		Incarcerated individuals	3.1.1
		Veterans	3.1.1 3.1.3
		Individuals with disabilities	3.1.1
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	3.1.1
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	3.1.1 3.1.3

	Requirement	Details	Section
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	3.1.1 3.1.3
4	A coordination and outreach strategy, including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement with representatives of:	Individuals who live in covered households	4.1.6
		Aging individuals	4.1.6
		Incarcerated individuals	4.1.6
		Veterans	4.1.6
		Individuals with disabilities	4.1.6
		Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who are English learners or individuals who have low levels of literacy	4.1.6
		Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	4.1.6 4.1.6.2
		Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area	4.1.6
		The full range of stakeholders within the State	4.1.1 4.1.3 4.1.4
5	A description of how municipal, regional, and/or Tribal digital equity plans will be incorporated into the State's Digital Opportunity Plan		3.1.2 3.1.3
6	An implementation strategy that:	Is holistic	5
		Addresses the barriers to participation in the digital world, including affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and digital navigation	5.1.1 5.1.2 5.1.3
		Establishes measurable goals and objectives	5.1 2.3.2.2
		Establishes proposed core activities to address the needs of covered populations	5.1
		Sets out measures ensuring the plan's sustainability and effectiveness across State communities	5.1.4
		Adopts mechanisms to ensure that the plan is regularly evaluated and updated	5.1.4

	Requirement	Details	Section
7	An explanation of how the implementation strategy addresses gaps in existing state, local, and private efforts to address barriers identified pursuant to NOFO Section IV.C.1.b.i, item 1.		5.1
8	A description of how the State intends to accomplish the implementation strategy by engaging or partnering with:	Workforce agencies such as state workforce agencies and state/local workforce boards and workforce organizations	4.2
		Labor organizations and community-based organizations	4.2
		Institutions of higher learning, including but not limited to four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, education and training providers, and educational service agencies	4.2
9	A timeline for implementation of the Plan		5.2
10	A description of how the State will coordinate its use of State Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant funding and its use of any funds it receives in connection with the BEAD Program, other federal or private digital equity funding		1.6 2.2 2.3.1 5.1.4

Appendix I: Changes to the Plan from public comment

This appendix lists categories of changes made to this Plan to incorporate public comments that were received. ADECA reviewed and responded in writing to each comment that was submitted, although some did not require a revision to the Plan. The public comment process is described in Section 4.1.5. More information regarding the comments received on the Plan – and ADECA's actions taken in response – can be found in the Record of Public Comments and Actions Taken submitted to NTIA with this Plan.

Table 50: Changes to Plan from public comment

Comment	Document updates
Comments from organizations that identified themselves as digital opportunity assets and that requested inclusion in the state's digital opportunity asset inventory	Added organizations to Table 3 in Section 3.1.1, including the Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance, all Community Foundations of Alabama, Alabama Giving, Alabama Association of Nonprofits, Social U, area literacy councils, and organizations that can provide digital literacy programs/training and use local volunteers.
Support for specific elements of the Plan	In their comments, organizations including but not limited to the Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance, Internet Public Trust, AARP Alabama, Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers, Comcast, the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, Digitunity, and Compudopt demonstrated expertise regarding specific elements of digital opportunity discussed in the Plan. These comments informed various changes to the Plan, including revisions to ADECA's strategies and objectives as well as plans for collaboration and partner engagement. These comments also will be used to inform implementation of the Plan, even if they do not suggest any modifications to ADECA's approach at this time.
Comments regarding the inclusion of information in the Plan about the needs of and barriers faced by covered populations	Information regarding aging individuals provided by AARP has been added to Section 4.1.6, which describes ADECA's approach to coordinating with covered populations. Information regarding alignment with state priorities for incarcerated individuals has been added to Table 2 and Section 2.2.5. Information about barriers for incarcerated individuals has been added to Section 3.2.1 in Table 7.

	ADECA will continue to collaborate with ADOC regarding the needs of incarcerated individuals and has identified, in Section 4.1.6, approaches to this coordination with ADOC and other partner agencies and organizations to implement digital opportunity activities to address the needs of this covered population. Comcast noted that barriers to broadband adoption include perceived relevance, digital readiness, information and language barriers, distrust, and structural issues related to poverty. It noted that overcoming these barriers requires community outreach and engagement, which is discussed in detail in the Plan.
Comments regarding local broadband service	Residents of Alabama are concerned about the quality of broadband services in their areas and this Plan includes increasing access to broadband infrastructure as a key goal for advancing digital opportunity. Residents also will have the opportunity to address these concerns, by working with local organizations, in the BEAD challenge process described in the Initial Proposal Volume 1.
Support for ACP	Organizations that work with covered populations support the ACP, whose goals are aligned with this Plan. Commenters urged ADECA to identify local partners to assist in ACP applications and to partner with financial institutions. The Plan encompasses these comments and provides specific goals regarding increasing ACP awareness and enrollment.
Support for middle-mile broadband network expansion	Commenters support greater investment in middle-mile broadband networks, particularly in unserved rural areas of the state. These comments will inform future stages of the BEAD and digital opportunity programs as part of grantmaking design.
Recommendations regarding the grant application process	Commenters urged ADECA to develop templated grant application materials to simplify the application process for entities. These comments will inform future stages of the digital opportunity program as part of grantmaking design.

Partnership recommendations	Commenters recommended ADECA seek and strengthen partnerships with organizations including extension services, regional planning and economic development agencies, community development organizations, community foundations, community colleges and universities (including HBCUs and MSIs), device distributors, financial institutions (in support of ACP outreach), and ISPs and other broadband providers. One commenter noted that partnerships are the most important aspect of advancing digital opportunity efforts. The Plan encompasses these comments and provides specific goals regarding partnership engagement to support digital opportunity efforts.