Pioneer Valley Region
Massachusetts Broadband and Digital Equity Listening Session

September 2023
Agenda

Welcome!
Introducing MBI
Statewide Planning Process
Digital Equity and Broadband in Pioneer Valley
Breakout Sessions
Thank You & Closing
Meeting Ground Rules

Be **fully present** by not checking your phone or computer

Know when to lead versus **creating space for others to speak**

**Be open** and listen to others. Even when you disagree, suspend judgment, and look for common ground.

Recognize that **we are all approaching this process with different levels of understanding and lived experiences** surrounding equity and digital equity.
Introducing MBI
About the Massachusetts Broadband Institute

**MBI’s mission** is to make affordable high-speed Internet available to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices, and other public places across the Commonwealth. MBI works closely with key stakeholders to bridge the digital divide in Massachusetts.
Investments: Tech Goes Home

Expanding the TGH program to reach learners in Holyoke and Springfield that will receive digital literacy instruction, a new device, and registration support for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) – a $30 federal subsidy for broadband service.

How to get involved?

Refer learners to partner sites via TGH Staff and program website!
This investment will support the following key activities:

• Distribution of mobile hotspots to homeless and relocated immigrant individuals through 105 local community based organizations.

• Expanded digital skills programs with Holyoke Community College, Berkshire Community College, Springfield Tech College, and Greenfield Community College that will provide digital skills training to 360 learners from the communities served by these colleges.

• Improved internet access and facilities at 80 public spaces such as community centers, libraries, and public housing common areas.

• Coordinated network of 20 organizations focusing on increasing ACP registration and adoption in the region through the ACP Helper Network.

How to get involved?

Join the Alliance!
MBI's Digital Equity Programs and Partnerships

Pioneer Valley Participants

Holyoke
Springfield
Colrain
East Hampton
Chicopee
Wilbraham
Whately
Wendell
Northfield
New Salem
Royalston
Phillipston
Massachusetts Broadband & Digital Equity Funding

$75M - State ARPA Digital Equity Fund

$175M - US Treasury Capital Projects Fund

$1M - NTIA Digital Equity Act Planning Grant

$147M - NTIA Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Grant (including $5M Planning Grant)
Dr. Frank Robinson

Vice President of Community Relations and Public Health, Baystate Health
Statewide Planning Process
The State Digital Equity Plan will include...

- Vision and input gathered from communities across the state in the planning process
- Community-identified barriers to digital equity
- An assessment of what's working to advance digital equity
- Strategies to build on existing data, reports, and plans
How you can further shape the plan!

**Contribute to Asset Mapping Database**
Fill out Asset Mapping form with relevant assets including programs, organizations, reports, engagement activities

**Take our Public Survey**
Send to your friends and family!

**Promote a Listening Session**
Tell your networks about the regional listening sessions!
- Pittsfield 9/13
- Holyoke 9/14
- Lowell 9/20
- Hyannis 9/28
- Boston 9/30
- Greenfield 10/3
Timeline

Summer to Fall 2023
Regional listening sessions, focus groups, public survey, asset mapping

Fall (Oct. & Nov.) 2023
Plan drafting and writing

Winter (Nov. & Dec.) 2023
Public comment period

Winter (Dec. & Jan.) 2024
Plan Submission

February 2024
Ongoing community engagement, challenge process launch, and grant deployment

→ Visit broadband.masstech.org for upcoming events and ways to get involved.
Existing Conditions
Digital equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy. Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

– National Digital Inclusion Alliance
Determining Factors of Digital Access

Connection
- Fast
- Affordable

Adequate Device
- Router
- Personal Computer / Laptop

Literacy
- Use of Technology
- Ensuring functioning equipment
- Evaluating quality of information and privacy risks
Of 281,000 households in the Pioneer Valley Region...

Households with **no computer** (laptop or desktop).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>68K</th>
<th>43K</th>
<th>79K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many more face challenges with finding the support they need to use the internet safely and meaningfully.

Households with **no broadband internet subscriptions**.*

These challenges have **disproportionate impact for specific population groups** depending on a range of socioeconomic, historical, and geographic factors.

* Residents with no broadband access (cable, fiber optic, or DSL) in their household. **Source:** U.S. Census Bureau
## Statewide Survey - Preliminary Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Valley Region</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Boston Region</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>1,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Cod &amp; Islands Region</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Region</td>
<td>1,101</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Region</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Mass Region</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire Region</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6,030</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Covered Population Responses in Pioneer Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covered Population</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aging Individuals</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of Color</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with Limited English**</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income Households</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in Rural Areas</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response numbers are updated as of Wednesday, 9/13, 12pm.

** This is an estimate based on the number of non-English surveys submitted.
The availability gap score is comprised of three scores: 1) average upload speeds, 2) average download speeds, and 3) percent of the population (2021) not using internet at 100/20 megabits per second. This metric does not capture infrastructure. Sources: ACS 2017-2021, 5-year estimates and Ookla speed tests.

Access and Quality of Service

26% of statewide survey respondents reported that their internet service is not good enough to meet their household’s needs.

52% of municipalities in the Pioneer Valley have little or no competition in the broadband market.

Legend
The availability gap score ranges in value from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the highest gap in availability.
Access and Quality of Service

In the Pioneer Valley, there are ~2,100 Unserved or Underserved locations.

Top 5 Municipalities – Unserved Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolland</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilbraham</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawley</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top Municipalities – Underserved Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawley</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenge Process

- NTIA Approves Initial Proposal Volume I
- Challenge submission window: 30 calendar days 30 business days
- BEAD funding eligible locations posted 120 calendar days
- Rebuttal period: 60 business days
- Evaluation and final determination
Over 1 in 3 survey respondents statewide reported having at least some difficulty paying for their internet. The average for the lowest broadband price regionwide is $72.

Legend
The affordability gap score ranges in value from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the highest gap in affordability.

Note: The affordability gap score is comprised of percent of households in poverty. Sources: ACS 2017-2021, 5-year estimates.
In the Pioneer Valley, adoption gaps are highest in Springfield/Holyoke and rural communities.

Statewide, nearly half of survey respondents without internet at home cite cost as a prohibiting factor.

Legend
The adoption gap score ranges in value from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates the highest gap in adoption.
Assets in Pioneer Valley Region

MBI is collecting unique assets that contribute to digital equity in each region.

Example Assets:

**Alliance for Digital Equity** - a Western Massachusetts based coalition of community-focused organizations working toward digital equity for all people.

**The Tech Foundry** - Teaching skills for the IT workforce, contributing to a growing IT eco-system headquartered in Springfield. The foundry has trained over 400 students, representing the diversity lacking in IT, including women, people of color, LGBTQA+ people and those from non-traditional backgrounds.
MUNICIPAL DIGITAL EQUITY PLANNING

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

PLANIFICACIÓN DE EQUIDAD DIGITAL

COMISIÓN MUNICIPAL DE PLANIFICACIÓN DE PIONEER VALLEY

SPRINGFIELD, MA

9/13/23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Equity</th>
<th>Equidad Digital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>An Orientation to Municipal Digital Equity Planning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Una Orientación para la Planificación Municipal de la Equidad Digital</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Digital inequity is a significant issue.</td>
<td>• La desigualdad digital es un problema importante.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help bridge this gap, the PVPC is now providing Municipal Digital Equity Planning support and expertise to its member communities.</td>
<td>• Para tender un puente, PVPC ofrece ahora a las comunidades que se hacen miembros apoyo y experiencia en la planificación de la equidad digital municipal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program” is supported and funded by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI).</td>
<td>• El &quot;Programa de Planificación de la Equidad Digital Municipal&quot; cuenta con apoyo y financiamiento del Instituto de Banda Ancha de Massachusetts (MBI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• These funds are provided to Massachusetts through federal ARPA funds (This new planning effort will not cost your community any money).</td>
<td>• Estos fondos se proporcionan a Massachusetts a través de fondos federales ARPA (Este nuevo esfuerzo de planificación no costará dinero a su comunidad).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This effort will contribute to the state’s digital equity plan, as mandated by the Federal Digital Equity Act.</td>
<td>• Este esfuerzo contribuirá al plan de equidad digital del estado, según manda la Ley Federal de Equidad Digital.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### BACKGROUND

Lack of access to the internet is the result of a variety of issues, often overlapping.

**Most commonly these include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of connection, frequently due to lack of infrastructure or affordability.</td>
<td>Falta de conexión, a menudo por falta de infraestructuras o de asequibilidad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of devices that can enable someone to effectively engage online (tablets and laptops but not smartphones) — usually due to affordability.</td>
<td>Falta de dispositivos que permitan a las personas interactuar eficazmente en línea (tabletas y ordenadores portátiles, pero no teléfonos inteligentes), por lo general debido a su asequibilidad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills or familiarity with using the internet, often due to lack of knowledge and training, but sometimes concerns about safety.</td>
<td>Falta de destreza o familiaridad con el uso de Internet, a menudo por falta de conocimientos y capacitación, pero a veces por preocupaciones acerca de la seguridad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Efforts to date have been limited due to the lack of resources.

Los esfuerzos hasta la fecha han sido limitados debido a la falta de recursos.
DOORS THAT CAN BE OPENED FOR ALL IN A WORLD OF DIGITAL EQUITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• Remote medical care</th>
<th>• Atención médica a distancia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Remote education: K-12, post-secondary, lifelong learning opportunities</td>
<td>• Educación a distancia: K-12, postsecundaria, oportunidades de aprendizaje permanente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interacting with our governments: apply for public benefits, renew driver's license or registration, follow city council meetings</td>
<td>• Interactuar con nuestros gobiernos: solicitar beneficios públicos, renovar el permiso para conducir o registros, seguir las reuniones del consejero municipal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Looking for housing: whether you rent or own</td>
<td>• Búsqueda de vivienda: ya sea de alquiler o propietario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shopping: retail, groceries, Uber Eats, etc.</td>
<td>• Compras: tiendas, supermercados, Uber Eats, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At the height of COVID, people relied on remote access for an infinite number of things, from &quot;attending&quot; worship services to tracking infection rates in our communities</td>
<td>• En el apogeo de COVID, la gente dependía del acceso remoto para infinidades de cosas, desde &quot;asistir&quot; a los servicios religiosos hasta darle seguimiento a los por cientos de infección en nuestras comunidades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) continue explosive growth, the range of things that rely on full digital literacy and access will grow and grow.</td>
<td>• A medida que tecnologías como la inteligencia artificial (IA) siguen creciendo explosivamente, la gama de cosas que dependen de la plena alfabetización digital y el acceso crecerá y crecerá.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we DON'T take decisive action now to ensure everybody has equitable access, those left behind will be increasingly disadvantaged.

Si NO tomamos ahora medidas decisivas para garantizar que todo el mundo tenga un acceso equitativo, los que se queden atrás se verán cada vez más desfavorecidos.
### MUNICIPAL DIGITAL EQUITY PLANNING PROCESS
PROCESO DE PLANIFICACIÓN DE LA EQUIDAD DIGITAL MUNICIPAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• Convene core planning group made up of community representatives</th>
<th>• Convocar un grupo central de planificación compuesto por representantes de la comunidad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collect community data, and map assets</td>
<td>• Recopilar de datos comunitarios y mapas de recursos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage with people at the community level</td>
<td>• Comprometerse con la población a nivel comunitario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a municipal profile</td>
<td>• Crear un perfil municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct a needs assessment – with findings</td>
<td>• Realizar una evaluación de las necesidades - con hallazgos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop short- and long-term strategies</td>
<td>• Desarrollar estrategias a corto y largo plazo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore potential funding options</td>
<td>• Explorar posibles opciones de financiación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Type</td>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.0 Planning and Data Gathering</strong></td>
<td>1.1 Preliminary work/PVPC and Core Planning Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Quantitative Data Gathering for Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Qualitative Data Gathering for Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Asset Mapping to Establish Digital Equity Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.0 Outreach and Community Engagement</strong></td>
<td>2.1 Develop and Distribute Outreach Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Engage Stakeholders &amp; Community; Conduct 4 Community Forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.0 Recommendations and Final Report</strong></td>
<td>3.1 Develop interim report of findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Explore Short- and Long-term funding, begin drafting final report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Develop Final Recommendations; submit final report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Focus on 6 Main Areas

**Enfoque en 6 Áreas Principales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure availability</th>
<th>Disponibilidad de infraestructuras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordability for residents</td>
<td>Asequibilidad para los residentes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility for residents</td>
<td>Accesibilidad para los residentes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Literacy including skills and training</td>
<td>Alfabetización digital, incluyendo destrezas y entrenamiento.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and security awareness</td>
<td>Concientización sobre seguridad y protección</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to appropriate devices</td>
<td>Acceso a los dispositivos adecuados</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Digital Equity Act and MBI have also identified particular populations within society that are more likely to experience digital inequity. These include:

- Individuals who are struggling financially
- Aging individuals (over 60)
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier (literacy, immigrants)
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural areas
- Housing instability

La Ley de Equidad Digital y el MBI también han identificado poblaciones particulares dentro de la sociedad que tienen más probabilidades de experimentar desigualdad digital. Entre ellas se incluyen:

- Personas con dificultades económicas
- Personas mayores (más de 60 años)
- Personas encarceladas
- Veteranos
- Personas con discapacidades
- Personas con barreras lingüísticas (alfabetización, inmigrantes)
- Personas pertenecientes a una minoría racial o étnica
- Personas que residen principalmente en zonas rurales
- Inestabilidad de la vivienda
### NEXT STEPS – OPEN DISCUSSION
### PRÓXIMOS PASOS - DISCUSION ABIERTO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where to go from here?</th>
<th>¿Qué hacer a partir de ahora?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can you help us?</td>
<td>¿Cómo puede ayudarnos?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can we help you?</td>
<td>¿En qué podemos ayudarle?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) wants to hear from you about your experiences with getting and using internet service. Your input will help the State make sure that everyone can have access to high-quality and affordable internet service, devices, skills training, and digital support.

Your input is valuable!

Complete the survey here

Complete la encuesta aquí
03

Breakout Discussions
Remember the Ground Rules

Be **fully present** by not checking your phone or computer.

Know when to lead versus **creating space for others to speak**.

**Be open** and listen to others. Even when you disagree, suspend judgment, and look for common ground.

Recognize that we are all approaching this process with **different levels of understanding** surrounding equity and digital equity.

**Respect confidentiality.** What is discussed in this room stays in this room.
Breakout Rooms

We look forward to hearing from you on the topics below.

Virtual Breakout Rooms:
Please follow this jam board link:

In Person:
Staff will assign breakout group participation
Imagine it’s five years in the future. The Digital Equity Plan has been a resounding success. After some initial challenges, Massachusetts's solutions are having a huge impact on the world in ways you'd never even imagined!

• Take 1 minute to scan the QR code to the right and use one word to answer the question above.
Report back

Thank you for your participation in our facilitated discussion. We want to learn more about what you heard and discussed.

What was discussed in your breakout room?
Timeline

- **Summer to Fall 2023**: Regional listening sessions, focus groups, public survey, asset mapping
- **Fall (Oct. & Nov.) 2023**: Plan drafting and writing
- **Winter (Nov. & Dec.) 2023**: Public comment period
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→ Visit broadband.masstech.org for details on events and ways to get involved.
Thank you!

Contact MBI at broadband@masstech.org

Visit the Internet for All Page broadband.masstech.org/internetforall