



Town of Winchendon

Digital Equity Plan

November 2024

Prepared by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
On behalf of the town of Winchendon



MBI

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BROADBAND INSTITUTE



at the MassTech
Collaborative



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Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 DIGITAL EQUITY OVERVIEW	6
3 THE PLANNING PROCESS	14
4 EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS	18
5 COMMUNITY NEEDS	34
6. VISION, GOALS & ACTIONS	44
7. APPENDIX	56

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1 Introduction

Municipalities need equitable digital access in changing political, economic, and technological conditions, especially for marginalized populations. This access requires digital equity where all individuals and families are privy to reliable and accessible broadband technologies that service a wide variety of needs. Without digital equity, there cannot be broader social equity. People of all ages must be able to access online resources to navigate life. This need is increasingly true concerning overlapping life situations like education, health care, employment, personal finances, and political engagement. This need was highlighted because of COVID-19 and has only become more urgent over time, which magnified the essential role of broadband and technology in our lives and the detrimental impacts on communities that cannot fully access and use them.



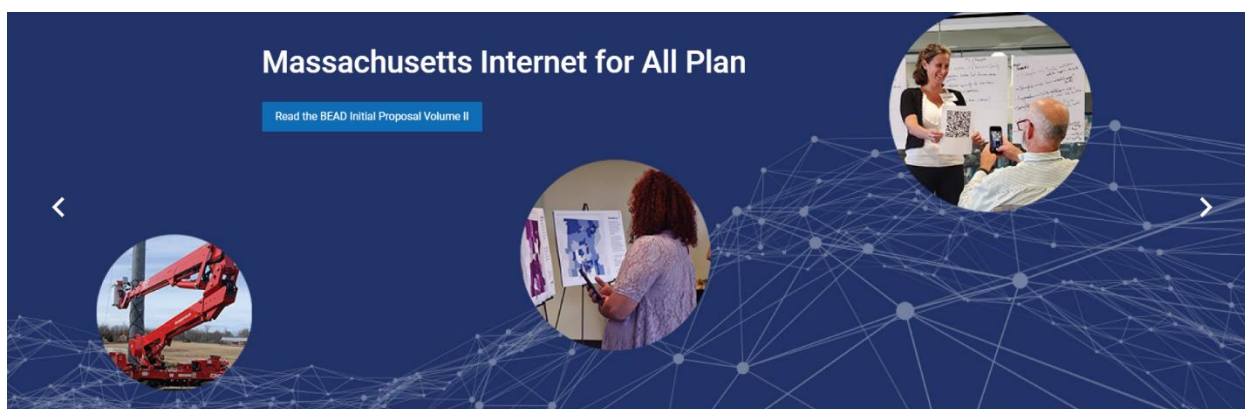
The Town of Winchendon embarked on an approximately eight-month-long planning process to prepare a Digital Equity Plan under the facilitation of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and consultation from Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. (MRPC). This Plan reflects a collaboration and community input regarding the digital divide in Winchendon and proposes a shared vision for advancing digital equity and inclusion in the Town. This Plan also positions the Town to apply for existing and future state and federal funding and guides decision-making and investments related to services and infrastructure that will increase access, adoption, and internet usage throughout town, with no one left behind.

This project was funded by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at the MassTech Collaborative under the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program who's funding was provided by Massachusetts ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Funds.



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2 DIGITAL EQUITY OVERVIEW



2.1 DIGITAL EQUITY

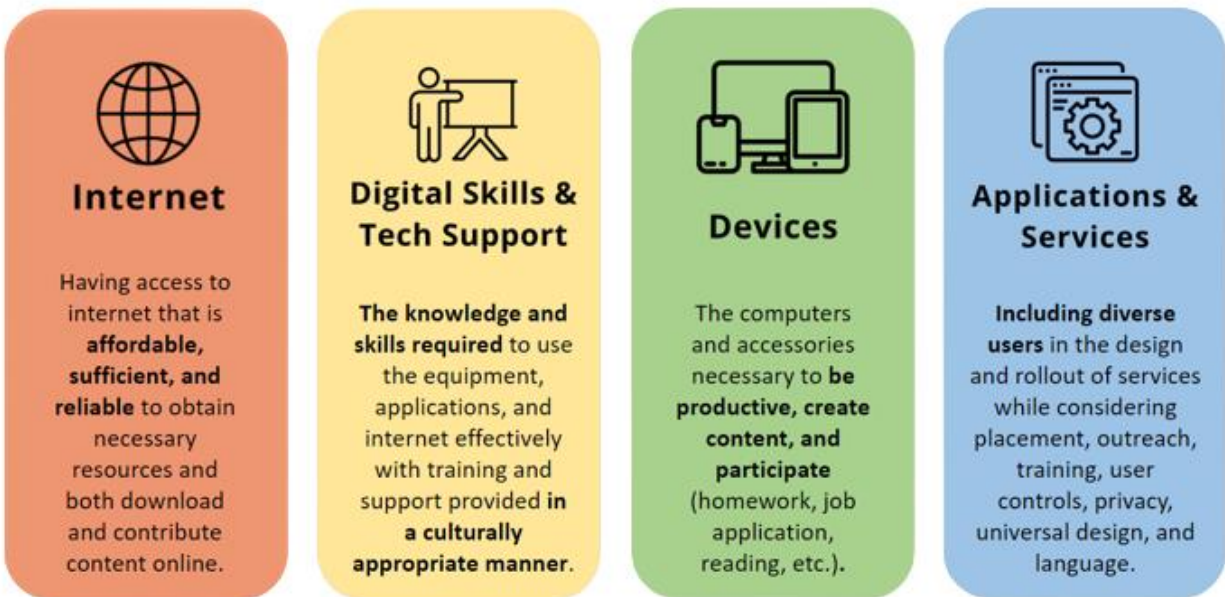
Equitable access to broadband internet varies across demographic groups based on geographic location, race, age, income, education, and other related factors. Physical, geo-spatial, and socioeconomic challenges and barriers associated with these factors have resulted in noticeable gaps in equity related to broadband access, affordability, and adaptability at local, regional, and national scales. Similarly, broadband service and cost-based gaps also exist at each of these scales and often correlate to the same demographic factors specified above. With local and regional partners, in consultation with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, under the Massachusetts Broadband Institute’s Municipal Digital Equity Planning program, the Town of Winchendon is undergoing a Digital Equity Planning process to better understand the needs of the community. The outcome of the planning process is this Digital Equity Action Plan that will identify the community’s vision, and associated goals and implementable actions, to improve

Digital Equity Gaps Impact:

- Social Connectivity
- Workforce Readiness
- Civic Participation
- Healthcare Access
- Educational Opportunities
- Financial Resources

broadband internet access, enhance digital equity, and increase digital literacy among residents, businesses, and institutions.

As with many other small Towns, broadband internet accessibility and connectivity issues currently do exist and are related to various factors, including gaps in reliable internet service, diverse socioeconomic demographics affecting income and opportunity, higher-than average services costs limiting access and affecting affordability, convenient access to affordable devices and technology, gaps in digital literacy and available training or tech-help opportunities, and other general accessibility issues.



The overall purpose of Digital Equity Planning is to understand the existing conditions around internet access and digital technology, specifically those related to, availability, affordability, and adoptability of broadband internet and digital devices with a focus on certain covered populations of the Digital Equity Act.

2.2 COVERED POPULATIONS OF THE DIGITAL EQUITY ACT

Individuals who live in Covered Households

The term “covered household” means a household, the taxable income of which for the most recently completed taxable year is not more than 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level, as determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.

Aging Individuals

The term “aging individual” has the meaning given the term “older individual” in section 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 ([42 U.S.C. 3002](#)), within which the term “older individual” means an individual who is 60 years of age or older.

Incarcerated Individuals

Inmates at state and county jails and correctional facilities, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility. The closest facility to Fitchburg is the North Central Correctional Institution in Gardner, MA.

Veterans

The term “veteran” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code. The term “veteran” means a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

Individuals with Disabilities

The term “disability” has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ([42 U.S.C. 12102](#)).

Individuals with a Language Barrier

Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who—

- a. Are English learners; and
- b. Have low levels of literacy

Individuals who are Members of a Racial or Ethnic Minority Group

Racial and ethnic minority groups are groups of people who are underrepresented in a population and may experience discrimination based on their race or ethnicity:

- Race: A term that refers to physical differences that a society considers significant.
- Ethnicity: A term that describes a shared culture.
- Minority group: A term that describes groups that are subordinate or lack power in society, regardless of their skin color or country of origin

Individuals who Primarily Reside in a Rural Area

The term “rural area” means any area other than –

1. A city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants.
2. Any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and

3. 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.

2.3 BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS: AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY, AND ADOPTION

2.3.1 Broadband Access

Internet Availability



The Three Components of Access— Availability, Affordability, Adoption

Availability: Is there sufficient infrastructure and coverage to deliver reliable, high-speed wired or wireless broadband service and technology tools for learning?

Affordability: Can learners and families/caregivers pay for the total cost of maintaining reliable, high-speed broadband service and technology tools for learning?

Adoption: Do learners and families/caregivers have the information, support, and skills to obtain regular, adequate access to reliable, high-speed broadband service and technology tools for learning?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the digital divide was an omnipresent issue in 2018¹, continued to be an issue in 2019², and the factors disproportionately affecting certain segments of the population³ were exacerbated and highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, resulting in the passage of the Digital Equity Act in 2021.

Prior to the pandemic, most evaluations of internet access and use focused on survey data on internet subscriptions, however, these assessments often failed to consider availability, or whether Internet Service Providers (ISPs) provided service to a given area.

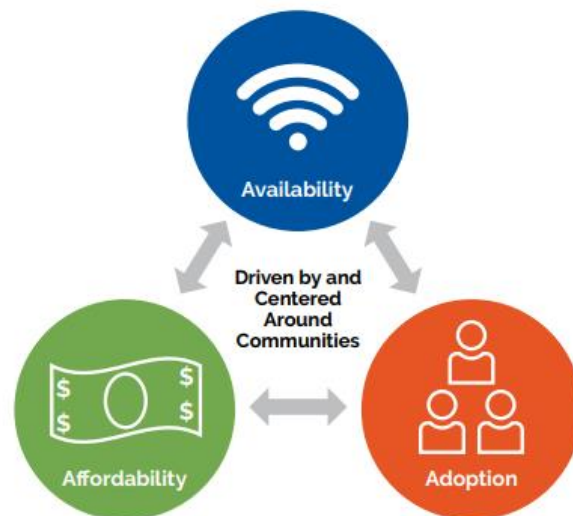
Since passage of the Digital Equity Act, research, evaluations, and investments have attempted to understand and address the digital divide in a more comprehensive and inclusive way, by considering not only internet subscription rates, but actual access to broadband internet services based on measures and metrics of availability, affordability, and adoptability (inclusive of knowledge, skills, abilities, and willingness to adopt internet services, technology, and devices).

¹ <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2018/demo/SEHSD-WP2018-12.pdf>

² <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2019/demo/sehds-wp2019-15.pdf>

³ <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2022/05/mapping-digital-equity-in-every-state.html>

While past and recent studies indicated that throughout the nation, most geographic areas had high-speed fixed broadband service available, that service was not universally or equitably available among all segments of the population or within certain areas. For example, there were noticeable differences in availability and quality of service (i.e., types of technology, and levels of reliability or speeds), particularly between urban and rural areas, and among factors related to income, race and ethnicity, language and literacy, and geographic areas where percentages of the population represented by those factors were greater.



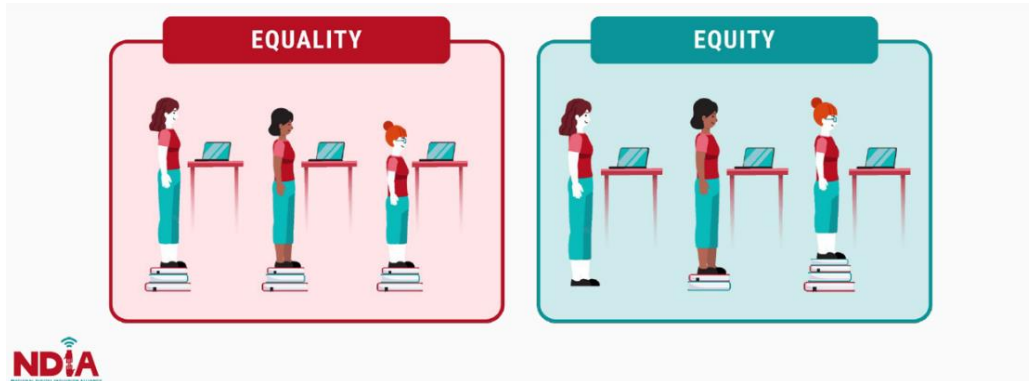
Nationally, some states have high availability throughout, while regionally, availability varies from one county to the next. Locally, even greater variation exists at the Census Tract level, as shown within the U.S. Census Bureau’s Digital Equity Act Population Viewer Map, and that variation often correlates to the socio-economic demographic factors referenced above. Income is often an indicator of internet service availability and strongly correlated with affordability and adoptability of service types. However, geography cannot be overlooked when understanding and addressing the Digital Divide, as the rural location of an area is often one of the greatest predictors or limiting factors of internet availability.

Internet availability can be assessed in terms of the number of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) serving and providing direct, connections to the internet at households, businesses, or institutions within a certain location or area. Further, it can be assessed based on the type of internet service provided (e.g., Fiber-optic, Cable, and Fixed Wireless Internet), and the average and maximum speed of that service (i.e., Digital Data Upload & Download Speeds measured in Megabytes per second [Mbps]).

A location, or more specifically, an address, that has “service” access to Broadband Internet service by an ISP is considered a **Serviceable** location. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as of March 14, 2024, the minimum “benchmark” for high-speed fixed broadband internet is now 100 megabits per second download speed and 20 megabits per second upload speed – a four-fold increase from the 25/3 Mbps benchmark set by the FCC in 2015⁴. This new minimum speed benchmark increase is now consistent with standards established by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program and multiple U.S. Universal Service Fund programs. Under these established standards, locations with fixed broadband internet service “that meets or exceeds 100 Mbps download speed and 20 Mbps upload speed”, are considered “**Served**”. Alternatively, according to the standards set by the NTIA BEAD Program under their Internet for All initiative,

⁴ FCC News, Office of Media Relations, Press Release dated March 14, 2024: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-401205A1.pdf>

addresses “with broadband service below 100 Mbps download speed and 20 Mbps upload speed but higher than 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed” are considered “**Underserved**”. And finally, again, according to the NTIA BEAD standards, any address location without access to any broadband service or “with broadband service below 25 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed” is considered “**Unserv**ed”.⁵



2.3.2 Internet Affordability

Thirty-two percent of U.S. households are subscription vulnerable, meaning they are unable to afford and maintain an internet service subscription. This gap leads to differences in learning experiences, as 65 percent of families with income levels below the poverty threshold reported lack of access prevented their children from participating in school and completing schoolwork or that their child had no option other than to participate through a mobile device. Among families with income levels below the national median and with access to broadband, 56 percent stated the service was too slow, and among families with home access to a computer, 59 percent stated their device runs too slowly or does not work. Sixty-five percent of families with incomes below the national poverty level, 66 percent of Hispanic parents, 75 percent of families headed by immigrant Hispanic parents, and 56 percent of Black parents with incomes below the national median reported technology-related disruptions to their children’s learning.⁶ Such figures may also be higher due to underreporting. For example, Spanish-language-dominant Americans are less likely to report having high-speed internet at home.⁷

Perhaps the biggest loss to internet affordability was ending the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). To better understand the program’s impact, the FCC surveyed ACP recipients in December 2023. According to the survey, 77% of respondents say losing their ACP benefit would disrupt their critical aspects of lives by making them change their plan or drop internet service entirely. Approximately three-fourths report using their internet service for work, health care appointments, job applications and schoolwork. Finally, when asked how losing their ACP benefit would affect them,

⁵NTIA BEAD Program, Program Documentation:

<https://www.ntia.gov/funding-programs/internet-all/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program>

⁶ Johnson, M., Bashay, M., Bergson-Shilcock, A., Richardson, M., & DeRenzis, B. (2019). *The roadmap for racial equity*. National Skills Coalition. <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/the-roadmap-for-racial-equity/>

⁷ Johnson, M., Bashay, M., Bergson-Shilcock, A., Richardson, M., & DeRenzis, B. (2019). *The roadmap for racial equity*. National Skills Coalition. <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/the-roadmap-for-racial-equity/>

many say they would need to cut other basic expenses such as food or gas if they had to pay \$30 more out of pocket for their internet. Others say they would drop their internet service.⁸

2.3.3. Internet Adoption

Digital connectivity is a combined measure of people accessing and utilizing the internet (particularly broadband internet) and digital devices at home. Some factors that can be assessed to “measure” digital connectivity are: Average Household Size, Percentage of the Population Working from Home, Percentage of Households with Digital Computing Devices, Percentage of Households with Internet, Percentage of Households with Broadband Internet (defined as download/upload speeds above 100/20 Mbps, and Broadband Internet Usage vs. Availability (percentage of households which have a Broadband Internet connection to their home that actually subscribe to a Broadband Internet Service).

Of the estimated 15–16 million K-12 learners who have insufficient broadband access or access to devices to support learning at home, approximately 6 million face adoption barriers apart from availability and affordability. Learners who have immigrated to the U.S. and learners from multilingual homes face unique challenges in getting connected and engaging with learning once connected. Credit checks or deposits to get a subscription and digital literacy gaps further inhibit receiving low-cost coverage. Children with disabilities, who disproportionately live in low-income households, experience additional technology barriers, such as outdated equipment, inaccessible online platforms and course materials, and a lack of in-person support to engage with technology tools for learning.

Even with high technology usage in the classroom, few professional learning opportunities for effective technology use in instruction are provided to educators. The National Center for Education Statistics has found that on average, educators working with low-income and rural learners are the least likely

“A recent study showed that participants who were older, less educated, economically disadvantaged, and from ethnic groups were up to five times less likely to have access to digital health information.”

“An older adult in a rural area is 1.6 times more likely to lack in-home internet service.”

“Access and affordability are only two parts of the equation to help older adults get connected. The third component is to make sure that seniors know how to use technology and feel comfortable doing so.”

National Council on Aging

⁸ <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/without-federal-program-whats-the-outlook-for-affordable-broadband>

to receive access to training on effective technology use in instruction. Combined, these barriers further contribute to the digital divide.⁹

2.4 THE GOAL: DIGITAL EQUITY

The goal of addressing the digital divide through digital inclusion initiatives within a community is to



help all individuals and groups within the community to participate and aid in digital equity. 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, facilitating lifelong learning and access to essential services.**” The three pillars of digital equity work that are the focus of this plan are **digital literacy**, **device access**, and **internet access**. By boosting internet service subscriber numbers, resolving infrastructure problems, increasing the number of opportunities for digital literacy training, and easing access to suitable devices, communities can promote digital equity.

⁹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, *Advancing Digital Equity for All: Community-Based Recommendations for Developing Effective Digital Equity Plans to Close the Digital Divide and Enable Technology-Empowered Learning*, Washington, DC, 2022.

3 DIGITAL EQUITY PLANNING PROCESS

The Digital Equity Core Team Working Group (the Committee) is a team of municipal and housing authority staff with a stake in providing information and technology resources throughout Winchendon. The Committee includes representatives from Town Hall, the Beals Memorial Library, the Winchendon Housing Authority, The Winchendon Senior Center (CAC contact) and the Winchendon Public Schools (WPS). With MRPC, the Committee provided guidance and oversight on developing the Plan and relayed community sentiment and Digital Equity needs.

3.2 DIGITAL EQUITY CORE TEAM WORKING GROUP

The Digital Equity Core Working Group and project stakeholders provided valuable input, relayed comments from residents, and participated in meetings throughout the Digital Equity planning process.

DIGITAL EQUITY CORE WORKING GROUP

1. Linda Daigle, Special Projects Coordinator (ret.)
2. Christa Latulippe, DE Project Manager
3. Daria Marciano, Winchendon Housing Authority
4. Miranda Jennings, Winchendon Senior Center (CAC contact)
5. Don O'Neil, IT Director
6. Bill Clinton, IT Director, Winchendon Schools
7. Manuel King, Beals Memorial Library Director
8. Nicole Roberts, Land Use Coordinator
9. Barbra Anderson, BOS Member
10. Rick Ward, BOS Member

The Digital Equity Core Team Working Group met on:

- November 29, 2023
- March 21, 2024
- September 19, 2024
- October 23, 2024

Details from the final Digital Equity Plan were presented to the Winchendon Select Board on Monday, November 25, 2024. A public comment period ran through December 17, 2024. All comments received have been incorporated into the plan.

3.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Digital Equity planning process included several community and stakeholder areas that allowed the Town to distribute information to the public regarding Digital Equity planning activities and the statewide survey. The process also gathered critical input that helped to develop the goals and recommendations in this Plan. The Plan relied heavily on information collected through various means as outlined in the following sections.

3.3.1 Statewide Digital Equity Surveys

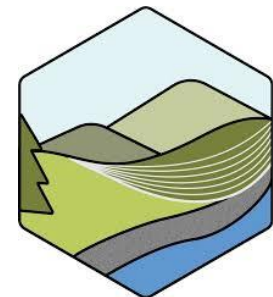
The Senior Center/CAC requested that the Statewide Digital Equity survey be translated to Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish and Haitian Creole. Staff members from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, Translation Center completed this task, and the translated surveys were distributed to the town. In addition, survey boxes were placed at:

- The Town Hall
- The Senior Center
- Beals Memorial Library
- The Clark YMCA
- Pop up event: Winchendon Founders Day, June 8, 2024

Survey results are discussed in greater detail in Section 6 of this plan.

3.3.2 Community Events and Pop-ups

Founders Day, June 8, 2024 – The town celebrated Founder’s Day as their 2nd Free fun day. June 10th signifies the founding day of the Winchendon Community Park’s new amphitheater and the founding day of the Town. A Digital Equity survey box was part of the information provided to the community by the Winchendon CAC.



3.4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

On July 23, 2024, members of the MRPC DE planning team hosted a digital literacy forum at the Winchendon Housing Authority. Unfortunately, despite advertising the event, no residents of the Housing Authority properties attended. Digital Literacy materials were left at the community center in hopes that some residents will find them helpful. Per the survey results, (see Section 6 of this plan) self-guided literacy materials were the highest sought-after method for digital literacy training.



Digital Literacy Training	Date	Covered Population or Focus Group
Winchendon Housing	7/23/24	Rural/Low Income, Aging, Minority, Non-English

3.5 FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS & ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

The MRPC team conducted focus Group meetings to discuss the needs of the covered populations within the respective organization’s mission.

Focus Group Meetings	Date	Covered Population or Focus Group
Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center	6/12/24	Rural/Low Income, Minority, Non-English, Disability, Veteran, Aging Population
Winchendon Housing Authority	7/23/24	Rural/Low Income, Aging, Minority, Non-English, Aging Population

3.6 INTERVIEWS/MEETINGS

The MRPC Team facilitated several interviews and/or received questionnaires with digital equity stakeholders focused on key challenges and opportunities related to their day-to-day work.

Organization/Department/Board	Date Completed	Staff	Questionnaire Completed
CAC “The HUB”	4/24/24	M Jennings	Y
Library	5/28/2024	M King	Y
School Dept	4/11/24	B Clinton	Y
Housing Authority (with Templeton)	7/3/24	D Marciano	Y
COA/Senior Center	4/24/24	M Jennings	Y
Comcast	9/16/24	K Morris	N
WCTV	6/13/24	C Latulippe	Y
Commission on Disabilities (new)	9/26/24	M Jennings	Y
Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center	6/12/24	S Marchetti	Y
Clear Path for New England Veterans	5/31/24	J Vance	Y
Luk, LLC	8/19/24	E McMillian	Y
Winchendon Select Board	10/28/24	n/a	N

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4 EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The following existing conditions analysis evaluates certain aspects of the Town of Winchendon’s population demographics with specific regard to the eight (8) Covered Populations of the Digital Equity Act. The analysis highlights vulnerabilities and inequities regarding internet access relative to availability, affordability, and adoptability – the three pillars of digital equitability and broadband internet accessibility. The analysis leads to an assessment of community needs through information gathered during targeted outreach to interested stakeholders, covered populations, and local digital equity champions, including core team meetings, focus group meetings, stakeholder questionnaires and interviews, and local and regional responses to the Statewide Digital Equity Survey.

4.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

Establishing comprehensive and inclusive existing conditions, through a robust community outreach and stakeholder engagement process, allows for the development of a Digital Equity Plan that includes a set of meaningful, community guided recommendations that will best address the needs of those it is intended to serve. In addition to providing information about available broadband internet services and devices, the analysis also identifies and evaluates certain barriers and challenges experienced by people, especially covered populations, relative to broadband internet service accessibility or availability, adoption, and affordability. Further, it assesses not only those people with access to, or using such services or devices, but also those portions of the populations without access or use of, or otherwise lacking fixed broadband services, computers or other internet-connected digital devices. It aims to better understand the barriers and challenges of populations not using the internet, and populations not using a device. Sometimes those challenges or barriers extend beyond access or affordability, and at times are related to a person’s willingness to adopt such technology (services and devices, alike), rather than their ability or accessibility.

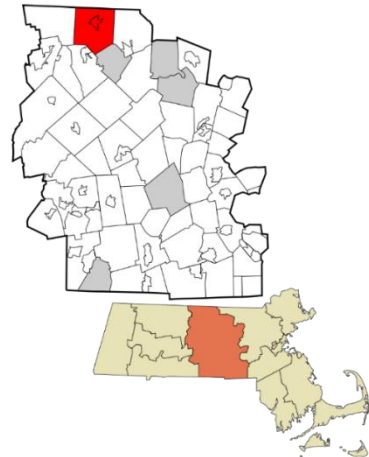
Much of the data for this analysis was obtained from input from the Digital Equity Planning Core Team members, stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, digital literacy assessments and tech-help sessions, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) survey results, FCC Data, other local and regional data and information, including the Massachusetts Division of Local Services’ Data Analytics and Resources Bureau, and US Census data.

4.2 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Demographic trends in a community can impact local internet service demand and technology support needs. Understanding Winchendon’s demographic profile, socioeconomic indicators and covered populations are critical in adequate planning for digital equity.

Winchendon Town

Located in North Worcester County on the New Hampshire Border, Winchendon is home to 10,364 residents. The median income in the community is \$84,375, which is below Worcester County median income of \$86,258. Over 11% of residents in the town live below the poverty line, which is higher than the Worcester County average of 10.6%. 9,198 residents or 88% of all residents report themselves as white alone. 65% of minority households in Winchendon live below the poverty level. The 2022 unemployed rate in Winchendon was estimated at 7.5%. Of those over the age of 25, 93.2% have a high school education, with 48.2% having some college or obtained an associate degree and 23.4% obtained bachelor’s degrees or higher.¹⁰

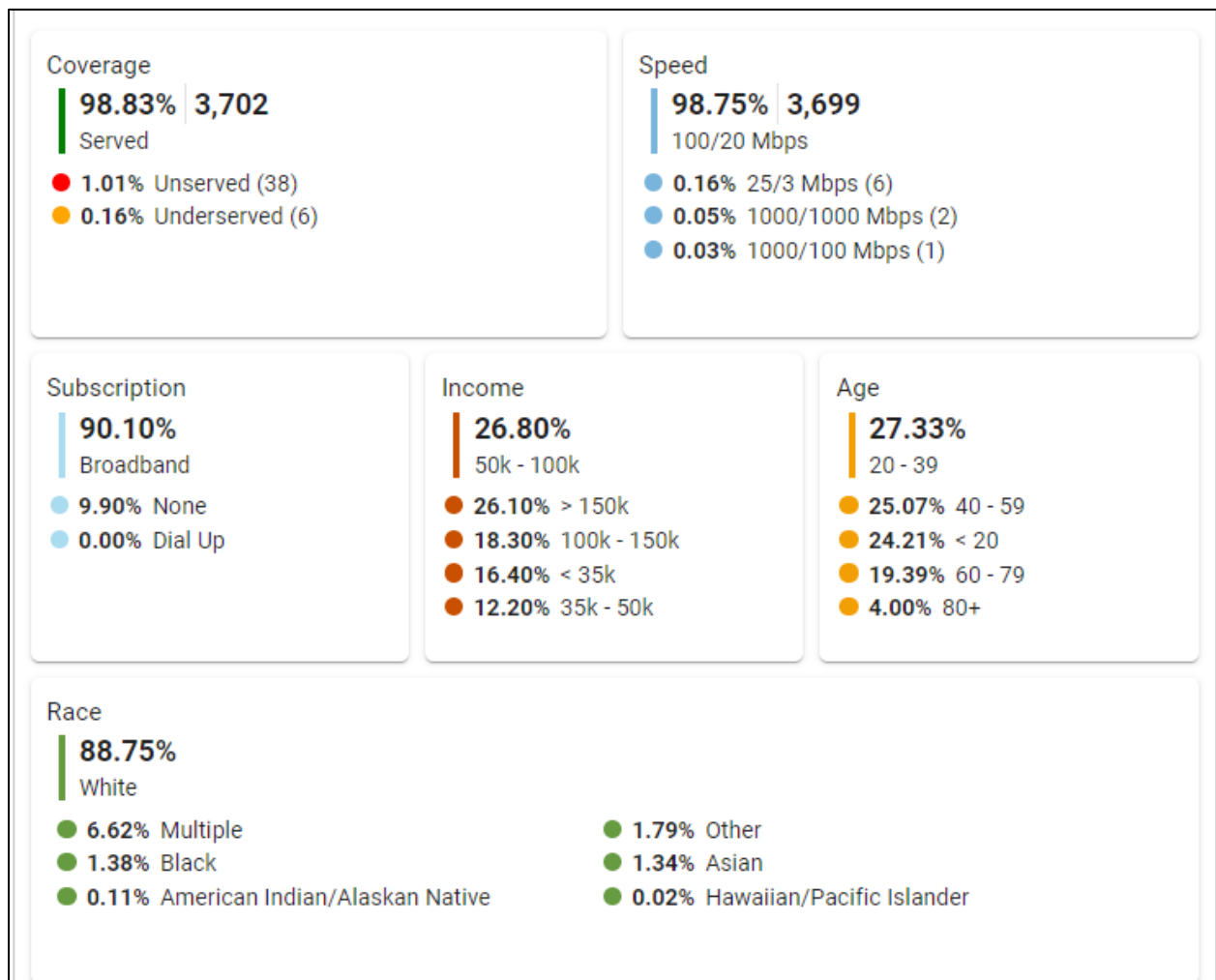


¹⁰ <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALPL2020.P1?g=060XX00US2502780405>. Accessed on August 5, 2024.

4.2 ASSESSING DIGITAL EQUITY IN WINCHENDON

According to the U.S. Census, 94.5% of Winchendon’s households in 2023 reported having a desktop or laptop computer, 77% reported having one or more smartphones, and 62% reported having a tablet or other portable wireless computer. These trends are reflected in MBI statewide survey data, as 65% of respondents reported using a laptop computer most to connect to the Internet, 35% reported using a desktop computer, 77% reported using a cellphone, and 54% used a tablet or similar device. However, while a high percentage of Winchendon’s residents report having a computer, there is potential to improve community awareness of publicly accessible devices in Winchendon, existing programs supporting device access, and how to enroll. Additional opportunities exist to provide device training. However, the Library, Senior Center and CAC all report needing additional devices for the training to be effective **Figure 1**, is a summary of Digital Equity Indicators for Winchendon. ¹¹

Figure 1: Broadband and Digital Equity Indicators, Winchendon



¹¹ Massachusetts Broadband Map: <https://mapping.massbroadband.org/map> (Accessed July 9, 2024.)

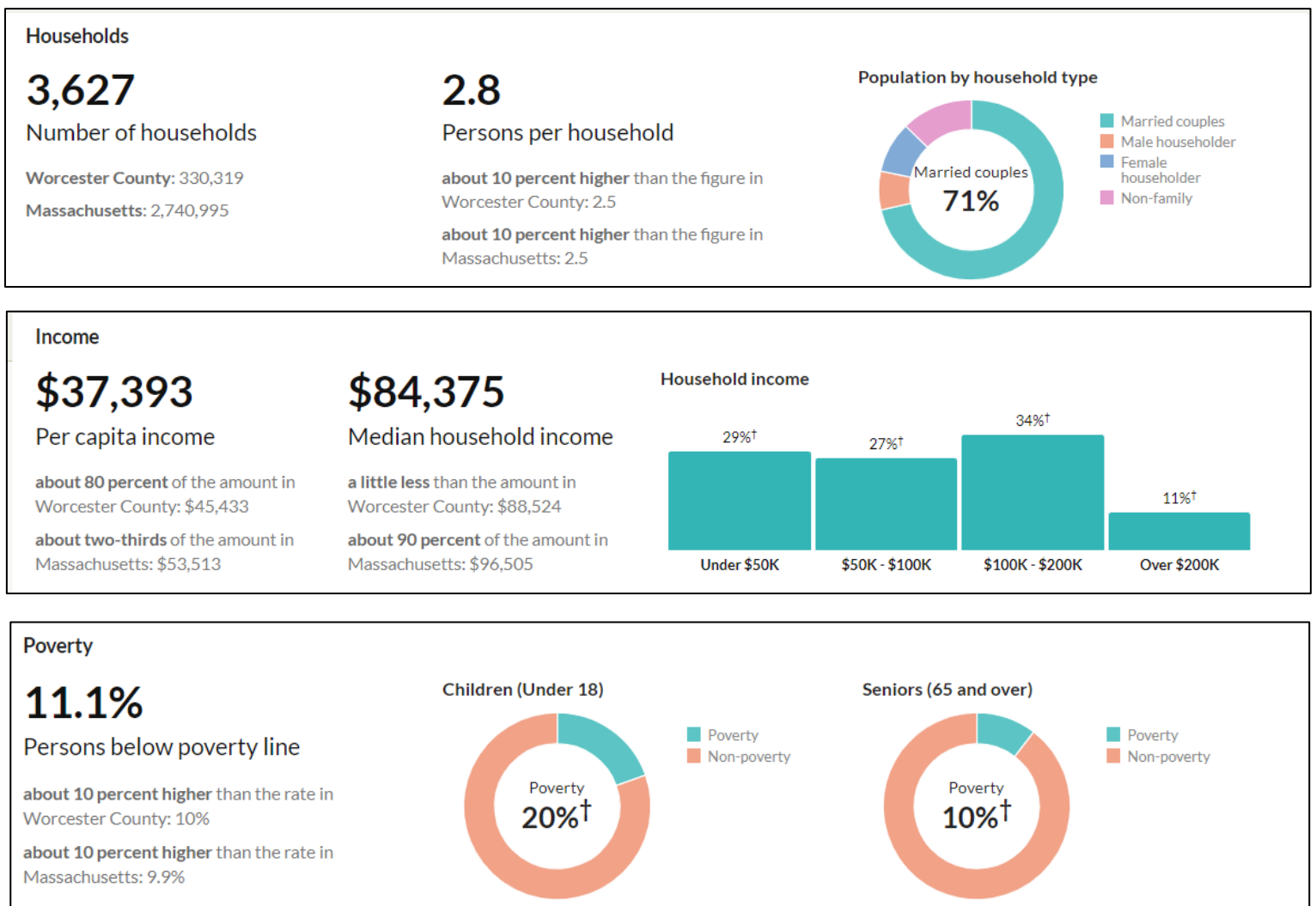
COVERED POPULATIONS

INDIVIDUALS WHO LIVE IN COVERED HOUSEHOLDS

Individuals who live in the term “covered household” means a household with the taxable income of which for the most recently completed taxable 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 US Census Bureau.

According to recent estimates Covered Households from the US Census Bureau, there are 3627 households in Winchendon. **Figure 2** below provides a summary of household and income-based demographics for Winchendon’s households.

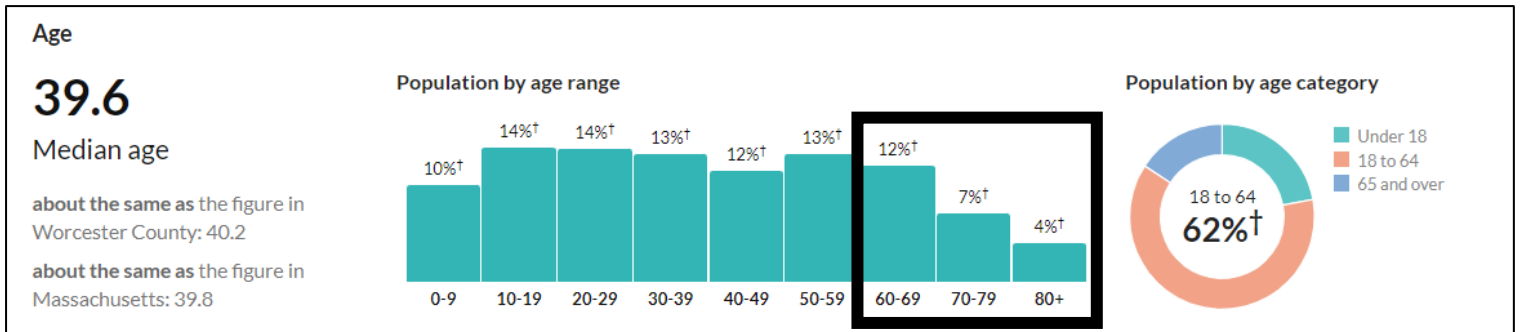
Figure 2: Household and Income-based Demographics in Winchendon, MA¹².



¹² <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US2502780405-winchendon-town-worcester-county-ma/>

AGING INDIVIDUALS

Figure 3: Age Demographics in Ashburnham, MA.¹³



Winchendon has a growing population of residents over 65 years of age, with 15.8 % of households having one or more people over the age of 65. Of single households, 7.1% are over 65.¹⁴ Public meeting attendees noted a need within the Town for digital literacy training and expanded advocacy for Winchendon’s senior population in areas such as device usage, navigation of common software platforms, and general computer skills

Vulnerable populations, such as senior residents, are impacted by barriers to healthcare access because they lack consistent access to suitable devices and internet services, as well as the knowledge necessary to use these resources.

INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

The closest facility to Winchendon is the North Central Correctional Institution in Gardner, MA.

VETERANS

As **Figure 4** depicts, Veterans make up 8.1% of the population in Winchendon with 96.8% of those being male.¹⁵ Winchendon provides Veteran’s services at the town hall for 2 hours on weekdays.¹⁶ The Winchendon American Legion Post 193 is located at 295 School St. The Legion Building has recently been renovated to accommodate the physically challenged with the installation of a 3-stop elevator to access all floors with ADA rest rooms available and the fire alarm evacuation system meets the needs for those that have sight or hearing difficulties. However, they currently do not offer any digital literacy resources.¹⁷

¹³ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US2502780405-winchendon-town-worcester-county-ma/>

¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101 (2022). <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S0101?q=060XX00US2502780405>. Accessed on August 5, 2024.

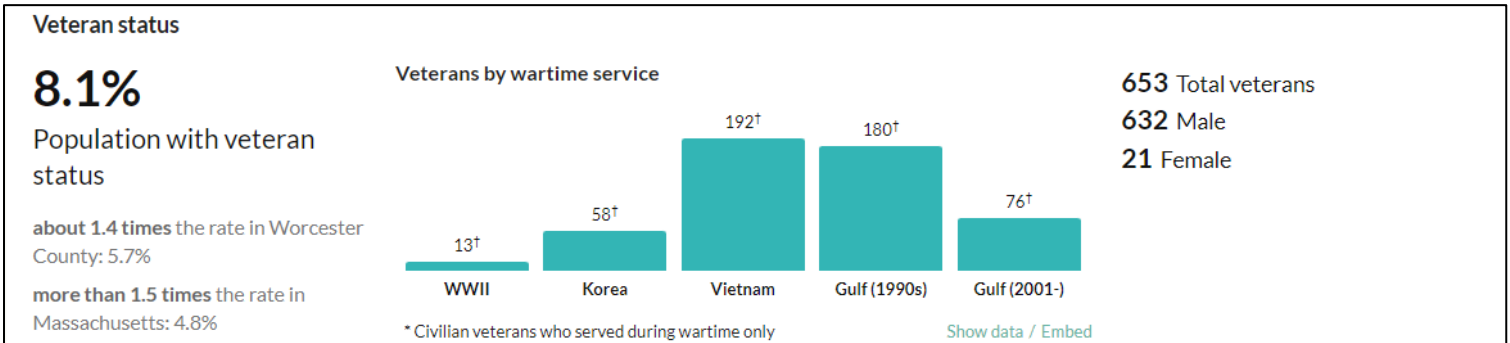
¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. "Sex by Age by Veteran Status for the Civilian Population 18 Years and Over." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B21001*. (2022).

<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.B21001?q=Veterans&g=060XX00US2502780405>. Accessed on August 5, 2024.

¹⁶ Town of Winchendon. (n.d.) Veteran’s Services. <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/veterans-services>. Accessed August 5, 2024.

¹⁷ American legion Winchendon (n.d.) <https://americanlegionwinchendon.org>. Accessed August 5, 2024.

Figure 4: Veteran Status in Winchendon, MA¹⁸

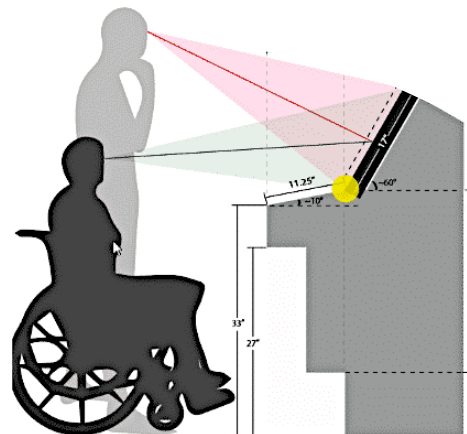


The Montachusett Veteran’s Outreach Center (MVOC) services over 700 Veteran’s annually, most of whom reside in the Montachusett Region including veterans housing. In addition to their many services, MVOC offers free Wi-Fi access for veterans at their Gardner office. Internet service is also available (free) to some residents and digital literacy classes are offered, however increased digital literacy programming is needed and desired by the organization and those they serve. A recent Digital Equity Veterans Focus Group meeting for the Montachusett Region was convened by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission as part of this planning process. The meeting was hosted by the MVOC and Veteran’s Services Officers from all Montachusett communities were invited to share their stories, ideas, needs, and visions for increased digital equity for the region’s veterans.

Cathy’s House, overseen by MVOC, is located in the town of Winchendon. Cathy’s House is a transitional / permanent-supportive housing option that offers a safe and healthy home environment for up to eight female-identifying residents in need of support services. Internet service is available (free) to residents and digital literacy classes are offered.¹⁹

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

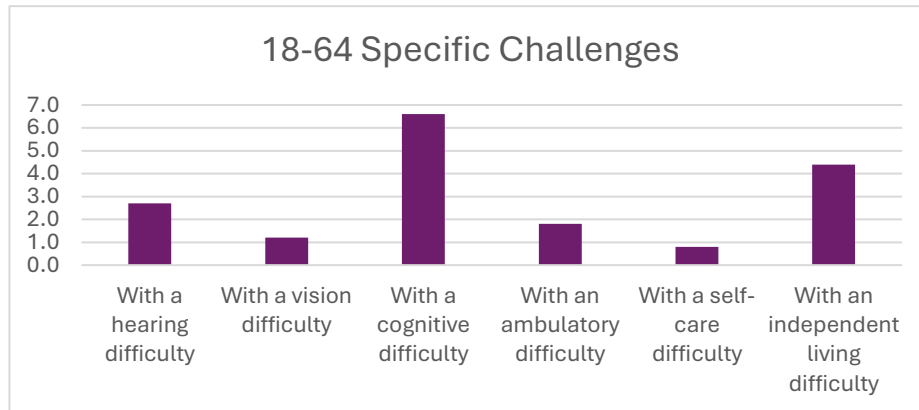
Winchendon most recently (May 2024) adopted a Commission on Disability as 15.4% of Winchendon’s households have at least one person reported to have a disability. Of those, 2.7% reported hearing difficulty, 1.2% reported as visually impaired, 6.6% reported a cognitive difficulty, 3.5% reported having ambulatory difficulties, 0.8% reported having self-care difficulty, and 4.4% reported independent living difficulty.



¹⁸ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US2502780405-winchendon-town-worcester-county-ma/>

¹⁹ Montachusett Veteran’s outreach Center (n.d.) Housing Programs. <https://www.veterans-outreach.org/services-and-programs/housing/>. Accessed August 5, 2024.

Figure 5: Specific Challenges²⁰



INDIVIDUALS WITH A LANGUAGE BARRIER

The Montachusett region has many individuals who are English learners and/or who have lower levels of literacy. Both groups of people are covered populations as individuals with a language barrier. Many people born outside of the US, some non-English speaking, have immigrated to the Montachusett Region over the course of many generations. More recently, an influx of non-English speakers including those who speak Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese have come to the Montachusett Region. Many of these individuals are also part of covered households who experience lower levels of income. Due to this recent influx, digital literacy surveys and information on digital equity must be translated into a large variety of languages to get the most accurate understanding of the region’s digital equity needs. Winchendon is primarily a white, English-speaking town with 85.5 percent of its residents only speaking English, higher than the state average of 75 percent English speakers. Second to English is Asian & Pacific Islander languages, with 9.3% of residents speaking to them at home, and 4.1% speak Spanish.²¹ Winchendon consists mostly of white, English-speaking residents, however, the presence of a broad diversity of ethnicities and languages within the Montachusett Region make this an important population to consider, even in more rural English-speaking areas. Further, lower levels of education and, hence, literacy, are also more prevalent within the rural communities of the Montachusett Region, again, illustrating the importance of recognizing and considering the needs of this covered population.

INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF A RACIAL OR ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP

The resident population of Winchendon primarily identifies as white and white alone, 9,678 (88.7%) of residents identifying as white alone.²² The number of white residents has decreased over time, as

²⁰ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/disability-demographics-by-municipality/download>

²¹ <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALPL2020.P1?g=060XX00US2502780405>. Accessed on August 5, 2024.

²² <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALPL2020.P1?g=060XX00US2502780405>. Accessed on August 5, 2024.

people born outside of the US, some non-English speaking, and some of multiple ethnicities, have immigrated to the Montachusett Region over the course of many generations, primarily to more urban areas. More recently, there has been an increase of immigration of non-English speakers to nearby cities such as Gardner and Leominster, including those who speak Haitian-Creole, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese. The ethnic make-up of Winchendon is like that of surrounding towns but is slowly becoming more diverse, following the demographic changes of several more urban cities such as Fitchburg and Leominster who see a large part of their population falling under one of the eight Covered Populations.



INDIVIDUALS WHO PRIMARILY RESIDE IN A RURAL AREA

The term rural includes all population and territory outside of urban areas. The criteria now used to define urban areas represent a significant departure from previous decades. First, population density was the primary statistic used in the delineation of urban areas from 1960 to 2010. The U.S. Census Bureau now defines rural as what is not urban—that is, after defining individual urban areas, rural is what is left. Winchendon meets the definition of a “Rural Area”, making all residents part of a “covered population” group.

LOW INCOME INDIVIDUALS/HOUSEHOLDS

As noted, 11.1 % of all people in Winchendon live below the poverty line.²³ The closure of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) has had an enormous negative impact in the community as available internet service is cost prohibitive for many residents, as 39% of Winchendon’s households were enrolled in the program at the time of its closure. According to the Digital Equity Steering Committee, economic barriers have exacerbated challenges in accessing digital literacy training, internet service enrollment, and participation in education, business development, and government services and programs.

Environmental Justices Areas²⁴

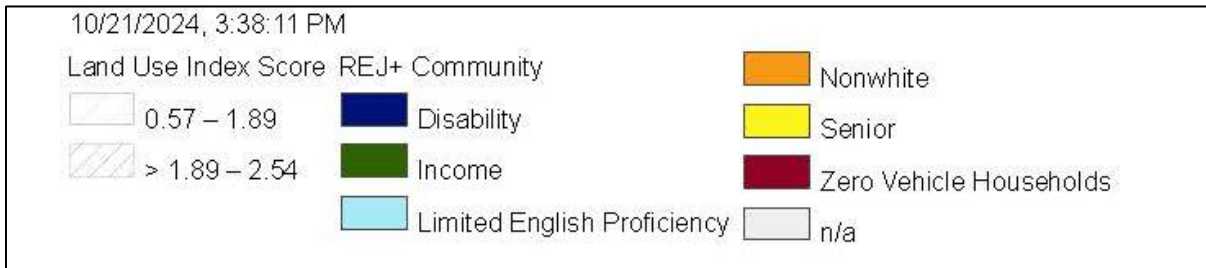
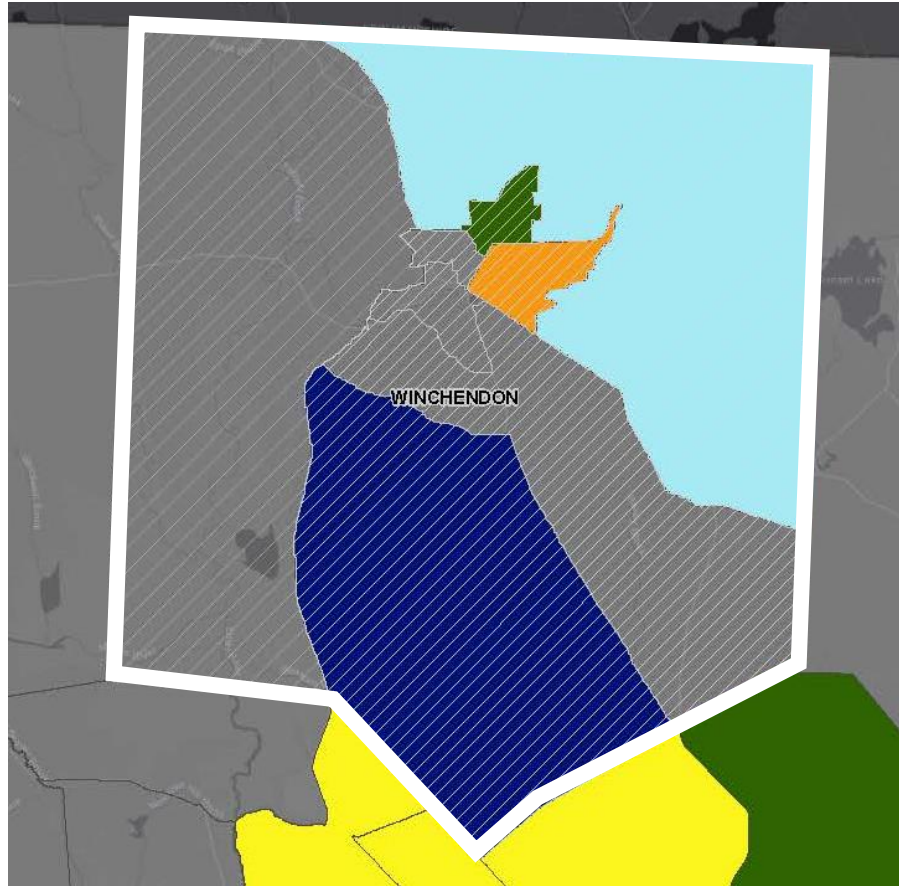
As figure 6 illustrates, Winchendon has Environmental Justice areas that are included in the covered populations of the Digital Equity Act. Specifically, covered households, limited english proficiency, aging individuals and racial minority individuals. As noted above, the termination of the ACP program

²³ U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.) Winchendon Town Profile. https://data.census.gov/profile/Winchendon_town_Worcester_County_Massachusetts?g=060XX00US2502780405. Accessed August 5, 2024.

²⁴ Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (June 2024). MassGIS Data: 2020 Environmental Justice Populations. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations>. Accessed August 6, 2024.

has had an adverse effect on many residents’ ability to afford internet service. Additionally, there is a need for translation devices in many of the Anchor Institutions as well as accessibility.

Figure 6: Environmental Justice Communities within Winchendon²⁵



4.3 PERCENTAGES OF COVERED POPULATIONS IN WINCHENDON

Figure 7 below shows a summary of the Town-wide percentages of the population for various indicators compiled by the US Census Bureau and Massachusetts office on Disability (MOD).

²⁵ https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/Transportation_Equity_Atlas/

Figure 7: Covered Populations in Winchendon, MA²⁶

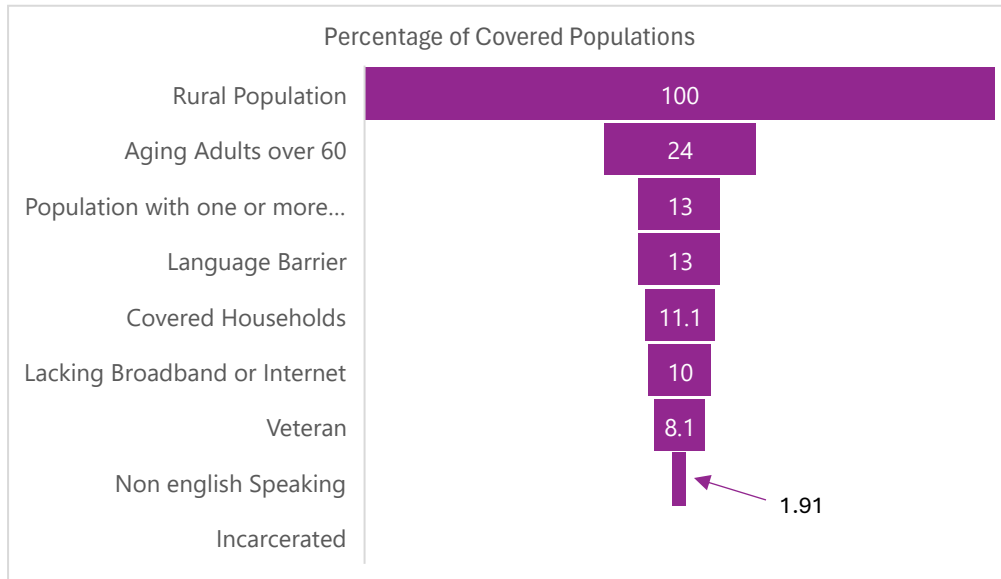
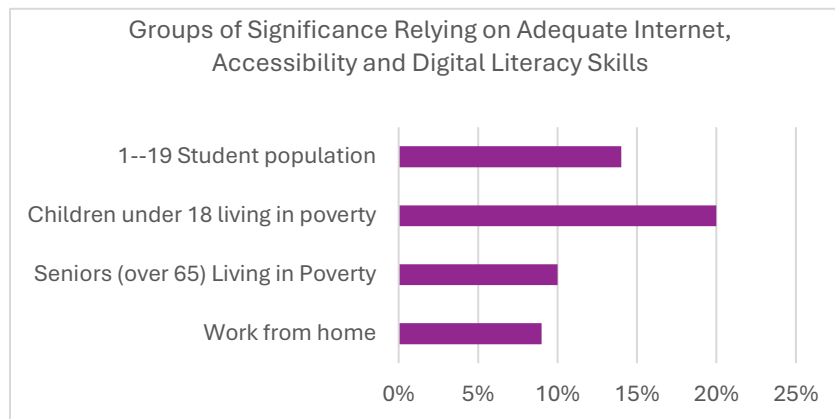


Figure 8 shows a summary of the percentages of the Winchendon population that may or may not be included in the covered populations but nonetheless rely on adequate internet, accessibility and digital literacy skills. The work from home category is the percentage of those in the over 18 workforces residing in Winchendon. Percentages are compiled by US Census Bureau information.

Figure 8 – Groups of Significance in Winchendon



4.4 INTERNET AVAILABILITY & DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

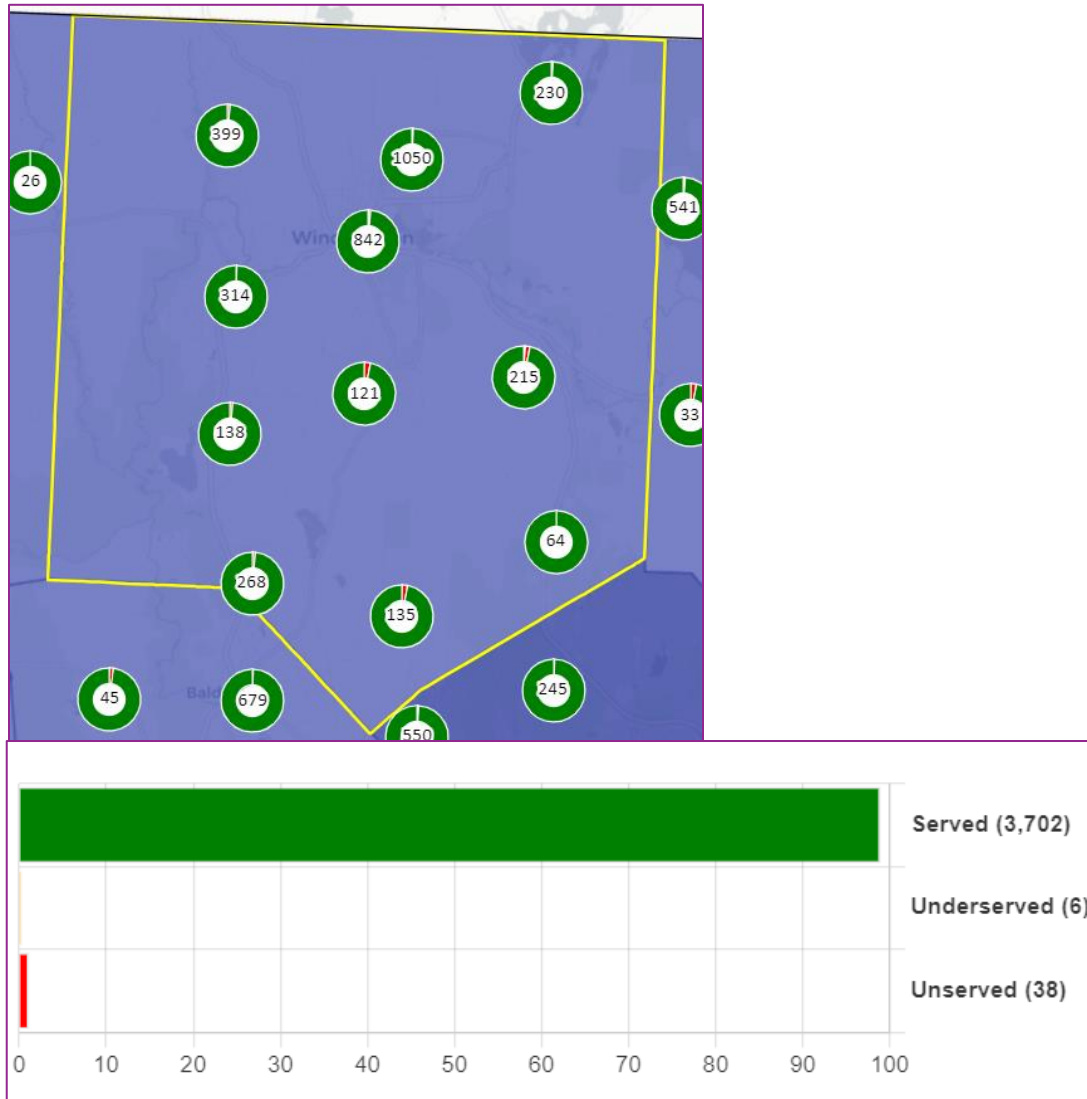
In October 2022, MBI completed the first statewide Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL) dataset to support broadband mapping and analysis in Massachusetts. BSLs are locations where wired (e.g., cable or fiber) or fixed wireless broadband service can or has been installed. The public version of the Massachusetts Broadband Map is part of an ongoing program to accurately map fixed broadband availability for each home, business and other serviceable locations in the

²⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/disability-demographics-by-municipality/download>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It shows individual broadband serviceable locations throughout the Commonwealth that are unserved or underserved.

According to the Massachusetts Broadband Map the Town of Winchendon has 3,746 Serviceable Locations, of which 3,702 (98.8%) are classified as “Served”, six (6; 0.16%) are classified as “Underserved”, and 38 (1.01%) are classified as “Unserved”. **Figure 9** shows the total distribution of serviceable locations, relative to their status as Served, Underserved, or Unserved.²⁷

Figure 9: Broadband Coverage Map, Winchendon, MA



Regarding **Internet Availability**, **Winchendon** has four (4) primary Internet Service Providers (ISP), as shown within **Table 1** below. Cable, Fiber, and Fixed Wireless internet are available, and satellite

²⁷ See footnote 2.

internet may also be available from various providers such as Dish, DirectTV, HughesNet, Viasat, and Starlink.²⁸

Table 1: Internet Availability in Winchendon, MA²⁹

Provider	Connection	Availability
Xfinity	Cable	98.2%
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	98.9%
Verizon	Fixed Wireless	14.3%
Spectrum	Fiber	1.1%
HUB66	Fiber	2.0%

Digital connectivity describes access to digital services, applications and online platforms. . Access to digital connectivity is central to participation in the digital economy and the digital transformation of government services. Digital Connectivity, Winchendon is comparable to statewide and national averages with slightly more households with internet and broadband, working from home, and using devices, as shown within **Table 3**, below. One major variation from statewide and national averages is the availability of Fiber-optic infrastructure. Fiber-optic, which can handle greater bandwidth and provide higher speeds, has 3.15% availability in Winchendon while the state and country have significantly higher rates, with over 50% availability each.³⁰

Table 2: Connectivity Index in Winchendon, MA

Winchendon Digital Connectivity Index			
Metric or Measure of Connectivity	Winchendon	Massachusetts	USA
Average Household Size	2.8	2.5	2.7
Work from Home Percent	11%	15%	12%
Households with Devices	94%	95%	94%
Households with Internet	90%	91%	89%
Households with Broadband Internet	83%	81%	73%
Broadband Internet Usage vs. Availability	84%	82%	74%
Fiber-optic Availability	3.15%	55.92%	58.45%
Source: ISP Reports (https://ispreports.org/) accessed December 2, 2024.			

Winchendon’s Digital Connectivity rating is slightly higher than the Massachusetts state score of 75/100, and both the Town and State have higher levels of broadband access than the United States as a whole. Winchendon’s relatively low ISP rating of a C- could be improved by increased fiber-optic availability.³¹

The shift to remote work brought about by Covid-19 has significantly increased the demand for higher internet speeds and greater bandwidth, of which may be improved in Winchendon through an expansion of fiber-optic infrastructure. The widespread adoption of supplementary “work-from-

²⁸ ISP Reports. 2024. High Speed Internet in Winchendon, MA. <https://ispreports.org/internet-service-providers-winchendon-ma/>. Accessed August 5, 2024.

²⁹ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/disability-demographics-by-municipality/download>

³⁰ See footnote 28.

³¹ See footnote 28.

home” applications such as online messaging and video chatting services resulted in a need for more devices and robust broadband. The popularity of these resources is not limited to the remote work setting, as traditional office workplaces have become reliant on the heightened communication capabilities they provide. This change underscores the importance of reliable internet connectivity in today's work environment, wherever it may be.

Since late 2022, national demand for Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs has increased exponentially, along with the subsequent demand and need for faster, more widely available broadband internet connectivity. The upward trend of these bandwidth-intensive internet uses will continue and require that communities increase their digital infrastructure to accommodate. With population growth, higher demand for broadband internet, and an increase in high bandwidth internet uses, improvement to infrastructure could better provide for the existing and future populations.

4.5 CRITICAL DIGITAL ASSETS & COMMUNITY ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

Critical Digital Assets and Community Anchor Institutions are critical public resources for emergency personnel, residents, students, workers, and visitors to access internet services and devices outside their homes and for the effective and efficient administration of government and civic life. The following outlines the communities’ digital assets and institutions and their current role in the availability of digital equity resources and the provision of public internet and digital literacy programs and services.

4.5.1 Critical Digital Assets

The term “Critical Digital Asset” means a digital computer, communication system, or network that is a component of a critical Information System, including assets that perform Safety-Sensitive and/or Emergency Planning (SSEP) functions. Such assets (facilities- and systems-based infrastructure) are often critical to emergency response and public safety and provide support to protect, serve, or administer important government and public safety functions. Critical Digital Assets sometimes provide a pathway to other critical systems or a support system asset whose failure or compromise could result in a threat to public safety. A listing of the primary Critical Digital Assets for Winchendon is shown in **Table 3**:

Table 3: Critical Digital Assets in Winchendon, MA

Critical Digital Assets - Winchendon		
Facility Type	Organization	Location
Town Hall*	Winchendon Town Hall/EMS	109 Front St
Public Safety*	Fire Department/EMS	405 Central Street
Public Safety*	Police Department	80 Central Street
Public service	Public Works Garage	101 Glenallen Street
School*	Winchendon School District	3 Memorial Dr (Murdock)
Heating/Cooling Shelter	Clark Memorial YMCA	155 Central Street

*Denotes Critical Digital Asset connected to the Town Hall via fiberoptic network

4.4.2 Community Anchor Institutions

The term “Community Anchor Institution” as defined within the Digital Equity Act of 2021 means a public school, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a state library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization. Below in **Table 4** is a list of the primary Community Anchor Institutions located within the Town of Winchendon.

Table 4: Community Anchor Institutions in Winchendon, MA

Community Anchor Institutions - Winchendon		
Facility Type	Organization	Location
Library*	Beals Memorial Library	50 Pleasant Street
Public Housing	Winchendon Housing Authority	108 Ipswich Drive
Social Services	Winchendon Community Action Center	5 Summer Drive
Council on Aging *	Winchendon Senior Center	52 Murdock Avenue
Public School*	Murdock High/Middle School	3 Memorial Drive
Public School*	Toy Town Elementary School	175 Grove Street
Public School	Memorial Elementary School	32 Elmwood Road
Private School	The Winchendon School	172 Ash Street

*Denotes Community Anchor Institution connected to the Town Hall via fiberoptic network

Figure 11 on the following page shows the locations of all Critical Digital Assets and Community Anchor Institutions located within the Town of Winchendon, as listed in the tables above.

4.6 PUBLIC BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

4.7.1 Fiberoptic Network

In 2023, Winchendon was awarded a Municipal Fiber Grant award in the amount of \$189,350 for the creation of a new fiber network. The Municipal Fiber Grant program is a competitive grant program that will support the closing of critical gaps that exist in municipal networks. The provision of fiber in communities allows for centralized management of IT infrastructure, including an enterprise approach to network monitoring, cybersecurity, records management, and backup and recovery. A cohesive municipal network also creates opportunities to gain economies of scale by aggregating internet bandwidth purchases and the associated security infrastructure. Winchendon's Emergency services, Library, Senior Center and the Winchendon schools are now all tied to the Town Hall through the network.

5

5 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The assessment of community needs was not limited only to internet accessibility, but also included an evaluation of the region’s digital literacy opportunities, and the communities’ level of digital literacy or knowledge, skills, abilities, and importantly, comfort levels, and willingness to adopt broadband internet and digital technologies. Community needs were assessed generally, but with specific regard to the status and needs of covered populations.



5.1 THE PATH TO DIGITAL EQUITY IN WINCHENDON

The Existing Conditions Analysis in Chapter 4 outlines the assets in the community and illustrates some of the challenges the community faces concerning availability, affordability, and adoption. However, Winchendon has many mechanisms in place to begin to bridge the digital divide.

5.1.2 Digital Equity SWOT Analysis

The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis lists those mechanisms currently in place and some of the challenges the town faces when devising sustainable strategies to move their digital equity efforts forward.

STRENGTHS

- The implementation of the **Community Master Plan** calls for town officials to recognize that times have changed and “By embracing the changes and making them work for us, we can create even greater community engagement, coordinate existing efforts and foster a more cohesive community.”
- Awareness of the Digital Gap through **Goal CE 3** of the community Master Plan: “Make Broad band available and affordable to all town residents.
- The awareness of the economic impact of reliable internet service through **Goal ED5.8** of the Master Plan: “Pursue the installation of reliable high-speed internet to all businesses home businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public spaces.”
- Highly engaged Library, Senior Center and CAC employees committed to serving the needs of the covered populations of the Digital Equity Act., including cross communication between their facilities. **Goal CE 2.2.**
- Secured grant funding to enhance the internet between town hall, schools and emergency services.
- Winchendon HEAL, Community Heart & Soul, and Youth Changemakers initiatives that engage community stakeholders.
- Newly formed Youth Coalition and Disability Commission to assure the needs of the youth and disabled persons in Winchendon are met.

WEAKNESSES

- Budgetary and staffing constraints
- Lack of competitive internet providers
- Localized lack of availability to adequate and reliable internet services due primarily to cost, lack of digital devices and digital literacy issues.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Engage the Youth Change Makers to serve the community as **Digital Equity Champions/Digital Navigators** promoting and serving as advocates and trainers of digital literacy programs for covered populations.
- Promote intergenerational and multi-cultural relationships through digital literacy programs
- Expand on existing, vibrant programs and active participation by covered populations at the Winchendon Senior Center, Beals Memorial Library and the CAC
- Traditional “downtown” area in the process of revitalization efforts that can include installation of a mesh “internet” type service or alternative that covers the immediate area to enhance economic development options.

THREATS

- Affordability – High cost of internet service and devices
- Some covered populations sentiment towards digital literacy & adoption due to level of fear of security and lack of comfort using devices.

5.2 PUBLIC INPUT

5.2.1 Statewide Digital Equity Survey Availability

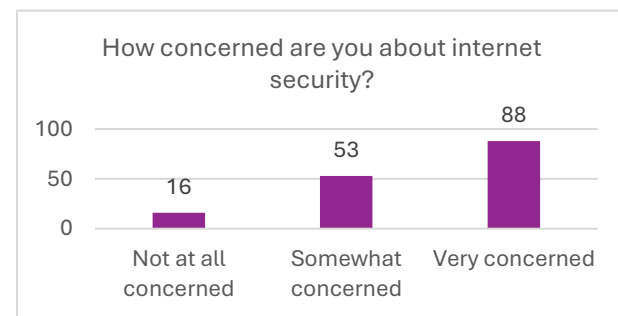
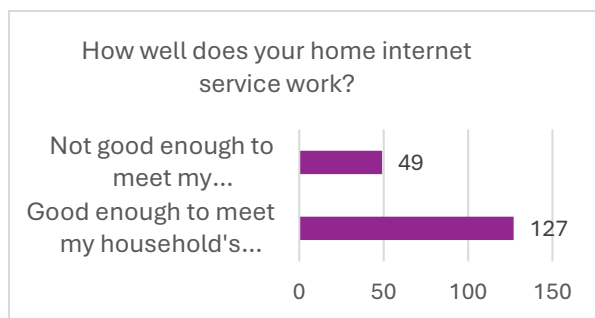
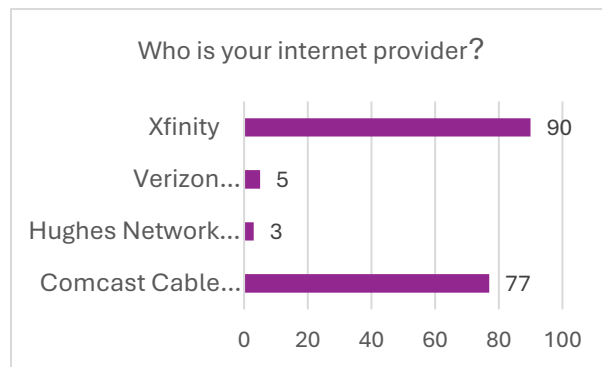
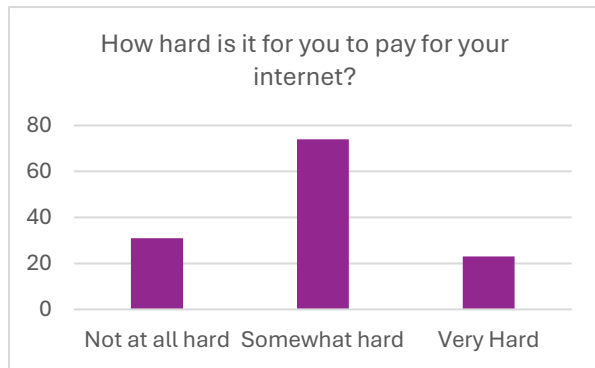
The Senior Center requested that the Statewide Digital Equity survey be translated to Turkish and Haitian Creole. Staff members from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, Translation Center completed this task. Fliers with the QR code for the state survey were distributed to working group members and displayed around town. For those without internet or device access, hard copy surveys and survey boxes were placed at:

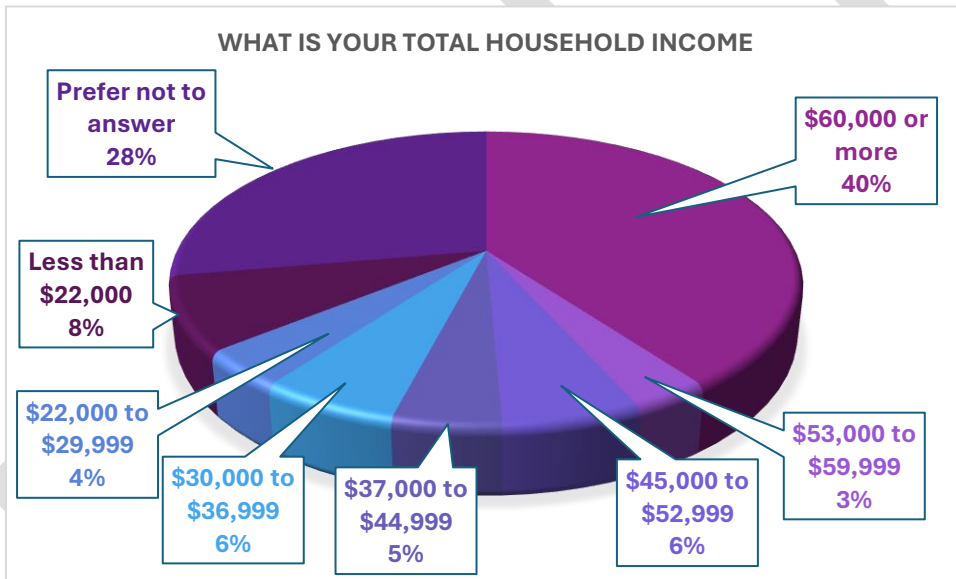
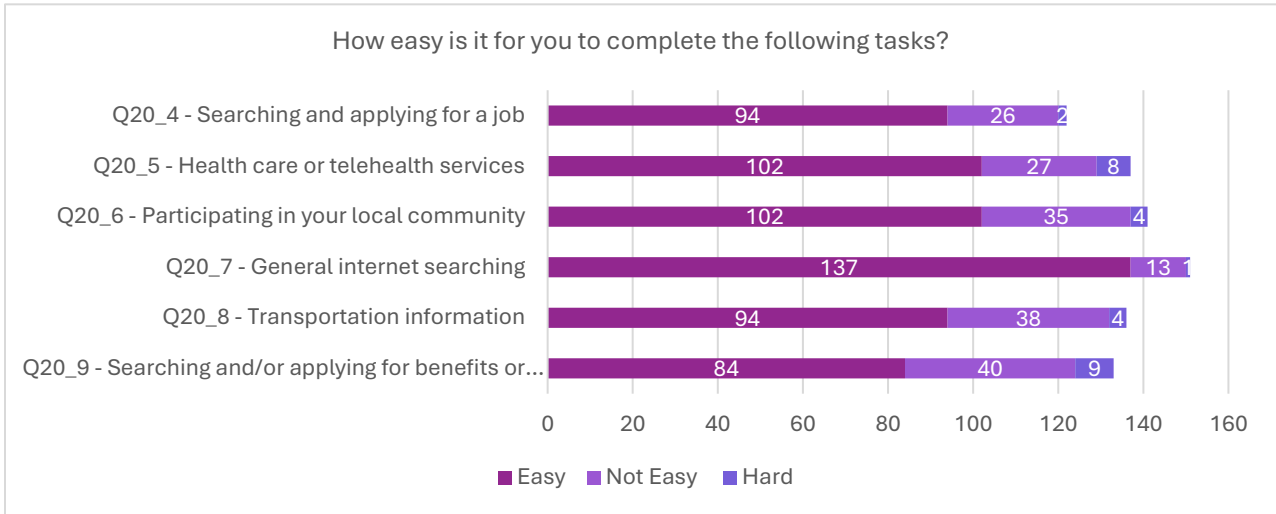
- The Town Hall
- The Senior Center
- Beals Memorial Library
- The Clark YMCA
- Pop up event: Winchendon Founders Day, June 8, 2024

10 hard copy (all English) surveys were collected via this means.

5.2.2. Statewide Survey Results – Sample

182 People from Winchendon took the statewide survey. A sample of results can be found below.





Xfinity/Comcast is the major supplier of internet service in Winchendon and about 2/3 of respondents find that the service works good enough to meet their needs. As expected, many survey respondents are concerned about internet security and are having difficulty paying for their internet service. The economic hardship may account for the 10% of residents in Winchendon that do not have an internet subscription. Respondents have the most difficulty searching and applying for benefits for themselves or family members.

5.3 COMMUNITY NEEDS

Winchendon's needs are based on interviews, focus groups, meetings and survey responses. The following illustrates what digital resources each Anchor Institution listed provides and what resources are needed to improve digital access, affordability and adoption.

5.3.1 Aging Adults

Winchendon Senior Center

The **Winchendon Senior Center** provides many services to the community and serves over 100 seniors weekly. The mission of the Winchendon Council on Aging that is in the Senior Center is to enrich the lives of the community's senior population by providing educational programs, recreational activities, referral and social services assistance and to advocate for our seniors while educating the community of the needs of its elderly. The Center helps over 10 % of Winchendon's population. The Center currently has 2 computers that are available for those who know how to use them. The Center also helps Senior navigate the online process to apply for lifeline Support.³²



The Senior population in Winchendon needs assistance with digital literacy as many do not know how to use devices. Common issues that arise with the seniors are difficulties with using devices particularly their hand-held smart phone devices and accessing online government assistance programs. Smartphones are the senior's primary digital device, however a barrier to getting their device is the high cost.

Key actions to improve Digital Equity:

1. There is need for additional resources at the Senior Center & the CAC, such as devices, training and financial assistance for internet services and devices.
2. Devices that are ADA compliant to mitigate difficulties
3. Formal training classes are needed at the Senior Center that are reoccurring because new users need to have the training reinforced if they do not utilize digital technology daily. More informal, self-guided digital literacy training is needed at the CAC as there are many different types of users at varying degrees of ability.
4. Resources for improved communication with the Town
5. ILAP, live translation tablets

³² <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/>

5.3.2 Veterans

Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center

Many veterans lack internet access due to affordability, trust, and digital literacy barriers. Additionally, although most veterans have mobile data, many are concerned about scams and privacy. The lack of feeling secure online discourages veterans from accessing the internet at home. 75% of veterans have some form of internet access, however many struggle with the cost and lack of digital skills needed to navigate the online world. There is an emphasis on the need for accessible digital literacy programs held in familiar, comfortable locations, ideally promoted through veteran networks. Locations such as libraries are crucial access points to get Wi-Fi and digital help. But many of these places lack privacy or require appointments that act as barriers for veterans trying to access digital resources. Furthermore, veterans primarily use the internet for benefits, social connections, and entertainment.

Keys actions to improve Digital Equity:

1. Workspaces are needed to provide access to the internet for various services where privacy can be maintained.
2. Cyber-Security training is imperative as many Veterans do not utilize the internet for fear of safety and cyber security concerns.
3. Affordable internet options and devices are needed as many Veterans cannot afford to pay for internet services, nor can they afford a device. This is vital as many Veteran's programs and benefits are accessible only through the internet.

5.3.3 Covered Households & Families

Housing Authority

The **Winchendon Housing Authority** has 3 site locations, all of which have varying degrees of digital needs. Currently, there are 4 Chromebooks that the Templeton and Winchendon (Ipswich location) housing authorities share. The Ipswich location has one public computer that is used strictly for housing-related tasks. The Housing Authority also has hot spots at the community building, but they are not for lease.



Wi-Fi is offered at the Ipswich location, which is good but there is a need for more reliable and faster service. Individual housing units pay for their own internet; however, residents would like to see a program like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) come back. Moreover, the residents struggle with basic digital questions. This happens often enough to the point where additional tech support at the housing authority would be necessary and helpful. In addition to basic phone questions, the Housing Authority also assists with the client's cyber security needs. When talking about internet safety and cybersecurity as a concern at the organization, the elderly have difficulty then come to the office for help to fix it.

Key actions to improve Digital Equity:

1. The Housing Authority needs someone to come in and teach online safety and how to properly install and use security software and teach the residents digital literacy.
2. The Wi-Fi connection at the Ipswich location is good, but there is a need for faster speeds and more reliable service.
3. The Winchendon Housing Authority used to go through the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which was very popular, now individual housing units must pay for their own internet connection. Financial assistance/programs are needed.
4. Workstations and affordable digital equipment at some of the Winchendon locations.³³
5. ILAP, live translation tablets

Beals Memorial Library

Currently, the **Beals Memorial Library** offers free public Wi-Fi, however, it covers the lower half of the library the best. During covid people outside trying to connect to the Wi-Fi without going inside so there were efforts to expand the range of the connection to the street. For a year there used to be 10 hot spots offered with one set aside for staff, but the library had issues of theft. Presently the library is down to 2 hot spots that can be loaned out. The library offers 1 on 1 computer help by appointment; however, additional digital literacy training would be helpful.



A lot of the help that patrons need is either with their handheld device or basic and repetitive computer questions.

Key actions to improve Digital Equity:

- Reoccurring Digital Literacy classes are needed at the library to ensure that users are comfortable with using a device and navigating the internet.
- Faster, more reliable internet connection that extends to outside the physical location and to the second floor.
- Private workspaces that are equipped with devices on the second floor.
- Additional Hot Spots are needed as they are popular with those who cannot afford internet service.
- ILAP, live translation tablets

³³ Pearl Drive has been identified as the best location to set up workstations.

The Winchendon Community Action Center (CAC)



The **Winchendon Community Action Committee (CAC)** serves a diverse population of people including individuals with disabilities, low-income residents and seniors. The Winchendon CAC is dedicated to building a collaborative network of community members and partners to enhance the well-being of the community, envisioning a Winchendon where every individual has the opportunity and tools to thrive.

The center is home to Winchendon Works Community Hub, and offers services to over 300 families, averaging 800 monthly visits. The Youth Changemakers are also located in the CAC. Smartphones are the primary device for some however, they are cost prohibitive for most. There are limited devices available for clients to work on resumes, job applications, and apply for government assistance programs. The internet is described as ok but could be better. Likewise, there is a need for more laptops to build an internet café, improved internet connectivity, ILAP tablets for live translation, and hybrid meeting options. Additional resources the CAC would like to provide include digital literacy classes.

Key actions to improve Digital Equity:

- Adequate and reliable internet service
- Devices for client use while at the Center
- Private workspace and devices for wellness/psychologist's services
- Digital Literacy Resources
- ILAP, live translation tablets
- Provide expanded internet service in an outdoor area to provide internet outside of operating hours and to host public events.

Winchendon Public Schools

The **Winchendon Public Schools** are a critical digital Asset (CAI). While primarily serving students, the school system sees digital literacy of the adults (parents & guardians) in the house as a driving factor to overall literacy issues. There are access issues where there are some areas in Winchendon without affordable access or no access at all. The school system offers classes related to computers, digital skills, and programs but expresses the need for additional funding for equipment and staff to keep the level of services and programs at post COVID expectations. The



school offers digital safety programs but would like Individuals themselves to take the training more seriously and to be more conscious of the world around them.

Key actions to improve Digital Equity:

- Additional Resources for digital learning in the classroom
- Adequate internet for students outside of schools
- Additional devices of all types
- ILAP, live translation tablets

5.3.4 Digital Equity Core Group - Needs and Actions Outline

After reviewing the existing conditions and SWOT analysis, the Main points from the core group needs and actions meeting were as follows:

- Update the Town of Winchendon website (incorporate ADA and audio-visual impairment improvements)
- App for booking rides (senior transit)
- App for community resources and events (inclusive of digital/internet resources)
- Library hotspots are T-Mobile (Verizon is not reliable/poor connectivity in many parts of town)
- Greater need for translation tablets
- Schools have free outdoor Wi-Fi in school, around buildings, and at football fields, but no covered outdoor workstations or charging stations
- CAC, Library, and/or Senior Center have an interest in laptops (or tablets?)
- CAC, Library, and/or Senior Center have an interest in “pod” style workstations
- CAC and Senior Center have interest in outdoor workstations/charging stations (solar powered options are available and provide flexibility for location and provide lower cost of ownership through free power)
- Library interested in additional hotspots
- Library has limited outdoor Wi-Fi due to stone/masonry walls; There is interest in extending wifi to an outdoor workspace
- CAC could use a kiosk style workstation with laptop with privacy for clients to use

5.4 Digital Equity Champions

Winchendon has a system of digital equity champions, including leaders, instructors and technical experts working with the Beals Memorial Library, the Winchendon Senior Center, the Winchendon CAC, and the Winchendon Public Schools. Many of these Institutions serve as Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) or Critical Digital Assets (CDA) and employ at least one digital equity champion.

The Winchendon School system: **Bill Clinton**, Director of Technology who serves as the digital equity champion and school employee **Jonathan Landman** serves as the digital equity advocate.

The Winchendon Senior Center and CAC: Executive Director, **Miranda Jennings** facilitates digital equity resources and acts as a digital literacy advocate.

The Beals Library: Manuel King, Library Director serves as a digital champion with employee **Alexis Chanthachack** serving as a digital literacy champion for all patrons needing DE assistance.

The Winchendon Housing Authority, Daria Marcano-Ferrer, Resident Services Coordinator, serves as a Digital Literacy advocate.

5.5 Priorities

It was noted in several interviews and cannot be overstated, that internet and device access are **crucial for Seniors and Veterans** to access telemedicine, financial services and banking, and other online services that are now part of daily life. For medical patients and people of all ages with disabilities, but especially for people represented in multiple covered populations, such as aging adults with disabilities, aging adults who are veterans, or aging veterans who have one or more disabilities, etc., digital equity through enhanced digital literacy and advocacy is essential to successful and comfortable living.

Further, older adults who have mobility or transportation limitations that make it difficult for them to visit healthcare providers' offices, telemedicine—the provision of healthcare remotely using ICTs—offers a convenient means of accessing healthcare services, but only if they are knowledgeable and comfortable using such technologies.

There are currently barriers to healthcare access in the region that affect residents of all ages. More advocacy and equity in digital access through affordability, availability, and adoptability, and therefore better digital access to healthcare for aging adults is of utmost importance, especially considering the growing popularity of web-based platforms for provider communication, medical records, scheduling, and receiving test results. Through digital equity stakeholder interviews, leaders in local institutions and organizations, the town noted their need to address barriers by providing access to internet services, devices and digital literacy education.

Other priorities include:

- **Senior Center:** Laptop computers are needed for both staff and client use
- **Library:** Additional Hot Spot Devices
Additional Laptop computers
- **CAC:** Laptop and private workspace for client/staff
Mesh Internet Service for the outdoor area
- **Schools:** Additional ILAP, live translation tablets
- **Winchendon Housing Authority:** Spam software, digital training for residents

6

6 DIGITAL EQUITY VISION, GOALS, ACTIONS & NEXT STEPS

Broadband internet accessibility and connectivity issues in Winchendon are related to various factors, including gaps in reliable internet service, diverse socioeconomic demographics affecting income and opportunity, higher-than-average services costs limiting access and affecting affordability, convenient access to affordable devices and technology. However, as outlined in the SWOT analysis, Winchendon has the framework in place to build off that can serve as an avenue towards bridging the digital gap.

6.1 DIGITAL EQUITY VISION

“To recognize that times have changed and by embracing the changes and making them work for us, we can create even greater community engagement, coordinate existing efforts and foster a more cohesive community.”

Winchendon Master Plan

Communication & Engagement

Background

Citizen participation is key to ensuring that the Master Plan creates the community that it envisions. Unfortunately, we have recently lost most of the traditional ways for keeping people up to date in what is happening in Winchendon. The loss of the printed Courier has been particularly hard.

At the same time, important new communication channels have opened. The cable community access channel makes it easier for citizens (with cable) to stay informed. Cellphones and social media provide untapped potential for better two-way communications between and among citizens and town officials. Most recently, the pandemic has caused everyone to think differently about how and what to communicate and has surfaced new ways of communicating via Zoom meetings and webinars.

The implementation of the Master Plan calls for our town officials to recognize that times have changed. By embracing the changes and making them work for us, we can create even greater community engagement, coordinate existing efforts and foster a more cohesive community.

Communication & Engagement Goals

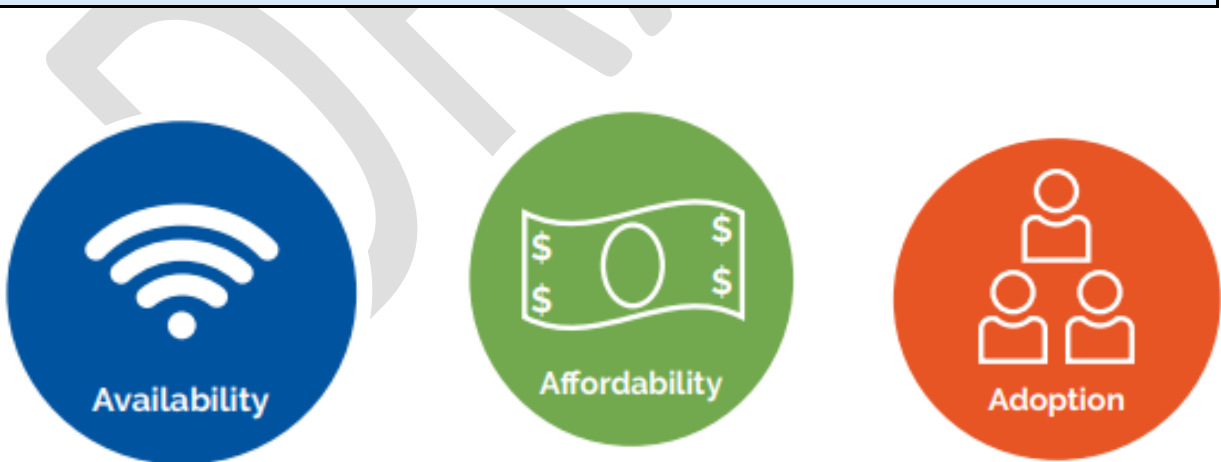
- CE 1: Adopt new methods for keeping the community aware of and involved in in Town government using technology where appropriate
- CE 2: Adopt new methods to improve communication across town departments and boards using technology where appropriate
- CE 3: Make broadband available and affordable to all town residents
- CE 4: Increase the level of citizen participation in Town government



29



6.2 DIGITAL EQUITY GOALS

1. Organize and advocate for improved internet.
2. Promote existing Public Wi-Fi Availability in and around public facilities.
3. Create Digital Navigators program with staff at each Anchor Institution.
4. Promote Wi-Fi Availability in housing complexes.
5. Create additional public Wi-Fi availability in and around public facilities.
6. Expand/improve Public Wi-Fi Availability in the downtown business area.
7. Expand "Hot Spot" lending programs.
8. Provide adequate spaces for connectivity in Anchor institutions.
9. Provide Financial resources for connectivity.
10. Promote existing and offer new one-to-one in-person support.
11. Explore digital navigation models and resources.
12. Provide Access to additional Devices.
13. Develop a digital equity network to strengthen public service, awareness and participation.
14. Increase the level of citizen participation in Town government.






6.3 DIGITAL EQUITY IMPLEMENTATION/ACTION FOCUS AREAS



Actions outlined in this plan and displayed in 6.3 Digital Equity Action Plan, were devised using the following seven (7) project focus areas outlined in the Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program.

	<p>Staff Capacity for Digital Equity</p> <p>A full- or part-time staff person to oversee, project manager, and execute municipal digital equity activities in coordination with municipal leadership, various municipal departments, stakeholders, and residents.</p>
	<p>Wi-Fi Access and Innovative Connectivity Technology</p> <p>Assessment, design, and establishment of appropriate technology solutions to provide in-unit access to the internet for residents living in affordable housing and/or low-income neighborhoods.</p>
	<p>Public Space Modernization</p> <p>Improvements to inadequate broadband infrastructure and digital use in public spaces, such as libraries, community centers, senior centers, educational facilities, workforce training locations, and commercial corridors.</p>
	<p>Connectivity for Economic Hardship</p> <p>Provision of Wi-Fi cellular hot spots to individuals lacking stable housing where they are unable to have a fixed broadband internet subscription.</p>
	<p>Digital Literacy</p> <p>Provision of training programs to improve digital literacy and skills to use devices, online resources, and other digital tools. Literacy program curricula and models may vary based on learner needs and familiarity with devices and the internet, such as in-person group instruction, asynchronous online instruction, or one-on-one training.</p>
	<p>Device Distribution and Refurbishment</p> <p>Provision of new or used internet-connected devices, such as laptops, tablets, and smart phones, to distribute to target populations.</p>
	<p>Education, Outreach, and Adoption</p> <p>Enrollment of eligible residents in discounted options for broadband, devices, and digital skills. Outreach may include workshops, call center phone banking, door-to-door outreach, online/printed communications, and public service announcements.</p>


6.4 DIGITAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

Category	Goal	Action	Champion	Funding/Program
Staff Capacity for Digital Equity 	Organize and advocate for improved internet.	Create a platform for residents to report internet challenges and develop resources or direct residents to available outside resources to address issues.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Strategy CE3.4 in Community Master Plan	N/A
	Promote existing Public WiFi Availability in and around public facilities.	Create an Application (AP) and /or a map and brochure of locations where free, public Wi-Fi is available.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal CE3.4 in Community Master Plan	Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, (AP may become an ongoing expense)Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship, Point 32 Health Foundation funding
	Create Digital Navigators program with staff at each Anchor Institution	Train town staff on digital literacy training technique	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Strategy CE3.4 in Community Master Plan	N/A
WI-Fi Access and Innovative Technology 	Promote WiFi Availability in housing complexes.	Install improved wifi in apartments and common areas.	Winchendon Housing Authority, CAC, See Goal CE3.4 in Community Master Plan	Residential Retrofit program, MAPC Apartment WiFi program, Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship, Point 32 Health Foundation funding
	Create additional public wifi availability in and around public facilities.	<u>Install public charging stations</u> , outside internet "café" type spaces, and expand internet service into parking areas.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE3.3 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
	Expand/improve, Public WiFi Availability in the downtown business area.	Explore avenues to provide "mesh" type or other alternatives that will improve internet service in the downtown business area.	Town, Economic Development Committee (If formed), WRA See Goal ED5.8 of Community Master Plan	Community One Stop for Growth program, Municipal Fiber Grant Program
	Expand "Hot Spot" lending program	Expand "Hot Spot" lending program in the Library and educate staff and community organizations about their existence.	Community Anchor Institution, Library See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
Public Space Modernization 	Provide adequate spaces for connectivity in Anchor institutions.	Provide space(s) for privacy or install a "pod" type structure for when a user is participating in a sensitive matter.	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library,CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, AARP's Community Challenge grant

6.3 DIGITAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN (CONT)

Category	Goal	Action	Champion	Funding/Program
Connectivity for Economic Hardship 	Provide Financial resources for connectivity	Provide list of financial assistance resources for internet service for those who qualify.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE1.3, CE3 of Community Master Plan	Lead for America American Connection Corps
		Create programs similar to fuel assistance for financial assistance for internet service for those who qualify.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, CAC) Communications Committee. See Goal CE1.3, CE3 of Community Master Plan	Point 32 Health Foundation funding,AARP's Community Challenge grant, Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship
Digital Literacy & Safety 	Promote existing and offer new one-to one in-person support	Create a map and brochure of locations that free, public Wi-Fi is available and when/where digital literacy courses and support are available. Create additional avenues of support as needed.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE1.3, CE3 of Community Master Plan	Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, (AP may become an ongoing expense)Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship, Point 32 Health Foundation funding
	Explore digital navigation models and resources	Introduce a Digital Navigator program to provide technical support and build a stronger digital equity network	Community Service Program - HS, Youth Changemakers See Goal CE1.1 in Community Master Plan	Lead for America American Connection Corps, Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp)
Device Distribution and Refurbishment 	Provide access to additional devices.	Provide additional Chrome Books and Lap tops for loan programs.	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library,CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
		Provide translation tablets to all Anchor Institutions and Digital Assets	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library,CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
		Provide additional desktop computers for use in the Senior Center, Housing Authority properties, and CAC.	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program

6.3 DIGITAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN (CONT)

Category	Goal	Action	Champion	Funding/Program
Education, Outreach and Adoption 	Develop a digital equity network to strengthen public service, awareness and participation	Create an Application(AP) and/or a map and brochure of locations that free, public Wi-Fi is available and when/where digital literacy courses and support are available.	Communications Committee See Goal CE1.1 & CE 1.3 , CE4.4 in Community Master Plan	Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, (AP may become an ongoing expense)Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship, Point 32 Health Foundation funding
		Offer workshops and educational campaigns to improve residents' understanding of digital terminology and internet safety	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE1.1 of Community Master Plan	The Hybrid Programming for Councils on Aging Grant, AARP's Community Challenge grant
		Offer workshops and educational campaigns translated to other languages for ESL or non english speakers to improve residents' understanding of digital terminology and internet safety.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE1.1 of Community Master Plan	The Hybrid Programming for Councils on Aging Grant, AARP's Community Challenge grant
	Increase the level of citizen participation in Town government	Provide adequate equipment to broadcast Government proceedings and provide for active resident participation.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal 4 in Community Master Plan	The Hybrid Programming for Councils on Aging Grant, AARP's Community Challenge grant
		Provide updated software to all Anchor Institutions/departments to streamline processes and ensure accessibility. Include Anti Spam software where necessary.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal 4 in Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
		Update the Town Website to include fillable forms and ADA accessibility measures	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal 4 in Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program

6.4 NEXT STEPS

6.4.1 Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program

Winchendon can and should leverage numerous state and federal funding opportunities to support digital equity initiatives to bridge the Town's digital divide. These funding programs target critical implementation areas of digital equity planning, including workforce development, digital literacy education, device distribution, broadband adoption, infrastructure, and outreach.

Municipalities participating in this program may select one or more of the focus areas for implementation. Like planning activities in the economic development field, if appropriate, it may be beneficial to adopt a regional approach to digital equity implementation to enable resource sharing, coordination and achieve economies of scale. At present, MBI has set aside a total \$56,603.77 that the Town of Winchendon is eligible to apply for to implement actions outlined in this plan. However, as pointed out below, the Town can apply for up to \$100,000.

6.4.2 Implementation Grant Program Overview³⁴

The intent of the Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program is to enable municipalities who need funding to mobilize, start-up, and implement digital equity activities locally to access a one-time grant up to \$100,000 per municipality to execute a project (or projects) defined in their Digital Equity Plan or related document that MBI deems of sufficient standard. Project implementation will increase access and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Municipalities are strongly encouraged to utilize their planning consultants from the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program to define a project (or set of projects) scope and budget for implementation. Upon approval from MBI, municipalities may start project implementation and will be accountable to MBI's reporting requirements, which vary by proposed focus area(s).

Specifically, the Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program will accomplish three goals:

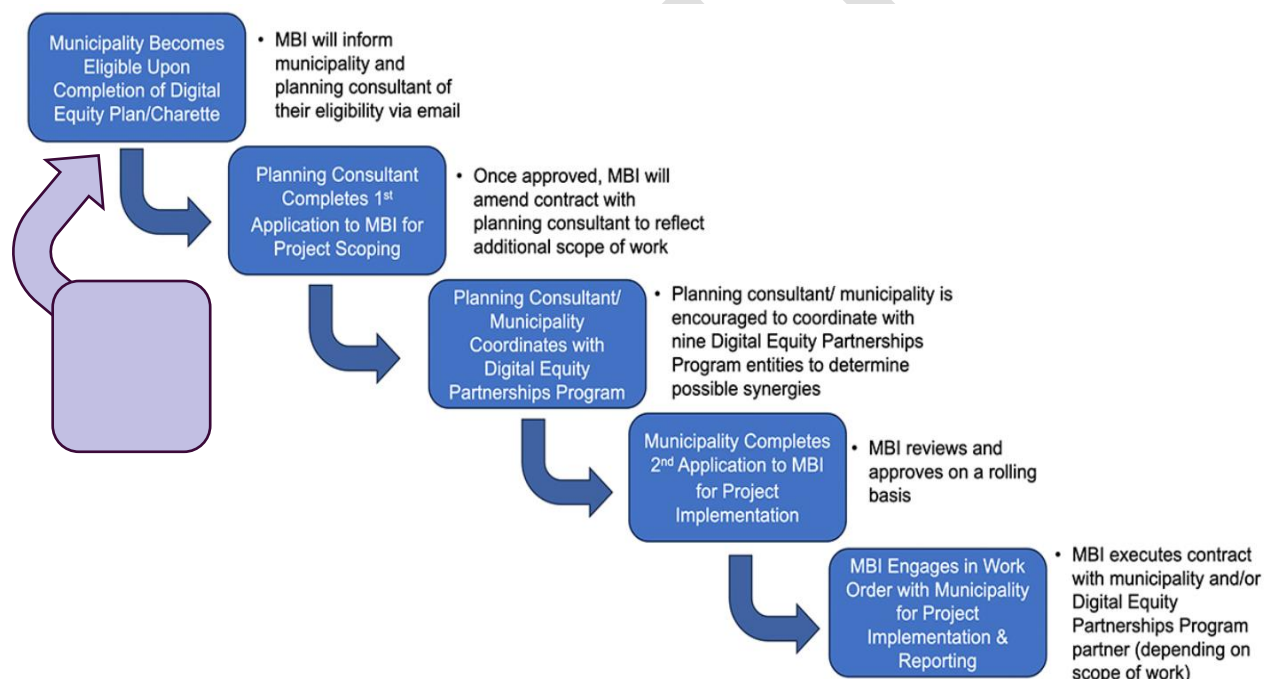
1. Enable municipalities to make local digital equity investments that will increase access, adoption, and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Transition municipalities from the planning to implementation phase by providing funds to execute a project (or projects) indicated in their Digital Equity

³⁴ Overview from <https://broadband.masstech.org/digital-equity-implementation>

Plan, Digital Equity Planning Charette, or pre-existing plan deemed sufficient by MBI.

3. Encourage collaboration and synergy with the Digital Equity Partnerships Program, which includes statewide and regional grantees with high capacity for digital equity work.

6.4.3 Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Grant Process



6.5 DIGITAL EQUITY RESOURCES

6.5.1 Statewide Digital Equity Planning

At the State level, MBI will develop a Statewide Digital Equity Plan for Massachusetts, integrating efforts conducted under the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program. Massachusetts has received funding under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, one of three grant programs established by the \$2.75 billion federal Digital Equity Act (DEA). The DEA aims to “promote the achievement of digital equity, support digital inclusion activities, and build capacity for efforts by States relating to the adoption of broadband by residents of those states.” MBI anticipates leveraging the statewide plan as a

framework for implementing DEA State Digital Equity Grant funds toward future planning efforts.³⁵

Digital Literacy Initiative

Establish and implement digital literacy training programs to ensure that target populations have the requisite skills to use devices, online resources, and digital tools. The Beals Memorial Library, Senior Center and the CAC can partner with MBI to expand digital literacy training opportunities.

6.5.2 Digital Equity Programs

Wi-Fi Access Initiative

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Apartment Wi-Fi Program works with municipalities, public housing authorities, and affordable housing developers to build Wi-Fi networks for residents. The Apartment Wi-Fi Program provides funding, project management, and procurement support to fund the construction of Wi-Fi networks, providing residents with equal or superior service to what is available from commercial ISPs at no cost to residents. Program funding covers all capital costs associated with network design, construction, equipment, and the first year of ongoing operating expenses.

Connectivity Initiative for Economic Hardship

The provision of Wi-Fi cellular hotspots to individuals lacking stable housing and unable to have a fixed broadband internet subscription will provide broadband connectivity to this vulnerable population. The Beal's Memorial Library can partner with MBI to expand the library's hotspot loan program, increasing the number of hotspots available to library patrons.

Education, Outreach, and Adoption

Support outreach and engagement activities designed to increase the success of digital equity programming, including digital literacy programs, device access, and Wi-Fi or hotspot connectivity. The Beals Memorial Library, Senior Center, and the CAC can partner with MBI to support public outreach regarding the Town's digital equity goals and increase enrollment in programs among the Town's population.

³⁵ National Telecommunications and Information Administration. (2022). Notice of Funding Opportunity State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program Executive Summary. Broadband- USA. <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/DE%20PLANNING%20GRANT%20NOFO.pdf>.

Lead for America American Connection Corps

The Lead for America American Connection Corp (ACC) is a service membership focused on advancing economic prosperity and bridging the digital divide. The ACC supports broadband development, digital inclusion, and civic leadership in communities through a network of ACC Members who provide critical capacity-building services for the host organization or municipality. A Member of ACC can advance community dialogue regarding community needs beyond the scope of this plan, continuing to identify issues and opportunities through routine surveying and discussions.

Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp)

Commonwealth Corporation's YouthWorks is a state-funded youth employment program that supports skills training for youth up to age 25 from households earning less than 200% of the federal poverty rate. Working with the Winchendon Youth Changemakers, YouthWorks funding can support workforce training in Winchendon for roles in the local broadband economy. YouthWorks participants can also participate in a formalized local network of digital navigators in Winchendon.

Determination of Need (DoN)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Determination of Need (DoN) program was established to “encourage competition with a public health focus; to promote population health; to support the development of innovative health delivery methods and population health strategies within the healthcare delivery system; and to ensure that resources will be made reasonably and equitably available to every person within the Commonwealth at the lowest reasonable aggregate cost.”

6.5.3 Digital Equity Grants

Municipal Fiber Grant Program

The Massachusetts Division of Local Services Municipal Fiber Grant Program assists municipalities with the construction and completion of municipal fiber networks. A cohesive municipal network “allows for centralized management of IT infrastructure, including an enterprise approach to network monitoring, cyber security, records management, and backup and recovery.” All municipalities that are not previous grantees of the program are eligible. Winchendon can leverage Municipal Fiber Grant Program funds toward developing a municipal wireless mesh network to provide free public internet outdoors. These funds can also support the promotion of job opportunities within Winchendon's broadband economy and workforce training opportunities.

Community Compact IT Grant Program

The Massachusetts Community Compact IT Grant Program provides grants of up to \$200,000 to support the implementation of local innovative IT projects, including one-time capital needs related to planning, design, installation, implementation, and initial training. To enhance the funding already

received, Winchendon can leverage Municipal Fiber Grant Program funds toward developing a municipal wireless mesh network to provide free public internet outdoors.

AARP's Community Challenge grants

The AARP Community Challenge grant program is part of the nationwide AARP Livable Communities initiative that provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. The program is intended to help communities make immediate improvements and jump-start long-term progress and increase digital connections by expanding the high-speed internet and enhancing digital literacy skills of residents.

The Hybrid Programming for Councils on Aging Grant

The Hybrid Programming for Councils on Aging Grant is a new \$1.45 million program from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA). Funds are available to help Massachusetts Councils on Aging (COAs) expand access to high-quality hybrid (i.e., both in-person and virtual) programs for Massachusetts residents who are 60 years of age and older. That way, the same programming is available, accessible, and enjoyable for Older Adults who attend in-person or virtually. The grant round for 2024 is closed but more funds are expected to be available in 2025.

Point 32 Health Foundation funding

Point 32 Health Foundation works with communities to support, advocate and advance healthier lives for everyone. Grants are available to nonprofits doing work in aging that addresses equity, especially in communities most affected by systemic barriers.

Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Grant

The Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Grant program is aimed to support capital improvements specifically dedicated to improving programmatic access and/or removing barriers encountered by persons with disabilities in applicant facilities throughout the Commonwealth. Grants will be awarded to successful applicants to remove barriers and create and improve accessible features and programmatic access including, but not limited to, Limited Use/Limited Application (LULAs) signage, and communication access devices.

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7

7 APPENDIX

Core Group Meeting Information

Focus Group Materials

Stakeholder Questionnaires

Interview Notes

Core Group Meeting Information

Meeting 1 – November 29, 2023

Winchendon MBI 11/29/23

Attendees

Name	Title/Role	Email
Manuel King	Library Director	mking@winchendon-ma.gov
Christa Latulippe	Broadcast	Clatulippe@winchendon-ma.gov
Mary Calandrella	Town Manager Office	mcalandrella@winchendon-ma.gov
Don O'Neil	Tech Director	doneil@winchendon-ma.gov
David Connor	Ex Dir. WHA	dconnor@winha.org
Linda Diagle	Town Manager Office	ldaigle@winchendon-ma.gov
Nicole Roberts	Planning	nroberts@winchendon-ma.gov
Guy Corbosiero	Planning	gcorbo@comcast.net

Stakeholder List

Name	Title/Role	Email
Daira Marcano	WHA RSC	dmarcano@winha.org
MOC		douelte@mocinc.org
Miranda Jennings	CAC	MirancaJennings@healwinchendon.org
Sheila Bettro	COA Director	sbettro@winchendon-ma.gov
Bill Clinton	School IT Director	bclinton@winchendonk12.org
Barbara Anderson	BOS	banderson@winchendon-ma.gov

11/29/23 Notes

What are your barriers? What kinds of training?

Grants coming down the pipeline

Include all the social services in town in the process- even as small as a rod and gun club

MBI- State's draft Plan Up for comment

Scope of Services

- Data
- Comm. Outreach

Deliverables

- Existing conditions report
- Asset map

Key Areas

They have a grant for fiberoptics for town buildings

Affordable Access, Internet, Devices, Training are important areas of interest

ACP Sign Up- maybe Chole Zearfross

- Train the Trainees

Hotspots at the Library!!!! 3 available, 2 week rental

- The town pays \$97/Mo
- E-rate? Reduced internet for libraries/ senior centers. Covers costs of devices and rates

Meeting 2 – March 21, 2024



Winchendon Digital Equity Planning (DeP) Project

Meeting #2 – Plan Framing & Stakeholder Identification

Thursday, March 21st, 2024

10:00-11:30 A.M.

Virtual Meeting

Public Notice Agenda

- **Introductions**
 - MRPC Planning Team
 - Town participants – Working Group Members

- **Plan Framing, Partnerships, and Stakeholders:**
 - Existing Conditions Assessment
 - Data Collection
 - Public Survey
 - Covered Populations
 - Digital Equity Partners & Organizations
 - Digital Equity Stakeholders
 - Project Framing Worksheet Exercise

- **Next Steps and Things to Consider:**
 - Planning process (Timeline, Activities, Stakeholder Outreach, etc.)
 - Community Assets and Stakeholder Interviews
 - Potential sources and collection of data
 - Statewide Digital Equity Survey
 - What local barriers exist? What type of training is needed? For whom?
 - Digital data upload/download speed tests
 - Focus Group Meeting(s) & Community Events
 - Implementation Grant Program and potential projects

March 21, 2024 Meeting Handouts



Covered Populations in the Digital Equity Act

1. Individuals who live in covered households
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals in a Federal correctional facility
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who—
 - a. Are English learners
 - b. Have low levels of literacy
7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural areas





Digital Equity Ecosystem Partners And Organizations

1. Organizations Delivering Digital Inclusion Programs

Digital Inclusion Organizations: Organizations whose primary purpose is to provide direct digital inclusion services and resources to under-connected communities

- Digital Skills Training
- Access to Affordable/Free Internet
- Access to Affordable/Free Computer Devices

Organizations With Digital Inclusion Programs: Organizations providing digital inclusion services and programs to under-connected communities

- Local, County, and State Libraries
- Computer Refurbisher Organizations
- Workforce Development Organizations
- Adult Education Organizations
- Connecthome - Housing Authorities

2. Organizations Providing Digital Inclusion Related Services

Housing Organizations: Organizations that focus on providing affordable housing options to low-income families with some level of wraparound services as well as open Wi-Fi, computer labs, loaner devices, and digital navigation, workforce, and shelf-science programs

- Affordable Housing Organizations
- Local/State/Federal Housing Agencies- Self-Sufficiency Programs
- Private and Nonprofit Housing Providers

Educational Institutions: Education organizations serving disenfranchised areas and populations. These organizations help provide digital inclusion resources and services, such as one-to-one student computer devices, hotspot, free Wi-Fi, technical support, digital skills training, and volunteers

- K-12-School - After school and parent learning programs
- Local Colleges - technical programs
- Universities - Research and internship programs

3. Organizations Supporting Digital Inclusion Efforts

Philanthropic Organizations: Funding institutions serving disenfranchised communities - help support digital inclusion efforts and programs by providing grants and connections to community organizations

- Community Foundations
- Private Foundations
- Corporate Foundations and Social Responsibility Programs

Business/For-Profit Organizations: Private businesses and organizations that, through social responsibility, also focus on supporting community development and services for minority and disenfranchised communities

- Banks
- Internet Services Providers
- Tech Organizations
- Business and Entrepreneurs

Government And Administrative Organizations: Local, County, Regional, and State agencies that work to provide and/or support digital inclusion services and policy

- Municipal and County Governments
- Regional Planning Commissions and Councils of Government
- Economic Development Agencies, Public Utilities, and Smart City Organizations
- State Broadband Offices and/or Commissions
- State Agencies that Support Elements of Digital Inclusion

4. Digital Equity Advocacy And Issue-Based Organizations

Issue-Based Advocates And Organizations: People and organizations that work to serve and connect opportunities around certain issue areas

- Civic/Civil Rights Organizations
- Health Institutions
- Media and Arts Organizations
- Startup and Tech Supporting Organizations

Key Population And Identity Groups Focused Organizations: People and organizations that serve these key populations:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Older adults individuals
- Individuals with language barriers
- Individuals who are English learners
- Individuals with low levels of literacy
- Veterans
- Justice-involved individuals
- Individual experiencing homelessness
- Communities of color
- Native and Tribal communities

Place-Based Organizations: People and organizations that focus on supporting a particular community within a geographic area

- Faith-Based Organizations
- Neighborhood Associations
- Community Based Coalitions
- Community Anchor Institutions

March 21, 2024 Meeting Notes

[10:14 AM] Miranda Jennings

we have a group of residents with disabilities that is working with the Town/CAC and Senior Center who would love to help with this.

like 2

[10:15 AM] Tracy Murphy

that's great!

[10:16 AM] Manuel King

Are there income requirements for veterans?

[10:18 AM] Bill Clinton

For translation services; Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Portuguese are primarily what we see needed at the school.

like 1

[10:18 AM] Miranda Jennings

arabic is also needed

[10:24 AM] Nicole Roberts

Steve Bassett-Veterans Agent sbassett@winchendon-ma.gov

like 1

[10:27 AM]

Daira Marcano (External) was invited to the meeting.

[10:32 AM] Bill Clinton

We do

like 1

[10:36 AM] Jeffrey Legros

Libraries & Schools - E-Rate Program: <https://www.fcc.gov/general/e-rate-schools-libraries-usf-program>

E-Rate - Schools & Libraries USF Program

NEW REQUIREMENT FOR REVIEW OF USAC DECISIONS: Any party (including, but not limited to entities filing an FCC Form 499, federal universal service program applicants, and service providers) that wis...

[10:36 AM] Jeffrey Legros

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/universal-service-program-schools-and-libraries-e-rate>

[10:36 AM] Jeffrey Legros

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRula14kO08>

Introduction to E-rate! - YouTube

Introduction to E-Rate for Massachusetts public libraries, September 2023.00:00 - Introduction by Paul Kissman, MBLC10:48 - Overview of the E-rate program23:...

[10:37 AM] Miranda Jennings

If you have some hard copies in different languages that would be great. We can ask our clients in person and help them do it.

[10:38 AM] Daira Marcano

Miranda if you need help translate let me know heart 1

[10:39 AM] Jeffrey Legros

MBI Residential Retrofit Program:

[10:43 AM]

Guy Corbosiero (Guest) was invited to the meeting.

[10:45 AM] Jeffrey Legros

<https://broadband.masstech.org/retrofit>

[10:45 AM] Manuel King

maybe the library can help with the computer literacy classes.

like 2

[10:46 AM] Jeffrey Legros

Appartment Wifi program (MBI)

[10:47 AM] Miranda Jennings

that would be great

[10:47 AM] Manuel King

yes we can do that. Let's talk Chloe

[10:48 AM] Daira Marcano

Question about ACP

Meeting #3 September 19, 2024



Winchendon Digital Equity Planning (DeP) Project

Meeting #3-Goals and Actions

Thursday, September 25st, 2024

10:00-11:00 A.M.

Virtual Meeting

Agenda

Discussions:

SWOT

Existing Conditions Assessment

What local barriers exist? What type of training is needed? For whom?

Goals and Strategies

Implementation Grant Program and potential projects

Next Steps: Present draft to BOS

Submit Plan to MBI

Implementation Grant

September 19, 2024 Meeting Materials



Winchendon
Digital Equity Plan
Community Needs
Goals and Strategies
September 19, 2024

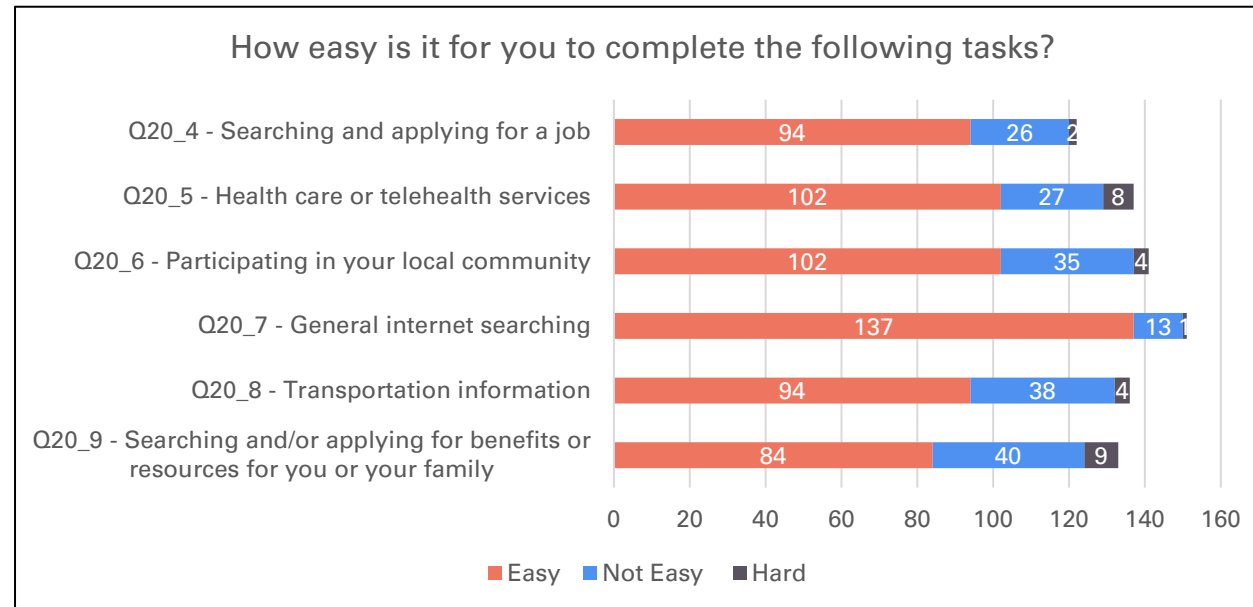
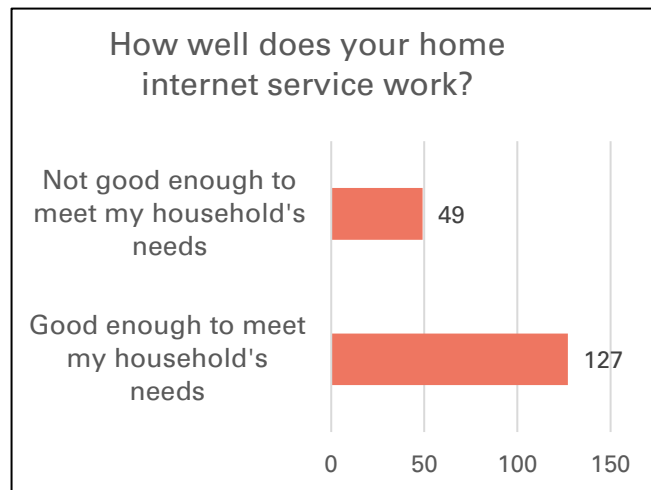
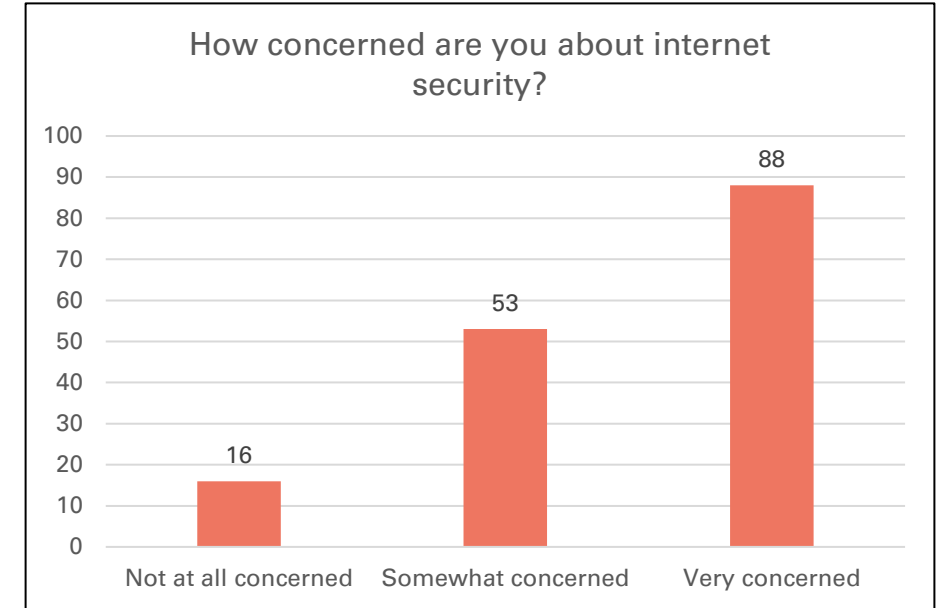
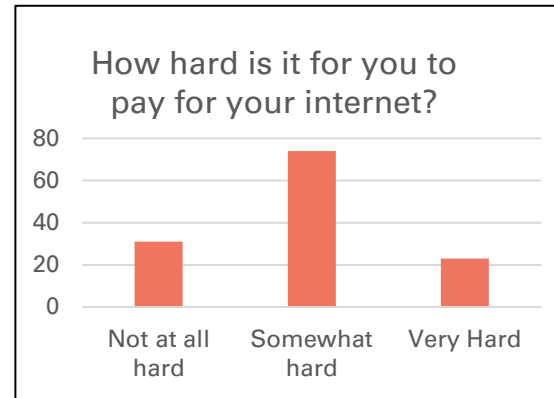
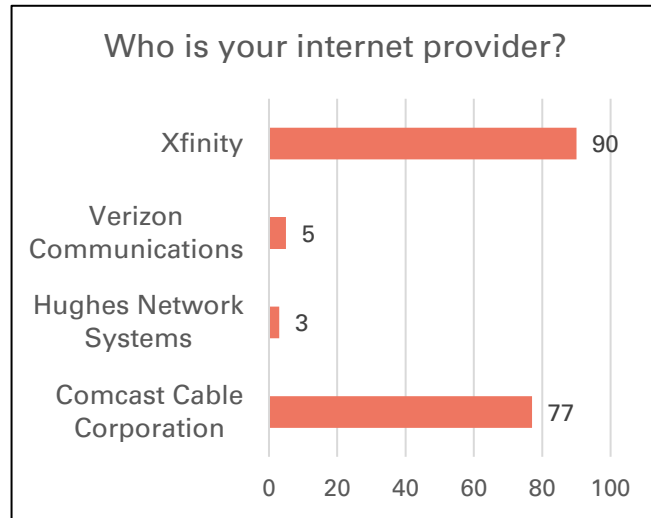
Quick Overview - Covered Populations in the Digital Equity Act

1. Individuals who live in covered households
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals, other than individuals in a Federal correctional facility
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who—
 - a. Are English learners
 - b. Have low levels of literacy
7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural areas



Snapshot of Survey Results-

182 responses



SWOT

Community Needs

Goals & Strategies

See handouts

Winchendon's existing conditions regarding the Digital Divide

STRENGTHS

- The implementation of the **Community Master Plan** calls for town officials to recognize that times have changed and “By embracing the changes and making them work for us, we can create even greater community engagement, coordinate existing efforts and foster a more cohesive community.”
- Awareness of the Digital Gap through **Goal CE 3** of the community Master Plan: “Make Broad band available and affordable to all town residents.
- The awareness of the economic impact of reliable internet service through **Goal ED5.8** of the Master Plan: “Pursue the installation of reliable high-speed internet to all businesses home businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public spaces.”
- Highly engaged Library, Senior Center and CAC employees committed to serving the needs of covered populations of the Digital Equity Act., including cross communication between their facilities. **Goal CE 2.2.**
- Secured grant funding to enhance internet between town hall and emergency services.
- Winchendon HEAL, Community Heart & Soul, and Youth Changemakers initiatives

WEAKNESSES

- Budgetary and staffing constraints
- Lack of competitive internet providers
- Localized lack of availability to adequate and reliable internet services

OPPORTUNITIES

- Engage the Youth Change Makers to serve the community as digital equity champions/digital navigators promoting and serving as advocates and trainers of digital literacy programs for covered populations.
- Promote inter-generational and multi-cultural relationships through digital literacy programs
- Vibrant programs and active participation by covered populations at the Winchendon Senior Center, Beals Memorial Library and the CAC
- Traditional “downtown” area in the process of revitalization efforts that can include installation of a mesh “internet” type service or alternative that covers the immediate area to enhance economic development options.

THREATS

- Limited alternatives to improve localized areas for adequate and reliable internet services
- Affordability – High cost of internet service and devices
- Some covered populations sentiment towards digital literacy & adoption

Critical Digital Assets - Winchendon		
Facility Type	Organization	Location
Town Hall	Winchendon Town Hall	109 Front St
Public Safety	Fire Department / EMS	405 Central Street
Public Safety	Police Department	80 Central Street
Public service	Public Works Garage	101 Glenallen Street
School	Winchendon School District	175 Grove Street
Community Anchor Institutions - Winchendon		
Facility Type	Organization	Location
Library	Beals Memorial Library	50 Pleasant Street
Public Housing	Winchendon Housing Authority	108 Ipswich Drive
Social Services	Winchendon Community Action Center	5 Summer Drive
Council on Aging	Winchendon Senior Center	52 Murdock Avenue
Private School	The Winchendon School	172 Ash Street
Public School	Murdock Middle School	3 Memorial Drive
Public School	Toy Town Elementary School	175 Grove Street
Public School	Memorial Elementary School	32 Elmwood Road

Community Needs

The Winchendon Town Hall

Needs to Improve Digital Equity:

WCTV

Needs to Improve Digital Equity:

Beals Memorial Library

Currently, the **Beals Memorial Library** offers free public Wi-Fi, however, it covers the lower half of the library the best. Internet speeds on the lower 4 public computers are the best while the upper half of the library is seldom covered. During Covid people were outside trying to connect to the Wi-Fi so there were efforts to expand the range of the connection to the street. For a year the library made 10 hot spots available with one set aside for staff, however, the library had issues of theft. Presently the library is down to 2 hot spots that can be loaned out.

The library offers 1 on 1 computer help by appointment; however, additional digital literacy training is needed. Much of the help that patrons need is either with their handheld device or basic and

repetitive computer questions. As an example, one person that frequently comes in does not understand how to do something after being told multiple times on separate occasions. This shows a lack of cognitive ability which requires more 1 on 1 digital help. Similarly, the degree of cognitive ability of those seeking digital help varies in Winchendon which makes individual help more necessary.

Needs to Improve Digital Equity:

- Digital literacy classes.
- Devices, materials and staff to offer computer literacy classes from 1 on 1 to up to 4 individuals at a time.
- Faster, more reliable internet connection that extends to outside the physical location and to the second floor.
- Additional hotspots
- Private workspaces equipped with devices on the second floor.
- ILAP, live translation tablets

The Winchendon Senior Center

The **Winchendon Senior Center** provides many services to the community. The mission of the Winchendon Council on Aging that is in the Senior Center, is to enrich the lives of the community senior population by providing educational programs, recreational activities, referral and social services assistance and to advocate for our seniors while educating the community of the needs of its elderly. The Center helps over 10 % of the Winchendon population. The Center currently has 2 computers that are available for those who know how to use them and numerous applications for lifeline. (explain) The Senior population in Winchendon needs assistance with digital literacy as many do not know how to use a smart phone.

Needs to Improve Digital Equity:

- Digital literacy resources.
- Additional devices of all types.
- Devices that are ADA compliant to mitigate difficulties
- Reliable internet
- adequate speed internet
- ILAP, live translation tablets
- Resources for improved communication with the Town
- ILAP, live translation tablets

The Winchendon Housing Authority

The **Winchendon Housing Authority** has 3 site locations, all of which have varying degrees of digital needs. Currently, there are 4 Chromebooks that the Templeton and Winchendon (Ipswich location) housing authorities share. The Ipswich location has one public computer that is used strictly for housing-related tasks. The Housing Authority also has hot spots at the community building, but they are not for lease.

Needs to improve digital equity:

- The Wi-Fi connection at the Ipswich location is good, but there is a need for faster speeds and more reliable service.
- The Winchendon Housing Authority used to go through the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which was very popular, now individual housing units must pay for their own internet connection. Financial assistance/programs are needed.
- Workstations and affordable digital equipment at some of the Winchendon locations.¹
- Assistance to teach online safety and how to properly install and use security software.
- ILAP, live translation tablets

The Winchendon Community Action Center (CAC)

The **Winchendon CAC** is dedicated to building a collaborative network of community members and partners to enhance the well-being of the community, envisioning a Winchendon where every individual has the opportunity and tools to thrive. The center is home to Winchendon Works Community Hub, and offers services to over 850 families, averaging 300 monthly visits. The Youth Changemakers are also located in the CAC. Smartphones are the primary device for some however, they are cost prohibitive for most. There are limited devices available for clients to work on resumes, job applications, apply for government assistance programs. The internet is described as ok, but could be better.

Needs to improve digital equity:

- Adequate internet service
- Reliable internet service
- Workspaces equipped with devices
- Private workspace and devices for wellness/psychologist's services
- Devices for the Sunshine café/youth internet café
- Digital Literacy Resources
- ILAP, live translation tablets

Winchendon Public Schools

The **Winchendon Public Schools** are a critical digital Asset (CAI). While primarily serving students, the school system sees digital literacy of the adults (parents & guardians) in the house as a driving factor to overall literacy issues. There are access issues where there are some areas in Winchendon without affordable access or no access at all. The school offers digital safety programs but would like Individuals themselves to take the training more seriously and to be more conscious of the world around them. The school system offers classes related to computers, digital skills, and programs but expressed the need for additional funding for equipment and staff to keep the level of services and programs at post COVID expectations.

Needs to improve Digital Equity:

- Resources for digital learning in the classroom
- Adequate internet for students' outside of the schools
- Additional devices of all types
- ILAP, live translation tablets

¹ Pearl Drive would be the best location to set up workstations.

Category	Recommendation	Action	Champion	Funding
Connectivity	Organize and advocate for improved internet.	Create a platform (multiple languages) for residents to report internet challenges and develop resources or direct residents to available outside resources to address issues.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal CE3.4 in Community Master Plan	N/A
	Create additional public Wi-Fi availability in and around public facilities.	Install public charging stations, outside internet "café" type spaces, and expand internet service into parking areas.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE3.3 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program, Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, Community Compact IT Grant Program (may entail ongoing expense)
	Promote existing (and future) Public Wi-Fi Availability in and around public facilities.	Create a map and brochure (multiple languages) of locations that free, public Wi-Fi is available.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal CE3.4 in Community Master Plan	N/A
	Promote Wi-Fi Availability in housing complexes.	Install improved Wi-Fi in apartments and common areas.	Winchendon Housing Authority, CAC, See Goal CE3.4 in Community Master Plan	Residential Retrofit program, MAPC Apartment Wi-Fi program
	Expand/improve, Public Wi-Fi Availability in the downtown business area.	Explore avenues to provide "mesh" type or other alternatives that will improve internet service in the downtown business area.	Town, Economic Development Committee See Goal ED5.8 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
Devices	Devise and/or Expand "Hot Spot" lending programs	Create "Hot Spot" lending programs in municipal Anchor Institutions and educate staff and community organizations about their existence.	Community Anchor Institutions (Municipal - Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, Schools) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program, Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, Community Compact IT Grant Program (will become an ongoing expense)
	Provide access to additional devices.	Provide additional Chrome Books and Laptops for loan programs.	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library, CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
		Provide additional desktop computers for use in the library, Senior Center, Housing Authority properties, and CAC	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library, CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
	Increase the level of citizen participation in Town government	Provide adequate equipment to broadcast Government proceedings and provide for active resident participation.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal 4 in Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
	Provide adequate spaces for connectivity in Anchor institutions.	Provide space(s) for privacy or install a "pod" type structure when a user is participating in a sensitive matter.	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library, CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program, Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, Community Compact IT Grant Program

Digital Literacy & Safety	Promote existing and offer new one-to one in-person support	Create a map and brochure (multiple languages) of locations that free, public Wi-Fi is available and when/where digital literacy courses and support are available. Create additional avenues of support as needed.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE3 of Community Master Plan	N/A
	Develop a digital equity network to strengthen public service, awareness and participation	Create a map and brochure of locations that free, public Wi-Fi is available and when/where digital literacy courses and support are available.	Communications Committee See Goal CE4 in Community Master Plan	N/A
		Offer workshops and educational campaigns to improve residents' understanding of digital terminology and internet safety	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE4 of Community Master Plan	N/A
		Offer workshops and educational campaigns translated to other languages for ESL or English speakers to improve residents' understanding of digital terminology and internet safety.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE4 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program
		Create ADA accessible Town Web Site.	Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal 4 in Community Master Plan	N/A
	Explore digital navigation models and resources	Introduce a Digital Navigator program to provide technical support and build a stronger digital equity network	Communications Committee See Goal CE4 in Community Master Plan	N/A

DRAFT

September 19, 2024 Meeting Notes

September 19, 2024

Winchendon Digital Equity Plan

Needs & Actions Meeting

J.L. notes:

- Update website (incorporate ADA and audio-visual impairment improvements)
- App for booking rides (senior transit)
- App for community resources and events (inclusive of digital/internet resources)
- Schools no longer provide hotspots but library has 2 currently
- Library hotspots are T-Mobile (Verizon is not reliable/poor connectivity in many parts of town)
- Need for translation tablets
- Schools have free outdoor wifi in school, around buildings, and at football field, but no covered outdoor workstations or charging stations
- CAC, Library, and/or Senior Center may have an interest in laptops (or tablets?)
- CAC, Library, and/or Senior Center may have an interest in “pod” style workstations
- CAC and Senior Center has interest in outdoor workstations/charging stations (solar powered options are available and provide flexibility for install locations and provide lower cost of ownership through free power)
- Library interested in additional hotspots
- Library has limited outdoor wifi due to stone/masonry walls; There may be interest in extending wifi to an outdoor workspace
- CAC could use a kiosk style workstation with laptop for clients to use
- Does Town Hall have a kiosk with computer or laptop for bill pay, permitting, registration purposes? Is there an interest/need, if not?

Meeting 4 October 23, 2024

Meeting Notes

Focus Group Materials

MBI
MASSACHUSETTS
BROADBAND INSTITUTE



TECH HELP AND DIGITAL EQUITY FOCUS GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, July 23rd at 1:00 pm

108 Ipswich Drive Winchendon, MA 01475

Have you struggled to access affordable, reliable, high-speed internet in the Town of Winchendon? The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission is hosting a Digital Equity Focus Group Meeting to talk about your Broadband Internet needs and provide general Tech Help. We want to hear from you! Come share your experiences and get tech help with MRPC at this interactive listening session.



Stakeholder Questionnaires

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, April 11, 2024 1:50:29 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, April 11, 2024 2:08:07 PM
Time Spent: 00:17:37
IP Address: 209.80.128.102

Page 1

Q1

Winchendon

Which community do you serve/represent? (If more than one, use the other box to identify the other communities).

Q2

Your Name and Position:

Bill Clinton, Director of Technology, Winchendon Public Schools

Q3

Organization Name and Location:

Winchendon Public Schools, 175 Grove St. Winchendon, MA 01475

Q4

Respondent skipped this question

Are you aware of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program?<https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal>

Q5

Respondent skipped this question

Have you taken the statewide Digital Equity Survey? If not, please select "No" and follow the link below to take the survey:Statewide Digital Equity SurveyPlease promote and share the survey link with those you serve!

Q6

Would you like us to provide you with a flier or other information to help you promote the survey to the people you serve? If so, please indicate below and provide an email address to send the flier to.

The school Generally does not take part in social media campaigns. We do share school district information only via a handful of limited accounts.

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q7

Does your organization serve a Covered Household or Population as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841)? Covered populations include: Aging individuals (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults); Individuals or families of low-income households (not greater than 150% of the poverty level); Minority groups; Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, individuals with disabilities; Veterans; Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility.

Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150% of the poverty level

Members of a racial or ethnic minority group,

Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy

Q8

If your organization serves clients from one or more of the covered populations, how many covered people do you typically serve each year?

Unknown. Schools deal primarily with students of those households and some of that data we did not get. We are a CEP district.

Q9

Is your organization on the statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

I don't know

Q10

If NOT, do you believe your organization SHOULD be included in statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Other (please specify):

Unknown

Q11

How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).

61

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q12

Please describe some of the greatest digital equity and broadband internet needs of those you serve within each of the following categories:

Digital Literacy

Again, we primarily service students, but for the parents and guardians, we do see this would be a driving factor. Many of them think they are digital literate because they are on Social media, but do not understand the broader web.

Digital Skills Adoption

See above

Access to Digital Devices

Likely not an issue

Access to Broadband Internet Service

Limited issue in some areas without affordable access or any access for that matter

Affordability of Broadband Internet Services

A concern but unknown how many this affects. We have not done a survey since 2020 on this.

Willingness to Adopt Digital Technology

N/A

Q13

Yes

Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?

Q14

Yes

Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?

Q15

Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type? (If not, skip question)

Yes, for students PreK-12

Q16

What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?

Funding

Q17

How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.)

Mostly back to pre-pandemic learning with the exception of more digital programs in the classroom.

Q18

Yes

Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?

Q19

If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?

Individuals themselves to take the training we offer more seriously And to be more conscious of the world around them.

Q20

Yes, CAI

Would you consider your organization a Critical Digital Asset (CDA) or a Community Anchor Institution (CAI)? The term "Critical Digital Asset" means a digital computer, communication system, or network that is a component of a critical Information System (this includes assets that perform Safety-Sensitive or Emergency Planning ("SSEP") functions, or provide support to, protect, or provide a pathway to critical systems), or a support system asset whose failure or compromise as the result of a cyber attack would result in an adverse impact to an SSEP Function. The term "Community Anchor Institution" as defined within the Digital Equity Act of 2021 means a public school, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a State library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization.

Q21

If YES, do you currently have a public-facing free and open wifi network? If NO, would you be interested in being considered for one in the future?

we do not offer public facing open Wi-Fi.

Q22

Is there someone at your organization who may be interested in being part of a regional digital equity coalition or working group? If so, who?

Myself

Q23

Is there a person within your community or organization that is an advocate for digital equity, digital literacy, and/or internet access and services? If so, who?

Jonathan Landman

Q24

Respondent skipped this question

Are there any other important stakeholders, interested organizations or individuals, or covered populations, or focus groups that we should contact and include in the planning process? Please list any people, entities, or groups.

#9

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, May 31, 2024 12:33:27 AM
Last Modified: Friday, May 31, 2024 12:45:43 AM
Time Spent: 00:12:16
IP Address: 73.100.27.102

Page 1

Q1 **Winchendon**

Which community do you serve/represent? (If more than one, use the other box to identify the other communities).

Q2

Your Name and Position:

Christa Latulippe Winchendon Tv Coordinator

Q3

Organization Name and Location:

Winchendon TV Studios, 109 Front St, Winchendon ma 01475

Q4 **Yes**

Are you aware of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program?<https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal>

Q5 **Yes**

Have you taken the statewide Digital Equity Survey? If not, please select "No" and follow the link below to take the survey:Statewide Digital Equity SurveyPlease promote and share the survey link with those you serve!

Q6

Would you like us to provide you with a flier or other information to help you promote the survey to the people you serve? If so, please indicate below and provide an email address to send the flier to.

No, I already have

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q7

Does your organization serve a Covered Household or Population as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841)? Covered populations include: Aging individuals (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults); Individuals or families of low-income households (not greater than 150% of the poverty level); Minority groups; Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, individuals with disabilities; Veterans; Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility.

Persons 60 years of age or older (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or aging adults)

,

Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150% of the poverty level

,

Veterans,

Persons with Disabilities,

Rural Residents

Q8

If your organization serves clients from one or more of the covered populations, how many covered people do you typically serve each year?

Not sure

Q9

Is your organization on the statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

I don't know

Q10

If NOT, do you believe your organization SHOULD be included in statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Yes

Q11

How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).

3

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q12

Please describe some of the greatest digital equity and broadband internet needs of those you serve within each of the following categories:

Digital Literacy	Making resumes, using the Internet for jobs
Digital Skills Adoption	Word, excel, photoshop
Access to Digital Devices	We have no cameras or video cameras for people to rent
Access to Broadband Internet Service	Just the library, which has specific hours
Affordability of Broadband Internet Services	Trying to spread the word
Willingness to Adopt Digital Technology	Semi
Ability to Adopt Digital Technology	Could be done
Reliability, Speed, and Performance of Available Broadband Internet Service	Rural, so not high hopes
Awareness and Confidence with Cyber Security and Internet Safety	None

Q13

No

Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?

Q14

No

Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?

Q15

Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type? (If not, skip question)

No, but would like to

Q16

What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?

Computers, programs, better Internet at town hall, cameras to utilize, product photography stations for those in town selling online, more hot spots, something for power outages that happen frequently here

Q17

How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.)

Working from home instead of out in the general public

Q18

Yes

Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?

Q19

If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?

Better cyber security against hackers

Q20

Yes, CDA

Would you consider your organization a Critical Digital Asset (CDA) or a Community Anchor Institution (CAI)? The term "Critical Digital Asset" means a digital computer, communication system, or network that is a component of a critical Information System (this includes assets that perform Safety-Sensitive or Emergency Planning ("SSEP") functions, or provide support to, protect, or provide a pathway to critical systems), or a support system asset whose failure or compromise as the result of a cyber attack would result in an adverse impact to an SSEP Function. The term "Community Anchor Institution" as defined within the Digital Equity Act of 2021 means a public school, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a State library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization.

Q21

If YES, do you currently have a public-facing free and open wifi network? If NO, would you be interested in being considered for one in the future?

Yes, but it is very hard to keep a constant connection to

Q22

Is there someone at your organization who may be interested in being part of a regional digital equity coalition or working group? If so, who?

No

Q23

Is there a person within your community or organization that is an advocate for digital equity, digital literacy, and/or internet access and services? If so, who?

No

Q24

Are there any other important stakeholders, interested organizations or individuals, or covered populations, or focus groups that we should contact and include in the planning process? Please list any people, entities, or groups.

No

#12

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, June 04, 2024 3:55:56 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, June 05, 2024 8:43:18 AM
Time Spent: 16:47:22
IP Address: 75.147.41.186

Page 1

Q1

Winchendon

Which community do you serve/represent? (If more than one, use the other box to identify the other communities).

Q2

Your Name and Position:

Daira Marcano-Ferrer Resident Services Coordinator

Q3

Organization Name and Location:

Winchendon Housing Authority

Q4

Yes

Are you aware of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program?<https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal>

Q5

Yes

Have you taken the statewide Digital Equity Survey? If not, please select "No" and follow the link below to take the survey:Statewide Digital Equity SurveyPlease promote and share the survey link with those you serve!

Q6

Would you like us to provide you with a flier or other information to help you promote the survey to the people you serve? If so, please indicate below and provide an email address to send the flier to.

dmarcano@winha.org

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q7

Does your organization serve a Covered Household or Population as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841)? Covered populations include: Aging individuals (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults); Individuals or families of low-income households (not greater the 150% of the poverty level); Minority groups; Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, individuals with disabilities; Veterans; Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility.

Persons 60 years of age or older (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or aging adults)

,

Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150% of the poverty level

,

Members of a racial or ethnic minority group,

Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy

,

Veterans,

Persons with Disabilities,

Rural Residents

Q8

If your organization serves clients from one or more of the covered populations, how many covered people do you typically serve each year?

Respondent skipped this question

Q9

Is your organization on the statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Yes

Q10

If NOT, do you believe your organization SHOULD be included in statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Yes

Q11

How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).

98

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q12

Please describe some of the greatest digital equity and broadband internet needs of those you serve within each of the following categories:

Digital Literacy	is very limited.
Digital Skills Adoption	they don't have any skills.
Access to Digital Devices	they don't know how it used.
Access to Broadband Internet Service	some of them have it but no all of them.
Affordability of Broadband Internet Services	they don't have any access because the ACP is gone.
Willingness to Adopt Digital Technology	it can be challenging.
Ability to Adopt Digital Technology	some of them.
Reliability, Speed, and Performance of Available Broadband Internet Service	is important because some of them don't trust and don't have patience.
Awareness and Confidence with Cyber Security and Internet Safety	we have to take care them so they don't be in trouble.

Q13

Yes

Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?

Q14

Yes

Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?

Q15

Respondent skipped this question

Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type? (If not, skip question)

Q16

What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?

faster speed.

Q17

How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.)

remote work sometimes

Q18

Yes

Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?

Q19

If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?

Install safety software. Teach how used it correctly.

Q20

Not sure

Would you consider your organization a Critical Digital Asset (CDA) or a Community Anchor Institution (CAI)? The term "Critical Digital Asset" means a digital computer, communication system, or network that is a component of a critical Information System (this includes assets that perform Safety-Sensitive or Emergency Planning ("SSEP") functions, or provide support to, protect, or provide a pathway to critical systems), or a support system asset whose failure or compromise as the result of a cyber attack would result in an adverse impact to an SSEP Function. The term "Community Anchor Institution" as defined within the Digital Equity Act of 2021 means a public school, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a State library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization.

Q21

Respondent skipped this question

If YES, do you currently have a public-facing free and open wifi network? If NO, would you be interested in being considered for one in the future?

Q22

Respondent skipped this question

Is there someone at your organization who may be interested in being part of a regional digital equity coalition or working group? If so, who?

Q23

Respondent skipped this question

Is there a person within your community or organization that is an advocate for digital equity, digital literacy, and/or internet access and services? If so, who?

Q24

Respondent skipped this question

Are there any other important stakeholders, interested organizations or individuals, or covered populations, or focus groups that we should contact and include in the planning process? Please list any people, entities, or groups.

#24

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, August 19, 2024 9:52:38 AM
Last Modified: Monday, August 19, 2024 10:00:11 AM
Time Spent: 00:07:33
IP Address: 38.52.239.225

Page 1

Q1 Other (please specify):
All of the above apart from Royalston

Which community do you serve/represent? (If more than one, use the other box to identify the other communities).

Q2

Your Name and Position:

Eolann McMillan, prevention coordinator

Q3

Organization Name and Location:

LUK Inc, Fitchburg

Q4 Yes

Are you aware of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program?<https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal>

Q5 Yes

Have you taken the statewide Digital Equity Survey? If not, please select "No" and follow the link below to take the survey:Statewide Digital Equity SurveyPlease promote and share the survey link with those you serve!

Q6

Would you like us to provide you with a flier or other information to help you promote the survey to the people you serve? If so, please indicate below and provide an email address to send the flier to.

have it

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q7

Does your organization serve a Covered Household or Population as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841)? Covered populations include: Aging individuals (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults); Individuals or families of low-income households (not greater than 150% of the poverty level); Minority groups; Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, individuals with disabilities; Veterans; Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility.

**Members of a racial or ethnic minority group,
Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy
,
Rural Residents**

Q8

If your organization serves clients from one or more of the covered populations, how many covered people do you typically serve each year?

Respondent skipped this question

Q9

Is your organization on the statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

I don't know

Q10

If NOT, do you believe your organization SHOULD be included in statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Yes

Q11

How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).

49

Q12

Please describe some of the greatest digital equity and broadband internet needs of those you serve within each of the following categories:

Digital Literacy

limited

Digital Skills Adoption

limited in adult pops

Access to Digital Devices

limited and not equitable, students get through school

Affordability of Broadband Internet Services

high costs due to monopolies

Willingness to Adopt Digital Technology

lower in older pops

Ability to Adopt Digital Technology

lower in older pops

Awareness and Confidence with Cyber Security and Internet Safety

limited and not talked about enough

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q13

No

Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?

Q14

No

Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?

Q15

Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type? (If not, skip question)

developing digital literacy training

Q16

Respondent skipped this question

What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?

Q17

How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.)

remote, young ppl need tech year round

Q18

Yes,

Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?

Not Sure

Q19

Respondent skipped this question

If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?

Q20

Neither

Would you consider your organization a Critical Digital Asset (CDA) or a Community Anchor Institution (CAI)? The term “Critical Digital Asset” means a digital computer, communication system, or network that is a component of a critical Information System (this includes assets that perform Safety-Sensitive or Emergency Planning (“SSEP”) functions, or provide support to, protect, or provide a pathway to critical systems), or a support system asset whose failure or compromise as the result of a cyber attack would result in an adverse impact to an SSEP Function. The term “Community Anchor Institution” as defined within the Digital Equity Act of 2021 means a public school, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a State library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization.

Q21

Respondent skipped this question

If YES, do you currently have a public-facing free and open wifi network? If NO, would you be interested in being considered for one in the future?

Q22

Is there someone at your organization who may be interested in being part of a regional digital equity coalition or working group? If so, who?

me- emcmillan@luk.org

Q23

Respondent skipped this question

Is there a person within your community or organization that is an advocate for digital equity, digital literacy, and/or internet access and services? If so, who?

Q24

Respondent skipped this question

Are there any other important stakeholders, interested organizations or individuals, or covered populations, or focus groups that we should contact and include in the planning process? Please list any people, entities, or groups.

Please complete the survey questions and return to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (tmurphy@mrpc.org)

Your Name: Manuel King

Your Organization/Role: Beals Memorial Library

Questions for Town Contacts and Interested Stakeholder groups – Digital Equity Planning - Winchendon	Response Options
<p>Are you aware of the State's Digital Equity Project and have you taken the state survey and/or promoted it to the people you serve?</p> <p>https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal</p> <p>https://mbicx.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxTIMGFVF8KjigC</p>	<p>We are aware of the State's Digital Equity Project and we've promoted it to our patrons.</p>
<p>Would you like us to provide you with social media or other information to help you promote it to the people you serve?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Are you on the State Asset Inventory Map?</p>	<p>I don't know.</p>
<p>If not, do you want to be (should they be in your opinion because they serve a Covered Population and now or in the future want to support digital equity activities?)</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If YES, are you open to having me add you now?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>How many people do you typically serve in a year who fall within the Covered Population? Which Covered Population or Stakeholder Group is it? Examples of covered populations are senior citizens, low income individuals or families, minority groups, non-english speaking persons, veterans, incarcerated or previously incarcerated.</p>	<p>Approximately 1,000</p>
<p>How well do you think you know the people you serve's Digital Equity needs on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Of those you serve, what do you think their major needs are in these categories: digital literacy, skills, devices, access, affordability, adoption?</p>	<p>Digital literacy skills with computers & devices</p>
<p>Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Please complete the survey questions and return to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (tmurphy@mrpc.org)

Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type?	We offer one-on-one help with digital literacy, mostly with devices
What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?	Computer literacy classes for up to 4 individuals at a time. Faster speed and reliable service
How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.) For example, do your workers work remote or hybrid now? Did you start offering more online services or remote virtual appointments or meetings?	The pandemic didn't change how we work.
Is cybersecurity a concern for your organization?	No
If YES, what would you need to make your organization more cyber-safe?	
Would you consider your organization a Critical Digital Asset (CDA) or a Community Anchor Institution (CAI)?	Yes
If YES, do you currently have a public-facing free and open wifi network? If NO, would you be interested in being considered for one in the future?	We offer free WiFi
Is there someone at your organization who may be interested in being part of a regional digital equity coalition or working group?	Yes
Is there a person within your community or organization that is an advocate for digital equity, digital literacy, and/or internet access and services? If so, who?	Yes, Alexis Chanthachack
Are there any stakeholders, interested organizations or individuals, or focus populations that we should contact and include in the planning process? Please list any people, entities, or groups.	I don't know

MBI Regional Partner Guidance

Focus Group Notes Submission Template

Please feel free to use this form to assist with note-taking by hand during your focus group session. After the session, enter your information into the online form at: [XXX](#)

General Session Information

Region Name	Winchendon
Focus Group Date	6/13/2024
Focus Group Start and End Time	11 – 12:30 am
Focus Group Location (address)	Winchendon Public Library 50 Pleasant Street, Winchendon, MA 01475
Primary Covered Population Focus	

Number of Total Attendees (not including facilitator, note-taker, or other organizing staff):

_____1_____ Attendees _____2_____ Facilitators/Planners _____1_____ Staff

If you have any additional details to share on the specifics of this session, please do so here (summarize main takeaways):

Summer times show movies using hotspot 50% of the time stream music

Beals on wheels bring the library to different locations

Busiest time of the year during the summer

Do you offer digital literacy training courses (yes by appointment 1 on 1 computer help sitting "I just bought the new laptop can you help me") Definitely would be interested in a digital literacy training class with MRPC

4 staff 2 of whom are older

Fax machine is very much used

Variety of ways to reach people in Winchendon (go to the senior Center send fliers post stuff on social media)

1 person that frequently comes in doesn't understand being told how to do something (others have varying degrees of cognitive disadvantages)

Opening

1. How did you learn about this focus group session? What brought you here today?	
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* 2. Does anyone have a story to share about a specific time or way the internet has changed your life?	Elderly patrons that come in that need help with handheld devices
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<p>3. What do you regularly use the internet for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work • School • Healthcare • Family and social connection • Civic engagement • Public benefits • Other? 	<p>More of how where is the internet how</p> <p>User questions</p> <p>Not really how it works</p> <p>Brings devices in its questions on the library catalogue</p> <p>“What is word? how do I log into facebook?”</p> <p>Not too much on health care</p> <p>Usually people know what they are coming in for</p> <p>How to download</p> <p>Referring them to the senior Center</p> <p>Maranda Jennings</p> <p>Variety</p> <p>Bring in their laptops</p>
<p>4. If you don't have access to the internet on a regular basis, but need it, what do you need it for the most?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work • School • Healthcare • Family and social connection • Civic engagement • Public benefits • Other? 	

*5. Do you have internet service in your home?

Make a note of rough count of yes/no.

*Yes, most *hesitantly**

whether it is on their device

6. For those of you who have internet service in your home, how is it in terms of speed and reliability? Good enough for what you and your family need?

Spotty not so reliable

Speed is ok on the public computers

Upstairs is spotty

6 (follow-ups). How difficult is it for you to pay your internet bill every month, given other expenses?

Have you ever had any especially positive or negative experiences with your internet service provider? If you've had issues with your service, have they been responsive and able to fix the problem?

*7. If you do not have internet service in your home, what is the main reason why?

- Service is not available in my area
- Service is too expensive
- I am concerned about online privacy or safety
- I don't feel confident navigating the internet or using online tools
- I can't afford or access a device to use the internet
- I don't have a computer or internet at home
- I don't feel that I need internet service

Annual fee CWMARS

E-rate program – Not sure if it was still in effect

Not very expensive

75% of the time its fine power lines going out

7 (follow-ups). Are there any other reasons you do not have internet service in your home?

8. If you do not have internet service in your home, are there any common places that you go to access internet?

- Friend or family member's home
- School
- Workplace
- Library or community center
- Business such as a cafe or bookstore
- Outdoor space such as a park

<p>8 (follow-ups). How is the quality of service at these locations?</p> <p>Where else do you wish you could access internet service?</p>	<p>Spotty</p>
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Device Availability, Affordability, Access

<p>*9. Do you own a computing device? (Including computers, smartphones, tablets, or other internet-enabled devices)?</p>	<p><i>Make a note of rough count of yes/no.</i></p> <p><i>Yes there are 4 here</i></p>
<p>9 (follow-ups). If yes, what kind of computing devices do you own?</p> <p>If yes, are the devices you have sufficient for your needs?</p> <p>If no, what's the main barrier to having one?</p>	<p>4 computers</p>

<p>10. For those of you who indicated that you don't have regular access to computers and the internet, what might help you to gain access to these technologies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower-cost computers/internet • Digital literacy training • Access to technical support 	
---	--

Digital Skills

<p>*11. How confident do you feel with navigating the internet and using different online services? For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for/applying for jobs • Finding health/medical information • Taking a course or finding learning materials • Online banking or financial services • Accessing or applying for government services • Using a video chat service (e.g., Zoom) for work, school, or telehealth • Using word processing applications (e.g., Google Docs or Microsoft Word) to create a document • Finding ways to protect the privacy of your personal data • Using email • Using social media • Online shopping 	<p>Not confident at all #:</p> <p>Somewhat confident #:</p> <p>Confident #:</p> <p>Very Confident #:</p> <p>Notes: People come in expecting they don't know what they are doing</p> <p>get confused easily</p> <p>get confused after 3 steps</p>
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<p>11 (follow-ups).</p> <p>Are there some activities you feel more or less comfortable with than others?</p> <p>Are there activities you'd like to do on the internet but feel you don't have the knowledge or skillset access?</p>	
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Privacy and Internet Safety

<p>*12. Are you concerned about your privacy and security online?</p>	<p><i>Make a note of rough count of yes/no.</i></p> <p>Yes:</p> <p>No: Not in the past year, what sites they asked about that were unsafe were blocked in the library</p> <p>Scams are called out</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>12 (follow-ups). If yes, what are some of your specific concerns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My data getting stolen or used without my consent • That I or a loved one could get scammed or tricked • That I could be tracked or surveilled • That I or a loved one could be harassed or abused online • Other concerns? 	

<p>13. How familiar are you with knowing how to maintain your cybersecurity online?</p>	
<p>13 (follow-ups). What kinds of resources, information, or support might help you feel safer online?</p>	<p>Before the pandemic 4 was sufficient Stronger wifi More reliable internet on the second floor (only one private space) One big space for groups Can you get the wifi from the top steps (want to extend the wifi beyond the walls of the library During covid people did not come into the building people posted around the wifi</p>

Public Resources and Services

<p>*14. How accessible and inclusive do you think online public resources and services are?</p>	<p>Totally accessible if you can get into the building Library computers does not require a library card</p>
<p>14 (follow-ups). What specific barriers or issues have you encountered when using these types of services?</p> <p>What changes might make some of these services feel more accessible or easy to use?</p>	<p>Stealing the hotspot devices (they are very used 10 free hotspots for a year 1 set aside for the staff After that program ended down to 2 T-Mobile sends free cards How to get the cards back</p>

Other

<p>15. What else should the State know about your needs or barriers related to computers and the internet?</p>	<p>Town IT guy who tries to keep the hardware up to date Dawn O'Neil</p> <p>Want to eliminate all of the wires</p> <p>Update equipment with a connection that is fast</p>
<p>15 (follow-up).</p> <p>How could the State help you address these needs or barriers?</p> <p>*16. Where do you turn for digital help in your community? Are there organizations, programs, or places that are providing helpful resources and services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Wi-Fi• Digital skills training providers• Device lending or access programs• Information on internet discounts• Others?	

Additional Questions

Please enter notes on any other region- or topic-specific questions discussed during your focus group session. Please make sure to include the question itself, as well as notes on participants' responses.

Senior center is more used by the seniors has more computers

Once it hits fall people do not leave their house

Definite reluctance for seniors to come to the library

Bus program to get more seniors to come here

Enter your notes online at: [XXX](#)

Interview Notes

WCTV Interview Write-up

Christa LaTulippe – Thursday, June 13th at 3:30 over the phone (978) 297-5420

Christa LaTulippe is the new Winchendon TV Coordinator, and she is the go-to for all the town's broadcasting services. Her office is located on the second floor of Town Hall at 109 Front St, Winchendon, MA 01475. The internet connectivity in the Town hall is unreliable and occasionally crashes when over stressed. For example, the entire building's connection was knocked out due to limited bandwidth. For this reason, LaTulippe is looking to provide Wi-Fi connection on her floor if the funding were available.

Moreover, LaTulippe has experience with the Town of Winchendon's internet and connectivity as a current resident in the area. She recalls that people in the woods have little connectivity and a lot of them use satellites because options are so limited. At some point there was push back to install service on certain streets to the point where people had to fight for connectivity. This goes to show that there is a need for reliable internet access in the town. Related, LaTulippe gave feedback on the Winchendon Public Library's hot spot program, saying those hot spots would have been helpful for her work had she known about them, implying there needs to be better advertising for the Library's hotspot program. She showed interest in providing hotspots at the WCTV center if she had the finances to adequately do so.

Additional funding would also go to providing computers and camera equipment and workstations to aid in the provision of future photography, photoshop, and/or resume writing classes. LaTulippe expressed a lot of interest in teaching digital classes on how to edit in and use photoshop, as well as using her resume writing strengths to provide career readiness services.

Furthermore, LaTulippe is requesting better anti-virus protection on the broadcasting computer and online safety programs for the town's residents. She gave multiple examples of people's Facebook accounts being hacked, her work computer being hacked, even the town being hacked. She states [the town] had to pay through insurance to get files unlocked. There appears to be both a staff and collective town need for digital safety training.

Going forward, MRPC should follow up with LaTulippe to get a better understanding of budget constraints and collect the surveys from the survey box next to her office.

Christa WCTV Notes DEI 6/15/24

Internet: second floor of tower hall
 upgraded system when went online
 knocked out the building bandwidth
 looking at providing own w.f.i
 help No ipads/laptops/computers etc

~ ~ resume writing (strength)

but wants to teach video editing provide
 to for the broadcasting Christa

~ of Winch - got hacked

→ had to pay through insurance

→ No anti virus on broadcasting computer
 → Need software

→ Training against cyber attacks

I see people get hacked all the time

! One I got hacked and someone
 was moving my mouse. * where you
 able to clear it up

~~with~~ Facebooks account getting hacked

What kinds of Digital problems do people

have?

People in the woods little connectivity

• lot of people use satellites

options were so limited. Doh networks

refusal to put service on certain streets

→ People have to fight connectivity

to advertise hotspots from library

→

to monitor & connectivity

to provide hot spots

→ yes provide if funding

you provide any digital literacy classes

→ restructuring the WCTV

→ get a couple stations set up to learn

→ to edit / ~~some~~ use photoshop

→ getting more equipment

→ A lot of crafters

service is better now that she is downtown
restored service Pretty

g questions:

Digital Equity Planning Stakeholder Questionnaire

Please complete the stakeholder questionnaire and return to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's Gregor Goodlett at: ggoodlett@mrpc.org

To take the questionnaire online visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DGVRZMP>



Your Name and Role: Daira Marcano-Ferrer Resident Services Coordinator

Name of Your Organization: Winchendon Housing Authority

City, Town, or Region Served: Winchendon

Questions for Municipal Contacts and Interested Stakeholder groups – Digital Equity Planning	Response Options
<p>Are you aware of the State's Digital Equity Project and have you taken the state survey and/or promoted it to the people you serve?</p> <p>https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal</p> <p>https://mbicx.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxTIMGFVF8KjigC</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Would you like us to provide you with social media or other information to help you promote it to the people you serve?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Is your organization on the statewide Asset Inventory Map?</p>	<p>Yes <i>Hot spots at community building not for lease</i></p>
<p>If not, should organization be listed because they serve a <i>Covered Household</i> or <i>Population</i> as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841) or because they otherwise provide support for digital equity related activities?</p>	
<p>If YES, are you open to having MRPC add your organization to the Asset Inventory Map now?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>How many people do you typically serve in a year who fall within one or more of the Covered Populations? Which Covered Population or Stakeholder Group is it? Examples of covered populations are: Rural residents, Aging individuals 60 years or older (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults), Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150% of the poverty level, Racial or ethnic minority groups, Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, Individuals with disabilities, Veterans, and Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility</p>	

want of equipment

"sounds good"

Affordability

Digital Equity Planning Stakeholder Questionnaire

Please complete the stakeholder questionnaire and return to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's Gregor Goodlett at: ggoodlett@mrpc.org

How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).	5
Of those you serve, what do you think their major needs are in these categories: digital literacy, digital skills adoption, access to digital devices, access to broadband internet service, affordability of broadband internet services, willingness to adopt digital technology, ability to adopt digital technology, reliability, speed, performance of available broadband internet service, awareness and confidence with cyber security and internet safety?	Affordability of broadband internet services, reliability, speed, awareness and confidence with cyber security and internet safety.
Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?	Yes
Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?	Yes
Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type?	There is a want in some w/ no someone teaches / volunteers !!
What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?	Need for Faster, speed more reliable service help pivoting to virtual.
How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.) For example, do your workers work remote or hybrid now? Did you start offering more online services or remote virtual appointments or meetings?	Remote work sometimes
Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?	Yes
If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?	⇒ Install safety software, teach them how used it correctly
Would you consider your organization a Critical Digital Asset (CDA) or a Community Anchor Institution (CAI)? The term "Critical Digital Asset" means a digital computer, communication system, or network that is a component of a critical	Yes

varies betw people on wants for Digital learning

For the elderly get in trouble come to Durian to fix

3 buildings pearl Dr. can set up work stations
Ipswich
nyda prk drive

it classes could be helpful

Digital Equity Planning Stakeholder Questionnaire

Please complete the stakeholder questionnaire and return to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's Gregor Goodlett at: ggoodlett@mrpc.org

<p>Information System (this includes assets that perform Safety-Sensitive or Emergency Planning ("SSEP") functions, or provide support to, protect, or provide a pathway to critical systems), or a support system asset whose failure or compromise as the result of a cyber attack would result in an adverse impact to an SSEP Function.</p> <p>The term "Community Anchor Institution" as defined within the Digital Equity Act of 2021 means a public school, a library, a medical or healthcare provider, a community college or other institution of higher education, a State library agency, and any other nonprofit or governmental community support organization.</p>	
<p>If YES, do you currently have a public-facing free and open wifi network? If NO, would you be interested in being considered for one in the future?</p>	
<p>Is there someone at your organization who may be interested in being part of a regional digital equity coalition or working group?</p>	
<p>Is there a person within your community or organization that is an advocate for digital equity, digital literacy, and/or internet access and services? If so, who?</p>	
<p>Are there any other important stakeholders, interested organizations or individuals, or covered populations, or focus groups that we should contact and include in the planning process? Please list any people, entities, or groups.</p>	

somebody to come ? teacher

=> have computers here shared w/ Templeton

=> 4 laptops available notebooks (limitations)

=> come in, call for GED

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

#11

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, June 04, 2024 3:59:43 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, June 04, 2024 4:06:50 PM
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Page 1

Q1

Templeton #4

Which community do you serve/represent? (If more than one, use the other box to identify the other communities).

Q2

Your Name and Position:

David Connor

Q3

Organization Name and Location:

Templeton Housing Authority

Q4

No

733 Baldwinville Road

Are you aware of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program? <https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal>

8 units
senior units total of 60
Majority of pop is elderly
younger & disabled
20-30% digitally literate

Q5

No

Have you taken the statewide Digital Equity Survey? If not, please select "No" and follow the link below to take the survey: [Statewide Digital Equity Survey](#) Please promote and share the survey link with those you serve!

Q6

Would you like us to provide you with a flier or other information to help you promote the survey to the people you serve? If so, please indicate below and provide an email address to send the flier to.

dconnor@templetonha.org

Talked about handy

Have 2 computers for applying for money

Q7 training programs for digital

Persons 60 years of age or older (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or aging adults)

Does your organization serve a Covered Household or Population as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841)? Covered populations include: Aging individuals (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults); Individuals or families of low-income households (not greater than 150% of the poverty level); Minority groups; Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, individuals with disabilities; Veterans; Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility.

Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150% of the poverty level

Members of a racial or ethnic minority group,

Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy

Veterans

4 laptops donated within

1 community building in Templeton family gen is well connected

Q8 An older gen needs most help not everyone has connection

Respondent skipped this question

If your organization serves clients from one or more of the covered populations, how many covered people do you typically serve each year?

Q9

I don't know

Is your organization on the statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Q10

Yes

If NOT, do you believe your organization SHOULD be included in statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Q11

10

How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).

Q12

Respondent skipped this question

Please describe some of the greatest digital equity and broadband internet needs of those you serve within each of the following categories:

Q13

No

Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q14

No

Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?

Q15

Respondent skipped this question

Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type? (If not, skip question)

Q16

Respondent skipped this question

What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?

Q17

Respondent skipped this question

How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.)

Q18

Yes

Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?

Q19

If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?

Continue to improve cyber security

Better to hold meetings @ the temple for senior center
John Mads talk to her

Winchendon Housing Authority Interview Write-up

Daira Marcano-Ferrer and David Connor – Friday, June 14th at 1:30 pm in person at 108 Ipswich Drive Winchendon, MA 01475

Daira Marcano-Ferrer is the Resident Services Coordinator at the Winchendon Housing Authority and is well versed in her community's digital needs. Briefly, Executive Director of the Templeton Housing Authority, David Connor, was at this meeting but due to an overlapping commitment he had to leave early.

The Winchendon Housing Authority has 3 site locations, all of which have varying degrees of digital needs and wants.

1. **108 Ipswich Drive Winchendon, MA 01475**
2. **51, 53, & 55 Hyde Park Dr - #6, Winchendon, MA 01475**
3. **25, Pearl Drive Winchendon, MA 01475**

Daira says the Ipswich location would be the best to run any focus group meetings and that digital literacy training would be best received there. If MRPC were to coordinate this event with the other housing centers, then it should take cautionary measures because allegedly there is 'bad blood' between some of the community members of different Winchendon housing locations. Despite this, it would still be a good idea to get as many people as possible to come to a focus group meeting. In this case reaching out to Daira to run posters or fliers through the newsletter would be the best way to inform her community of an upcoming MRPC event.

Currently, there are 4 Chromebooks that the Templeton and Winchendon (Ipswich location) housing authorities share. The Ipswich location has one public computer that is used strictly for housing-related tasks. Other than that, the Housing Authority has hot spots at the community building, but they are not for lease. Furthermore, the Wi-Fi connection at the Ipswich location is good, but there is a need for faster speeds and more reliable service. The Winchendon Housing Authority used to go through the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which was very popular. Now individual housing units must pay for their own internet connection. Additionally, there is a need for workstations and affordable digital equipment at some of the Winchendon locations.¹

Moreover, common and repetitive digital questions patrons ask Daira are about their hand-held digital smartphone or device. Daira states, "there are a lot of basic phone questions." This happens often enough to the point where additional tech support at the housing authority would be necessary and helpful. In addition to basic phone questions,

¹ Pearl Drive would be the best location to set up workstations.

Daira also assists with the client's cyber security needs. When talking about internet safety and cybersecurity as a concern at her organization Daira states, the elderly get in trouble then come to her to fix it. There needs to be someone to come in and teach online safety and how to properly install and use security software. Daira stated at multiple points during the interview that it would be helpful if someone could come in and teach the residents cyber security or digital literacy, provided there was financial backing. The only barriers to this at the organization are affordability and labor. If there were to be funding for additional volunteer help or labor at the Housing Authority, then Daira would like to see weekly training classes at her organization².

Moving forward, MRPC will reach out to Jean Meals³ and attend the Tuesday, July 23rd Winchendon Housing Authority focus group meeting.

² Perhaps through CFCE.

³ Unsure who this is. Need to do some digging. Should follow up to see who this is.

Digital Equity Planning Stakeholder Questionnaire

Please complete the stakeholder questionnaire and return to the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's Gregor Goodlett at: ggoodlett@mrpc.org

To take the questionnaire online visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DGVRZMP>



Your Name and Role: Daira Marcano-Ferrer Resident Services Coordinator

Name of Your Organization: Winchendon Housing Authority

City, Town, or Region Served: Winchendon

Questions for Municipal Contacts and Interested Stakeholder groups – Digital Equity Planning	Response Options
<p>Are you aware of the State's Digital Equity Project and have you taken the state survey and/or promoted it to the people you serve?</p> <p>https://broadband.mass.gov/municipal</p> <p>https://mbicx.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxTIMGFVF8KjigC</p>	Yes
<p>Would you like us to provide you with social media or other information to help you promote it to the people you serve?</p>	Yes
<p>Is your organization on the statewide Asset Inventory Map?</p>	Yes Hot spots - community building - not for law
<p>If not, should organization be listed because they serve a Covered Household or Population as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841) or because they otherwise provide support for digital equity related activities?</p>	
<p>If YES, are you open to having MRPC add your organization to the Asset Inventory Map now?</p>	Yes
<p>How many people do you typically serve in a year who fall within one or more of the Covered Populations? Which Covered Population or Stakeholder Group is it? Examples of covered populations are: Rural residents, Aging individuals 60 years or older (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults), Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150% of the poverty level, Racial or ethnic minority groups, Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, Individuals with disabilities, Veterans, and Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility</p>	

Wants -f equipment

Looks good

Accessibility

Digital Equity Planning Stakeholder Questionnaire

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How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).	5
Of those you serve, what do you think their major needs are in these categories: digital literacy, digital skills adoption, access to digital devices, access to broadband internet service, affordability of broadband internet services, willingness to adopt digital technology, ability to adopt digital technology, reliability, speed, performance of available broadband internet service, awareness and confidence with cyber security and internet safety?	Affordability of broadband internet services, reliability, speed, awareness and confidence with cyber security and internet safety.
Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?	Yes
Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?	Yes
Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type?	There is a wait in some weeks some teachers/volunteers!!
What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?	Need for Faster, speed more reliable service help pivoting to virtual.
How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.) For example, do your workers work remote or hybrid now? Did you start offering more online services or remote virtual appointments or meetings?	Remote work sometimes
Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?	Yes
If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?	⇒ Install safety software, teach them how used it correctly
Would you consider your organization a Critical Digital Asset (CDA) or a Community Anchor Institution (CAI)?	Yes
The term "Critical Digital Asset" means a digital computer, communication system, or network that is a component of a critical	

3 buildings part of can set up work stations
Ipwitel
nyda prk drive

it
choices
could be
helpful

varies
local people
on wants
for Digital
learning

For the
elderly
get in
trouble
come to
Daria
to fix

Digital Equity Planning Stakeholder Questionnaire

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<p>Is there a person within your community or organization that is an advocate for digital equity, digital literacy, and/or internet access and services? If so, who?</p>	
<p>Are there any other important stakeholders, interested organizations or individuals, or covered populations, or focus groups that we should contact and include in the planning process? Please list any people, entities, or groups.</p>	

somebody to come to learn

⇒ more computers have shared w/ Templeton

⇒ 4 laptops available around town (limitations)

⇒ come in with for GED

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

#11

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Your Name and Position:

David Connor

Q3

Organization Name and Location:

Templeton Housing Authority

Q4

No

733 Beldenville Road

Are you aware of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program? <https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal>

8 units
 senior units total of 60
 Majority of pop is elderly
 younger - disabled
 20-30% digitally literate

Q5

No

Have you taken the statewide Digital Equity Survey? If not, please select "No" and follow the link below to take the survey: [Statewide Digital Equity Survey](#) Please promote and share the survey link with those you serve!

Q6

Would you like us to provide you with a flier or other information to help you promote the survey to the people you serve? If so, please indicate below and provide an email address to send the flier to.

dconnor@templetonha.org

Talked about having
Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q7 *literacy programs for digital*

Does your organization serve a Covered Household or Population as defined within the definitions of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 (H.R. 1841)? Covered populations include: Aging individuals (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or older adults); Individuals or families of low-income households (not greater than 150% of the poverty level); Minority groups; Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy, individuals with disabilities; Veterans; Incarcerated individuals other than those who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility.

here I am putting for applying for literacy
Persons 60 years of age or older (sometimes referred to as senior citizens or aging adults)

Individuals living in households with incomes not exceeding 150% of the poverty level

Members of a racial or ethnic minority group,

Individuals with a language barrier – including English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy

Veterans

4 laptops donated within

*I community building on Templeton family gen is well connected
older gen needs most help not everyone has connection*

Q8
If your organization serves clients from one or more of the covered populations, how many covered people do you typically serve each year?

Respondent skipped this question

Q9

Is your organization on the statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

I don't know

Q10

If NOT, do you believe your organization SHOULD be included in statewide Digital Equity Asset Inventory Map?

Yes

Q11

How well do you think you know Digital Equity needs of those you serve? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=don't know them at all; 3 - unsure; 5 - know them well).

10

Q12

Please describe some of the greatest digital equity and broadband internet needs of those you serve within each of the following categories:

Respondent skipped this question

Q13

Do you currently offer people free access to the internet at your site?

No

Digital Equity Stakeholder Questionnaire

Q14

No

Do you currently offer people access to computers or a computer lab at your site so they can do tasks they can't do at home?

Q15

Respondent skipped this question

Do you currently offer ongoing or occasional classes related to computers, digital skills, programs, etc? If so, what type? (If not, skip question)

Q16

Respondent skipped this question

What kind of computer/digital support could you use as an organization to do your work more efficiently or effectively (e.g., newer computers, faster speed, more reliable service, help pivoting to virtual)?

Q17

Respondent skipped this question

How did the Covid-19 pandemic impact or change how you work? (Such as remote work, computers/internet, etc.)

Q18

Yes

Is cybersecurity or internet safety a concern for your organization or those you serve?

Q19

If YES, what would you need to make your organization or its clients more cyber-safe?

Continue to improve cyber security

Better to hold meetings @ the temple for senior center
John Mads talk to her

Beal Memorial Library Interview Write-up

Manuel King – Thursday, June 13th at 11 am in person at the Beal Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant Street, Winchendon, MA 01475

Manuel King the Library Director at Beal Memorial Library joined MRPC for an interview with Assistant Library Director Alexis Chanthachack. Manuel King refers to Alexis Chanthachack as knowing the digital needs of Winchendon's residents better and what tech services the library offers. Currently, the library offers free public Wi-Fi, however, it covers the lower half of the library the best. Internet speeds on the lower 4 public computers are the best. The upper half of the library is seldom covered, and stronger Wi-Fi upstairs would be appreciated. During covid people outside trying to connect to the Wi-Fi without going inside so there were efforts to expand the range of the connection to the street. The library would like to provide a faster, more reliable internet connection that extends to outside its physical location and to the second floor. There was also some interest in adding private workspaces to the second floor provided the funding.

For a year there used to be 10 hot spots offered with one set aside for staff, but the library had issues of theft. Presently the library is down to 2 hot spots that can be loaned out. King was unsure how to proceed with the program if there are to be continued thefts. Both agree that it would be beneficial if there were more hotspots available because they were so popular with the town.

Chanthachack offers 1 on 1 computer help by appointment, however, both she and King agree additional digital literacy training would be helpful. A lot of the help that patrons need is either with their handheld device or basic and repetitive computer questions. For example, one person that frequently comes in does not understand how to do something after being told multiple times on separate occasions. This shows a lack of cognitive ability which requires more 1 on 1 digital help. Similarly, the degree of cognitive ability of those seeking digital help varies in Winchendon which makes individual help more necessary. Chanthachack affirms, "[most of their 1 on1 help clients] get confused easily. [Often] after 3 steps." For this reason, they would be interested in a digital literacy training class with MRPC. Future classes are needed at the library, the only constraints are the funding and the shortage of staff.

Going forward, **MRPC should** get Alexis Chanthachak's contact information. There was also a survey box left at the front desk that MRPC should check to see if there were any respondents. Chanthachak also recommended that MRPC reaches out to Miranda Jennings because the Seniors in Winchendon need the most digital help. The Senior Center also has the most available computers.

MBI Regional Partner Guidance

Winchendon Stakeholder Interview Notes

General Session Information

Region Name	Winchendon
Focus Group Date	6/13/2024
Focus Group Start and End Time	11 – 12:30 am
Focus Group Location (address)	Winchendon Public Library 50 Pleasant Street, Winchendon, MA 01475
Primary Covered Population Focus	

Number of Total Attendees (not including facilitator, note-taker, or other organizing staff):

_____1_____ Attendees _____2_____ Facilitators/Planners _____1_____ Staff

If you have any additional details to share on the specifics of this session, please do so here (summarize main takeaways):

Summer times show movies using hotspot 50% of the time stream music

Beals on wheels bring the library to different locations

Busiest time of the year during the summer

Do you offer digital literacy training courses (yes by appointment 1 on 1 computer help sitting "I just bought the new laptop can you help me") Definitely would be interested in a digital literacy training class with MRPC

4 staff 2 of whom are older

Fax machine is very much used

Variety of ways to reach people in Winchendon (go to the senior Center send fliers post stuff on social media)

1 person that frequently comes in doesn't understand being told how to do something (others have varying degrees of cognitive disadvantages)

Opening

1. How did you learn about this focus group session? What brought you here today?	
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* 2. Does anyone have a story to share about a specific time or way the internet has changed your life?	Elderly patrons that come in that need help with handheld devices
---	---

<p>3. What do you regularly use the internet for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work • School • Healthcare • Family and social connection • Civic engagement • Public benefits • Other? 	<p>More of how where is the internet how</p> <p>User questions</p> <p>Not really how it works</p> <p>Brings devices in its questions on the library catalogue</p> <p>“What is word? how do I log into facebook?”</p> <p>Not too much on health care</p> <p>Usually people know what they are coming in for</p> <p>How to download</p> <p>Referring them to the senior Center</p> <p>Maranda Jennings</p> <p>Variety</p> <p>Bring in their laptops</p>
<p>4. If you don't have access to the internet on a regular basis, but need it, what do you need it for the most?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work • School • Healthcare • Family and social connection • Civic engagement • Public benefits • Other? 	

Service Availability, Affordability, Access

<p>*5. Do you have internet service in your home?</p>	<p><i>Make a note of rough count of yes/no.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, most *hesitantly*</i></p> <p><i>whether it is on their device</i></p>
---	--

<p>6. For those of you who have internet service in your home, how is it in terms of speed and reliability? Good enough for what you and your family need?</p>	<p>Spotty not so reliable</p> <p>Speed is ok on the public computers</p> <p>Upstairs is spotty</p>
--	--

6 (follow-ups). How difficult is it for you to pay your internet bill every month, given other expenses?

Have you ever had any especially positive or negative experiences with your internet service provider? If you've had issues with your service, have they been responsive and able to fix the problem?

*7. If you do not have internet service in your home, what is the main reason why?

- Service is not available in my area
- Service is too expensive
- I am concerned about online privacy or safety
- I don't feel confident navigating the internet or using online tools
- I can't afford or access a device to use the internet
- I don't have a computer or internet at home
- I don't feel that I need internet service

Annual fee CWMARS

E-rate program – Not sure if it was still in effect

Not very expensive

75% of the time its fine power lines going out

<p>7 (follow-ups). Are there any other reasons you do not have internet service in your home?</p>	
<p>8. If you do not have internet service in your home, are there any common places that you go to access internet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friend or family member's home• School• Workplace• Library or community center• Business such as a cafe or bookstore• Outdoor space such as a park	

<p>8 (follow-ups). How is the quality of service at these locations?</p> <p>Where else do you wish you could access internet service?</p>	<p>Spotty</p>
---	---------------

Device Availability, Affordability, Access

<p>*9. Do you own a computing device? (Including computers, smartphones, tablets, or other internet-enabled devices)?</p>	<p><i>Make a note of rough count of yes/no.</i></p> <p><i>Yes there are 4 here</i></p>
<p>9 (follow-ups). If yes, what kind of computing devices do you own?</p> <p>If yes, are the devices you have sufficient for your needs?</p> <p>If no, what's the main barrier to having one?</p>	<p>4 computers</p>

<p>10. For those of you who indicated that you don't have regular access to computers and the internet, what might help you to gain access to these technologies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower-cost computers/internet • Digital literacy training • Access to technical support 	
---	--

Digital Skills

<p>*11. How confident do you feel with navigating the internet and using different online services? For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for/applying for jobs • Finding health/medical information • Taking a course or finding learning materials • Online banking or financial services • Accessing or applying for government services • Using a video chat service (e.g., Zoom) for work, school, or telehealth • Using word processing applications (e.g., Google Docs or Microsoft Word) to create a document • Finding ways to protect the privacy of your personal data • Using email • Using social media • Online shopping 	<p>Not confident at all #:</p> <p>Somewhat confident #:</p> <p>Confident #:</p> <p>Very Confident #:</p> <p>Notes: People come in expecting they don't know what they are doing get confused easily get confused after 3 steps</p>
---	--

<p>11 (follow-ups).</p> <p>Are there some activities you feel more or less comfortable with than others?</p> <p>Are there activities you'd like to do on the internet but feel you don't have the knowledge or skillset access?</p>	
---	--

Privacy and Internet Safety

<p>*12. Are you concerned about your privacy and security online?</p>	<p><i>Make a note of rough count of yes/no.</i></p> <p>Yes:</p> <p>No: Not in the past year, what sites they asked about that were unsafe were blocked in the library</p> <p>Scams are called out</p> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>12 (follow-ups). If yes, what are some of your specific concerns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My data getting stolen or used without my consent • That I or a loved one could get scammed or tricked • That I could be tracked or surveilled • That I or a loved one could be harassed or abused online • Other concerns? 	

<p>13. How familiar are you with knowing how to maintain your cybersecurity online?</p>	
<p>13 (follow-ups). What kinds of resources, information, or support might help you feel safer online?</p>	<p>Before the pandemic 4 was sufficient Stronger wifi More reliable internet on the second floor (only one private space) One big space for groups Can you get the wifi from the top steps (want to extend the wifi beyond the walls of the library During covid people did not come into the building people posted around the wifi</p>

Public Resources and Services

<p>*14. How accessible and inclusive do you think online public resources and services are?</p>	<p>Totally accessible if you can get into the building</p> <p>Library computers does not require a library card</p>
<p>14 (follow-ups). What specific barriers or issues have you encountered when using these types of services?</p> <p>What changes might make some of these services feel more accessible or easy to use?</p>	<p>Stealing the hotspot devices (they are very used</p> <p>10 free hotspots for a year 1 set aside for the staff</p> <p>After that program ended down to 2 T-Mobile sends free cards</p> <p>How to get the cards back</p>

Other

<p>15. What else should the State know about your needs or barriers related to computers and the internet?</p>	<p>Town IT guy who tries to keep the hardware up to date Dawn O'Neil</p> <p>Want to eliminate all of the wires</p> <p>Update equipment with a connection that is fast</p>
<p>15 (follow-up).</p> <p>How could the State help you address these needs or barriers?</p> <p>*16. Where do you turn for digital help in your community? Are there organizations, programs, or places that are providing helpful resources and services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Wi-Fi• Digital skills training providers• Device lending or access programs• Information on internet discounts• Others?	

Additional Questions

<p>Please enter notes on any other region- or topic-specific questions discussed during your focus group session. Please make sure to include the question itself, as well as notes on participants' responses.</p>	<p>Senior center is more used by the seniors has more computers</p> <p>Once it hits fall people do not leave their house</p> <p>Definite reluctance for seniors to come to the library</p> <p>Bus program to get more seniors to come here</p>
---	--

Miranda Jennings

-took state survey

-her organization has promoted it, no focus groups yet

-CAC town website and senior center has posted it on social media and website and hung flyer

-850 families at the CAC, 1800 people, 300 monthly

-senior center 100 people a week, servicing over 10% of the population

-disabilities, low income, and seniors

-8/10 knows the needs of her clients

-they do have wifi

-Issues

-cost of phones

-applications for lifeline and app

-using the devices (seniors)

-seniors don't know how to use the phone

-resume, job applications, government assistance programs

Smartphones are the primary device

Needs

-laptops for an Internet cafe

Formal classes for youth, nothing formal for seniors and adults

Internet is ok, could be better

-all meetings offer hybrid option

-community anchor institution

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-reach out to youth council and commission on disabilities

-town communications

-digital literacy

-ILAP, live translation tablet

-translation services needed for other organizations