



Digital Equity Workshop in October 2024. Image Credit: VHB



Nevins Memorial Library. Image Credit: VHB



Methuen High School. Image Credit: VHB

# Digital Equity Study

City of Methuen, Massachusetts | December 2024

PREPARED BY:



PREPARED FOR:



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### DIGITAL EQUITY STAKEHOLDERS

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In Memory of Mayor Neil Perry, whose leadership and dedication made a lasting impact on our community. His strong support for the Nevins Memorial Library as a vital resource for growth and equity played a crucial role in making this Digital Equity Study a reality. Mayor Perry's commitment to creating a more inclusive Methuen will continue to guide and inspire us.

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# 1

## Executive Summary

This Methuen Digital Equity Study serves as a starting point for the city and its core institutions, organizations, and businesses to improve access to digital devices, resources, and training.

This study aims to identify key challenges and opportunities to enhance access to high-speed internet, digital devices, and digital skills training in the City of Methuen.

**31**  
residents and  
stakeholders engaged

**311**  
Statewide Digital Equity  
Survey respondents

**2**  
meetings (1 stakeholder,  
1 public meeting)

### Key Findings:

- › **Broadband internet:** Nearly all Methuen households have access to high-speed internet infrastructure, with primary cable and fiber infrastructure offered by Verizon and Comcast (Xfinity), respectively. Approximately 90.5% of households have broadband subscriptions, comparable with neighboring towns. Ongoing affordability challenges prevent some residents from subscribing to internet services.
- › **Digital devices:** 94.8% of households have one or more types of computing devices. Laptops and desktops dominate, but around 7% of residents rely solely on smartphones to access the internet. Nevins Memorial Library and other key institutions provide critical access to devices and internet for residents, with programs for lending hotspots and digital devices.
- › **Digital skills training:** Nevins Memorial Library and Methuen Public School District provide devices and internet access, but report a knowledge gap between students and parents. The Police Department provides some internet safety training through the Council on Aging, but the Council reports a need for additional digital skills training for older adults, who may not be aware of or confident in using the latest digital technology. More assistive technologies for residents with disabilities could improve user experience. Strategic coordination between local organizations or institutions and regional partners could improve and diversify the training opportunities available in Methuen.

Through a collaborative process involving data collection and public outreach, VHB and the Digital Equity Steering Committee refined the City of Methuen's Digital Equity Vision. These guiding principles serve as the foundation for the work that the City and its core institutions and organizations will undertake in the next one to five years.

### **Methuen's Digital Equity Vision**

**Methuen is a community where every individual, regardless of their origin, abilities, or economic situation, can use the internet to access resources and participate in an inclusive, interconnected community.**

**We are committed to bridging the digital divide by ensuring universal, equitable, and affordable access to high-speed internet, appropriate digital devices, and comprehensive training opportunities for all residents.**

**Through community collaboration, robust infrastructure, and innovative solutions, we aim to create a city where everyone has the resources and support necessary to fully participate in the digital age, fostering opportunity, growth, connectivity, and equity for a brighter future.**

The Vision will be achieved through the following Digital Equity Goals. These goals collectively aim to improve digital equity by ensuring affordable access to high-speed internet and necessary devices, thereby bridging the digital divide. They emphasize the importance of digital literacy through supported training programs and inclusivity of marginalized groups, such as immigrants and first-generation Americans. Additionally, the goals focus on enhancing awareness of available resources, ensuring everyone has the knowledge and tools to fully participate in the digital society.

### **Methuen's Digital Equity Goals**

- 1. Improve access to and affordability of high-speed internet for all residents.**
- 2. Enhance access to public digital devices and support device distribution to households that need them.**
- 3. Support and build upon existing digital skills training initiatives.**
- 4. Ensure inclusivity of historically vulnerable populations, including immigrants and first-generation Americans.**
- 5. Build internal and external awareness of resources and accessibility to institutions.**

# Resumen ejecutivo

Este estudio sobre la equidad digital en Methuen actúa como punto de partida para que la ciudad y sus principales instituciones, organizaciones y empresas mejoren el acceso a los dispositivos, recursos y capacitación en materia digital.

El objetivo del estudio es identificar los principales desafíos y oportunidades para mejorar el acceso a internet de alta velocidad, a los dispositivos digitales y a la capacitación en competencias digitales en la ciudad de Methuen.

**31**

residentes y partes interesadas involucrados

**311**

participantes de la encuesta estatal sobre equidad digital

**2**

reuniones (1 con partes interesadas, 1 reunión pública)

## Conclusiones más importantes:

- › **Internet de banda ancha:** Casi todos los hogares en Methuen tienen acceso a infraestructura de internet de alta velocidad, con una infraestructura básica de cable y fibra suministrada por Verizon y Comcast (Xfinity), respectivamente. Aproximadamente el 90.5 % de los hogares tienen suscripciones de servicios de banda ancha, un porcentaje similar al de ciudades vecinas. Sin embargo, algunos residentes no pueden contratar los servicios de internet debido a los costos actuales.
- › **Dispositivos digitales:** El 94.8 % de los hogares cuenta con uno o varios tipos de dispositivos informáticos. Los predominantes son las computadoras portátiles y de escritorio, pero alrededor del 7 % de los residentes solo cuenta con teléfonos inteligentes para conectarse a internet. La Biblioteca Nevins Memorial y otras instituciones destacadas ofrecen a los residentes acceso esencial a dispositivos y a internet mediante programas de préstamo de dispositivos digitales y puntos de acceso wifi.
- › **Capacitación en competencias digitales:** La Biblioteca Nevins Memorial y el Distrito de Escuelas Públicas de Methuen (Methuen Public School District) ofrecen dispositivos y acceso a internet, pero señalan una disparidad de conocimientos entre padres/madres y alumnos. El Departamento de Policía (Police Department) ofrece algunos cursos de ciberseguridad a través del Consejo de Adultos Mayores (Council on Aging), pero el Consejo advierte sobre la necesidad de ampliar la capacitación en competencias digitales para las personas mayores, que quizás no están familiarizadas con las últimas tecnologías digitales o no se sienten seguras a la hora de utilizarlas. Una mayor disponibilidad de tecnologías de asistencia para residentes con discapacidades podría mejorar la experiencia de los usuarios. La coordinación estratégica entre organizaciones o instituciones locales y socios regionales podría mejorar y diversificar las oportunidades de capacitación disponibles en Methuen.



Gracias a un proceso de colaboración que incluyó la recopilación de datos y la divulgación pública, VHB y el Comité Directivo de Equidad Digital perfeccionaron la visión de equidad digital de la ciudad de Methuen. Estos principios rectores sirven de base para el trabajo que la ciudad y sus principales instituciones y organizaciones llevarán a cabo en los próximos cinco años.

### La visión de Methuen sobre la equidad digital

Methuen es una comunidad en la que todas las personas, independientemente de su origen, capacidades o condición económica, pueden utilizar internet para acceder a diferentes recursos y participar en una comunidad inclusiva e interconectada.

Tenemos el compromiso de superar la brecha digital garantizando el acceso universal, equitativo y asequible a un servicio de internet de alta velocidad, dispositivos digitales adecuados y oportunidades de capacitación integral para todos los residentes.

Mediante la colaboración comunitaria, una infraestructura sólida y soluciones innovadoras, aspiramos a crear una ciudad en la que todos dispongan de los recursos y el apoyo necesarios para participar plenamente en la era digital a fin de promover las oportunidades, el crecimiento, la conectividad y la equidad para un futuro mejor.

Para alcanzar esta visión, nos guiaremos por los siguientes objetivos de equidad digital. En general, estos objetivos apuntan a mejorar la equidad digital garantizando un acceso asequible a internet de alta velocidad y a los dispositivos necesarios para superar de este modo la brecha digital. Destacan la importancia de la alfabetización digital mediante programas de capacitación subvencionados y la inclusión de grupos marginados, como los inmigrantes y los estadounidenses de primera generación. Asimismo, los objetivos se centran en divulgar la disponibilidad de los recursos para así garantizar que todas las personas cuenten con las herramientas y los conocimientos necesarios para participar plenamente en la sociedad digital.

### Objetivos de Methuen sobre la equidad digital

1. Mejorar el acceso y la asequibilidad de los servicios de internet de alta velocidad para todos los residentes.
2. Mejorar el acceso a dispositivos digitales públicos y promover la distribución de dispositivos a los hogares que los necesiten.
3. Promover y aprovechar las iniciativas existentes de capacitación en competencias digitales.
4. Garantizar la inclusión de las poblaciones tradicionalmente vulnerables, como los inmigrantes y los estadounidenses de primera generación.
5. Aumentar el conocimiento interno y externo sobre los recursos y la accesibilidad a las instituciones.

# Rezime Egzekitif

Etid sou Ekite Nimerik Methuen sa a ap sèvi kòm pwèn depa pou vil la epi pou enstitisyon, òganizasyon ak biznis prensipal li yo pou amelyore aksè a aparèy nimerik yo, resous yo ak fòmasyon.

Etid sa a gen pou objektif pou idantifye defi ak opòtinite kle yo pou ogmante aksè a entènèt a gwo vitès, aparèy nimerik ak fòmasyon sou konpetans nimerik nan Vil Methuen la.

**31**

rezidan ak  
pati prenand ki angaje yo

**311**

moun ki reponn Ankèt  
sou Ekite Nimerik nan  
Tout Eta a

**2**

reyinyon (1 reyinyon ak  
pati prenand yo,  
1 reyinyon piblik)

## Konklizyon Kle:

- › **Entènèt a gwo vitès:** Prèske tout kay nan Methuen gen aksè a enfrastrikti entènèt a gwo vitès, atravè enfrastrikti kab primè ak enfrastrikti fib optik Verizon ak Comcast (Xfinity) ofri respektivman. Apeprè 90.5% kay gen abònman entènèt gwo vitès, sa ki konparab avèk vil ki toupre yo. Pwoblèm finansye kontinyel yo anpeche kèk rezidan abone avèk sèvis entènèt yo.
- › **Aparèy Nimerik:** 94.8% kay gen youn oswa plizyè tip aparèy enfòmatis. Se laptòp ak òdinatè fiks ki plis genyen, men apeprè 7% nan rezidan yo sèvi sèlman avèk telefòn entelijan yo pou ale sou entènèt. Bibliyotèk Nevins Memorial ak lòt enstitisyon kle ofri aksè ki esansyèl a aparèy epi entènèt pou rezidan yo, avèk pwogram pou prete aparèy hotspot ak aparèy nimerik.
- › **Fòmasyon sou konpetans nimerik:** Bibliyotèk Nevis Memorial ak Distri Lekòl Piblik Methuen ofri aparèy ak aksè a entènèt, men rapòte yon eka nan konesans yo ant elèv ak paran yo. Depatman Lapolis la ofri kèk fòmasyon sou sekirite sou entènèt atravè Konsèy sou Vyeyisman (Council on Aging), men Konsèy la rapòte yon bezwen pou fòmasyon adisyonèl sou konpetans nimerik pou adilt ki pi aje yo, ki gendwa pa konnen oswa pa gen konfyans nan tèt yo pou sèvi avèk teknoloji nimerik ki pi resan an. Plis asistans teknolojik pou rezidan ki gen andikap yo ta kapab amelyore eksperyans itilizatè yo. Kowòdinasyon estratejik ant òganizasyon oswa entitisyon lokal ak patnè rejyonal yo ta kapab amelyore epi divèsifye opòtinite fòmasyon ki disponib nan Methuen.

Atravè yon pwosesis kolaboratif ki gen ladan koleksyon done ak konsyantizasyon piblik la, VHB ak Komite Pilotaj Ekite Nimerik la rann Vizyon Ekite Nimerik Vil Methuen lan pi klè. Prensip direktè sa yo sèvi kòm fondasyon pou travay Vil la ak enstitisyon ak òganizasyon prensipal li yo pral antreprann nan pwochen youn ak senk lane yo.

### Vizyon Ekite Nimerik Methuen

Methuen se yon kominote kote chak grenn moun, kèlkeswa orijin li, kapasite li, oswa sitiyasyon ekonomik li, kapab itilize entènèt pou li kapab gen aksè a resous yo ak pou li kapab patisipe nan yon kominote enklizif ki entèkonekte.

Nou pran angajman pou n konble lakin nimerik ki genyen yo pandan n ap asire aksè inèvèsèl, ekitab, epi ki abòdab ak entènèt gwo vitès, aparèy nimerik ki apwopriye, ansanm ak opòtinite pou fòmasyon konplè pou tout rezidan yo.

Gras ak kolaborasyon kominotè, enfrastrikti solid, ansanm ak solisyon inovan, nou vize kreye yon vil kote tout moun jwenn resous ak sipò ki nesèsè pou yo kapab patisipe konplètman nan laj nimerik la, pandan n ap ankouraje opòtinite, kwasans, koneksyon entènèt, ansanm ak ekite pou yon avni ki pi briyan.

Vizyon an ap reyalize nan swiv Objektif Ekite Nimerik annapre yo. Objektif sa yo ap vize yon fason ki kolektif amelyorasyon ekite nimerik nan asire aksè abòdab ak entènèt a gwo vitès ak aparèy ki nesèsè yo, yon fason pou konble lakin nimerik la. Yo mete aksan sou enpòtans konesans nimerik la atravè pwogram fòmasyon ki sibvansyone yo ak enklizyon gwoup majinalize yo, tankou imigran ak Ameriken premye jenerasyon yo. Anplisdesa, objektif yo konsantre sou ogmantasyon konsyantizasyon sou resous ki disponib yo, pou asire tout moun gen konesans ak zouti pou yo patisipe kòmsadwa nan monn nimerik la.

### Objektif Ekite Nimerik Methuen

1. Amelyore aksè ak entènèt ki gen gwo vitès ak rann li abòdab pou tout rezidan yo.
2. Ogmante aksè ak aparèy nimerik piblik yo epi sipòte distribisyon aparèy yo nan kay ki bezwen yo.
3. Sipòte epi devlope inisyativ fòmasyon sou konpetans nimerik ki egziste yo.
4. Asire enklizyon popilasyon ki istorikman vilnerab yo, enkli imigran yo ak Ameriken premye jenerasyon yo.
5. Bati konsyantizasyon entèn ak ekstèn sou resous ak aksè a enstitisyon yo.

## المخلص التنفيذي

تُعد دراسة ميثوين للمساواة الرقمية (Methuen Digital Equity Study) هذه بمثابة نقطة انطلاق للمدينة ومؤسساتها الأساسية ومنظماتها وأنشطتها التجارية لتحسين إمكانية الوصول إلى الأجهزة الرقمية والموارد والتدريب الرقمي.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد التحديات والفرص الرئيسية لتعزيز الوصول إلى الإنترنت عالي السرعة، والأجهزة الرقمية، والتدريب على المهارات الرقمية في مدينة ميثوين.

31

ساكنًا  
وطرفًا معنيًا شاركوا

311

مشاركًا في استبيان المساواة الرقمية  
على مستوى الولاية

2

اجتماعان (1 للأطراف المعنية،  
و1 اجتماع عام)

### النتائج الرئيسية:

- إنترنت البرودباند: تتمتع جميع المنازل في ميثوين تقريبًا بإمكانية الاستفادة من التجهيزات الأساسية للإنترنت عالي السرعة، مع توفر تجهيزات أساسية من الكابلات وأنظمة الألياف الضوئية (الفايبر) التي تقدمها Verizon وComcast (Xfinity)، على الترتيب. ما يقرب من 90.5% من الأسر لديها اشتراكات في إنترنت البرودباند (النطاق العريض)، وهي نسبة تماثل المدن المجاورة. لكن التحديات المتعلقة بالقدرة على تحمل التكاليف المستمرة تمنع بعض السكان من الاشتراك في خدمات الإنترنت.
- الأجهزة الرقمية: 94.8% من الأسر المعيشية لديها نوع أو أكثر من الأجهزة الحاسوبية. وتهيمن أجهزة الكمبيوتر المحمولة (اللابتوب) وأجهزة الكمبيوتر المكتبية، ولكن حوالي 7% من السكان يعتمدون فقط على الهواتف الذكية للوصول إلى الإنترنت. توفر مكتبة Nevins Memorial Library وغيرها من المؤسسات الرئيسية الأخرى إمكانية الضرورية لاستخدام الأجهزة والإنترنت للسكان، مع إتاحة برامج تتيح إعاره نقاط الاتصال بالإنترنت (Hotspots) والأجهزة الرقمية.
- التدريب على المهارات الرقمية: توفر مكتبة Nevins Memorial Library والإدارة التعليمية للمدارس العامة في ميثوين العامة (Methuen Public School District) الأجهزة والوصول إلى الإنترنت، ولكنهما أبلغتا عن وجود فجوة معرفية بين الطلاب وأولياء الأمور. وتوفر إدارة الشرطة (Police Department) بعض التدريب على السلامة على الإنترنت من خلال المجلس المختص بكبار السن (Council on Aging)، لكن المجلس أفاد بوجود حاجة إلى تقديم تدريب إضافي على المهارات الرقمية لكبار السن، الذين قد لا يكونون على دراية أو يفتقدون إلى الثقة في استخدام أحدث التقنيات الرقمية. يمكن لمزيد من التقنيات المساعدة للسكان من ذوي الهمم تحسين تجربة الاستخدام. كما من خلال التنسيق الاستراتيجي بين المنظمات أو المؤسسات المحلية والشركاء الإقليميين أن يتم تحسين وتنويع فرص التدريب المتاحة في ميثوين.

من خلال عملية تعاونية شملت جمع البيانات والتواصل مع الجمهور، قام مجلس إدارة شركة VHB واللجنة التوجيهية للمساواة الرقمية (Digital Equity Steering Committee) بتحسين رؤية مدينة ميثوين للمساواة الرقمية. تشكل هذه المبادئ التوجيهية الأساس للعمل الذي ستقوم به المدينة ومؤسساتها ومنظماتها الأساسية خلال السنوات الخمس المقبلة.

### رؤية ميثوين للمساواة الرقمية

ميثوين مجتمع يستطيع فيه كل فرد – بغض النظر عن أصله أو قدراته أو وضعه الاقتصادي – استخدام الإنترنت للوصول إلى الموارد والمشاركة في مجتمع شامل ومتربط. ونحن ملتزمون بسد الفجوة الرقمية من خلال ضمان الوصول الشامل والمنصف وميسور التكلفة إلى الإنترنت عالي السرعة والأجهزة الرقمية المناسبة وفرص التدريب الشامل لجميع السكان. من خلال التعاون المجتمعي، والبنية الأساسية القوية، والحلول المبتكرة، فإننا نهدف إلى تأسيس مدينة يتمتع فيها الجميع بالموارد والدعم اللازمين للمشاركة الكاملة في العصر الرقمي، وتعزيز الفرص والنمو والاتصال والمساواة من أجل مستقبل أكثر إشراقاً.

سيتم تحقيق الرؤية من خلال أهداف المساواة الرقمية التالية. وتهدف هذه الأهداف في مجملها إلى تحسين المساواة الرقمية من خلال ضمان الوصول إلى الإنترنت عالي السرعة والأجهزة الضرورية بأسعار معقولة، مما يقود بالتالي إلى سد الفجوة الرقمية. وهي تؤكد على أهمية محو الأمية الرقمية من خلال برامج التدريب المدعومة وشمول الفئات المهمشة، كالمهاجرين والأمريكيين من الجيل الأول. كما تركز الأهداف على تعزيز الوعي بالموارد المتاحة، وضمان حصول الجميع على المعرفة والأدوات اللازمة للمشاركة الكاملة في المجتمع الرقمي.

### أهداف ميثوين للمساواة الرقمية

1. تحسين الوصول إلى الإنترنت عالي السرعة والقدرة على تحمل تكلفته لجميع السكان.
2. تعزيز الوصول إلى الأجهزة الرقمية العامة ودعم توزيع الأجهزة على الأسر التي تحتاج إليها.
3. دعم مبادرات التدريب على المهارات الرقمية القائمة والبناء عليها.
4. ضمان شمول الفئات السكانية الضعيفة تاريخياً، بمن فيهم المهاجرين والأمريكيين من الجيل الأول.
5. بناء الوعي الداخلي والخارجي بالموارد وإمكانية الوصول إلى المؤسسات.



# 2

## Introduction

Digital equity means everyone has access to technology, the internet, and the knowledge to use both. This report sets forth goals for creating a community framework that allows Methuen residents to meet their technology and digital needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated society's dependency on technology for fundamental tasks in education, healthcare, employment, personal finances, and even political participation. This transition exposed the disparities in digital access and skills, impacting communities nationwide, and Methuen was no exception.

The increasing use and popularity of remote education, telehealth, remote work, virtual civic engagement, and maintaining family connections have underscored the urgency of addressing digital inequity. As the world continues to evolve towards a more digitally integrated future, ensuring equitable access to technology is not just a matter of convenience but a fundamental necessity for social and economic participation. The need to research, plan for, and fund future improvements is of primary interest at both the national and state levels, through agencies like the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), MBI, and National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA).

This report documents Methuen's baseline digital equity conditions, summarizes public engagement activities, and recommends goals and actions to address the digital divide, with a focus on inclusivity and the needs of marginalized communities or those in vulnerable situations.

## Study Purpose

This Methuen Digital Equity Study shares a sustainable, long-term framework to bridge the digital divide and empower all residents with the tools and skills necessary to fully participate in the digital age. It outlines key initiatives, strategies, and partnerships that will enable Methuen to achieve digital equity, ensuring that technology serves as a bridge rather than a barrier for the community.

## Key Definitions

The NDIA defines the following terms in digital equity work.<sup>1</sup>

### Digital Divide—The Problem

The digital divide is the gap between those who have affordable access, skills, and support to effectively engage online and those who do not.

### Digital Inclusion—The Work

Digital inclusion refers to the activities necessary to ensure that all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

### Digital Equity—The Goal

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.

Those most impacted by the digital divide are often marginalized communities, in which digital inequity can deepen existing social inequities like education, income, and housing. The NTIA identifies eight **vulnerable populations** that are historically more predisposed to the digital divide include:

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

Through targeted and comprehensive digital inclusion efforts, digital equity players (including local governments and institutions, non-profits, private organizations, and more) can enhance residents' experience with and trust of digital technology and broadband internet.

A full [Glossary of Terms](#) is available for reference at the end of this document.

## Digital Equity Indicators

The primary indicators of digital equity are broadband access, device access, and digital skills training. The City of Methuen, in collaboration with local anchor institutions and regional partners, strives to address the technological needs of residents through digital inclusion initiatives. This report recommends digital inclusion efforts that address the primary indicators of digital equity as defined below.

### Broadband Access

Broadband access refers to the ability and use of high-speed internet services (defined by the FCC as 100/20 Mbps) through technologies like fiber, coaxial cable, fixed wireless, DSL, and satellite. Key aspects of broadband access include availability, affordability, and adoption through internet subscriptions. (NDIA)

### Device Access

Device access refers to the ability of individuals to use electronic tools that process, store, and transit digital data, including computers, tablets, smartphones, smartwatches, and other connected devices. Key aspects of device access include availability, affordability, and applicability. (NDIA)

### Digital Literacy and Training

The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills. (American Library Association)

## THE THREE PILLARS OF DIGITAL EQUITY



A flyer at the Nevins Memorial Library promotes mobile hotspots available for check-out. Image credit: VHB





# 3

## Methodology

Digital equity planning initiatives in Methuen have been focused and effective, with the Digital Equity Charrette serving as the highlight of the process. In-depth discussions about digital needs, conducted through interviews and stakeholder meetings, laid the groundwork for the Charrette to serve as a forum where participants could express their visions for the future.

### Digital Equity Steering Committee

Representing a community institution already well-positioned to promote digital inclusion, staff at the Nevins Memorial Library served as the Digital Equity Steering Committee for Methuen's Digital Equity Charrette. The Library played a crucial role in facilitating this digital equity study, supporting with public engagement and data collection. Additionally, the Library staff helped to refine the recommendations in [Chapter 5: Goals to Achieving Digital Equity in Methuen](#).

### Stakeholder Interviews

Together with the Digital Equity Steering Committee, VHB interviewed representatives from several Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs), or key service providers, municipal departments, and organizations that provide digital equity services and support. Attendees included staff from the City IT Department, Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen Public School District, Methuen Community Studios, Methuen Housing Authority, the Council on Aging, and local banks and credit unions. The notes from this group interview session are included in [Appendix I](#).

### Public Charrette

On October 21, 2024, the Steering Committee and VHB facilitated a public digital equity charrette at the Nevins Memorial Library. A **charrette** is a focused workshop designed to gather information on community needs. This charrette focused on residents' experiences related to accessing the internet, devices, and training. Linguistic Systems, Inc. (LSI) provided live interpretation services in Arabic, Haitian Creole, and Spanish.

During the event, VHB presented Methuen’s baseline digital equity conditions. After the presentation, participants engaged in breakout discussions with VHB staff and the Steering Committee. Insights from these conversations highlighted Methuen’s key obstacles to achieving digital equity, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of the City’s constraints in this report. By identifying obstacles, participants were then encouraged to co-create solutions to improve digital equity. Suggestions included ways Methuen could offer new services, such as establishing a community computer lab, to promote greater digital equity. The notes from the public charrette are included in [Appendix II](#).



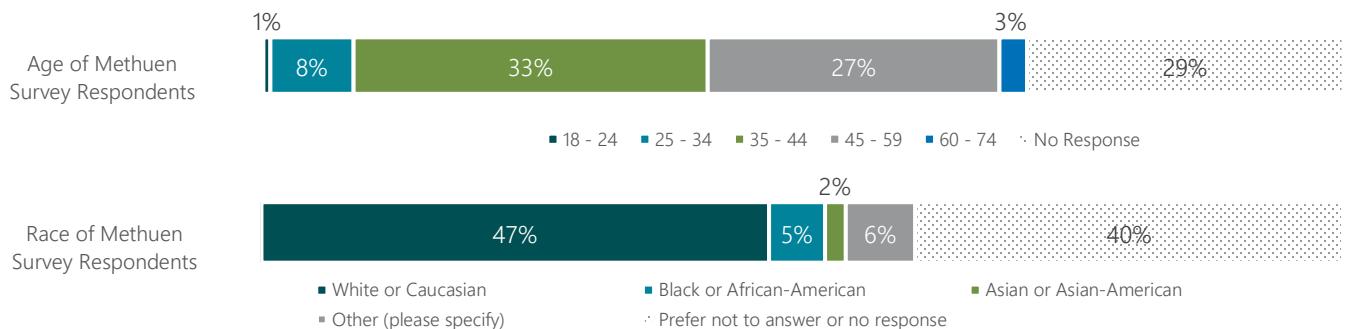
VHB presents at the public charrette at Nevins Memorial Library in October 2024. Credit: Image Credit: VHB

## Statewide Digital Equity Survey

MBI created a Statewide Digital Equity Survey to learn about regional and local internet access and digital equity needs of Massachusetts residents.

As of October 2024, a total of 311 Methuen residents completed the survey.

VHB evaluated the survey responses, which provided essential information on local internet providers, observed speeds, subscription pricing, and digital skills. 60% of survey respondents (187) were between the ages of 35 and 59 years old. 47% of respondents (146) identified as white or Caucasian. A summary of responses is included [Appendix III](#).



# 4

## Community Needs

Most Methuen residents have internet subscriptions and own digital devices. However, issues such as affordability, service reliability, and distrust prevent some residents from fully benefiting from digital tools and resources.



*A woman uses her computers at the Nevins Memorial Library. Image Credit: VHB*

## At a Glance

	Current Status	Primary Challenges	Opportunities
Broadband Access	Nearly every household has the infrastructure to connect to high-speed internet.	Affordability continues to play a role in whether residents subscribe to internet services.  Internet speeds vary depending on location and time of day.	Enhance market competition and share information about affordable subscription options.  Enhance public spaces by developing a mesh network or providing public hotspots for public Wi-Fi.
Digital Devices	Most residents have access to a smartphone, laptop, desktop, tablet, or some combination of these devices.	Devices are becoming more advanced and less affordable.  People may be unaware of public devices or device lending programs.	Establish a computer lab at a well-used public institution like the Nevins Memorial Library or Methuen Community Studios.  Ensure places with device-lending programs can also provide assistive technologies (AT) to those who need them.
Digital Skills Training	Several local institutions and non-profits lead digital skills training classes that serve specific sectors of the population.	Cybersecurity threatens all internet users.  People may be unaware of training opportunities or feel the training does not cater to their needs.  Language barriers at and physical access to training programs inhibits inclusive attendance.	Hire additional staff or find a digital navigator to provide 1-on-1 trainings at Community Anchor Institutions.  Establish a Digital Equity Steering Committee to lead digital equity initiatives.  Hire a grant writer to secure funding to support the implementation of new programs.

# Broadband Access and Adoption

## Connecting at Home

When evaluating broadband availability, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) assesses provider options and speeds at **Broadband Serviceable Locations** (BSLs), defined as “a business or residential location in the United States at which mass-market fixed broadband Internet access service is, or can be, installed.”<sup>2</sup> Examples of BSLs include single-family homes, townhouses, apartment buildings, restaurants, retail shops, and schools. Structures that are not BSLs include barns, sheds, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), or standalone garages.

Methuen residents have multiple options when it comes to Internet Service Providers (ISPs). **Table 1** illustrates the six providers in Methuen, their connection type, their maximum advertised speed, and the percent of BSLs that have access to that subscription type. **Fiber**, the fastest and most reliable internet connection, is available to almost 95% of BSLs in the City through Verizon.<sup>3</sup> The next best option is **cable**, provided by Comcast Communications (Xfinity), which has the capacity to serve nearly all of the BSL’s in Methuen.

**Table 1: ISPs in Methuen and Their Coverage with Maximum Speeds and Connection Type**

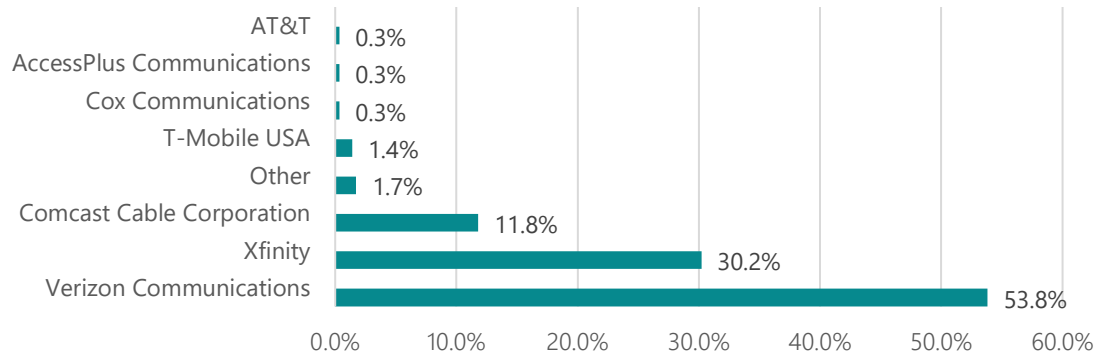
	<b>Internet Service Providers</b>	<b>Connection Type</b>	<b>Max Advertised Download/Upload Speed (Mbps)</b>	<b>% of BSLs with Service Available</b>
<b>Wired</b>	Comcast (Xfinity)	Cable	1200/35	99.83%
	Verizon	Fiber	1/1 (Gbps)	94.37%
<b>Wireless</b>	Viasat, Inc.	GSO Satellite	150/3	100%
	Starlink	NGSO Satellite	220/25	100%
	HughesNet Systems, LLC	GSO Satellite	100/5	100%
	T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	100/20	4.95%

Source: MBI Broadband Data (June 2022)

In addition to wired connections, Methuen’s residents can also access the internet via wireless connection types, including **satellite** (with ISPs HughesNet, Viasat, and Starlink) and licensed **fixed wireless** (with T-Mobile). Wireless connection types are typically less reliable than wired connections and are more likely to be affected by outside impacts like the weather, device limitations (older devices may not support the latest wireless standards), and network congestion.

Survey responses to the Statewide Digital Equity Survey revealed the following distribution for ISP subscriptions in Methuen, as shown as **Figure 1**.

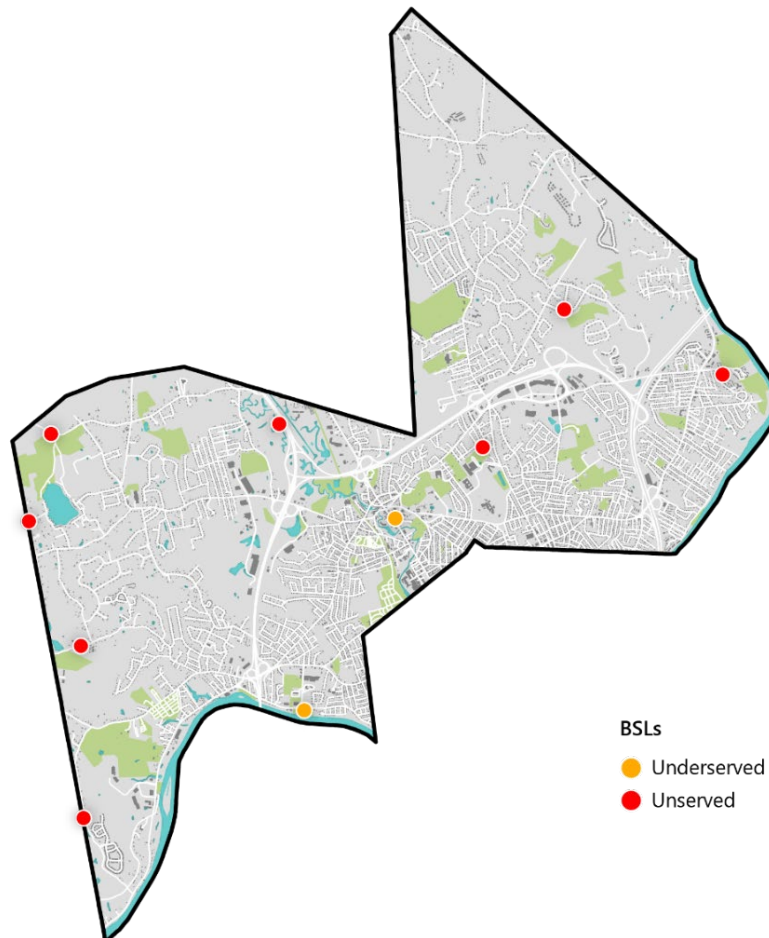
**Figure 1: Distribution of Methuen Internet Subscriptions for Methuen Households**



Source: Statewide Digital Equity Survey (October 2024)

The MBI Interactive Mapping Portal allows users to locate where BSLs are receiving internet speeds below the threshold classified by the State as high-speed internet. Nearly 100% of BSLs in Methuen are **served**, meaning these structures have the capability to link to wired broadband ISPs that provide internet at speeds of at least 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 20 Mbps upload (written 100/20 Mbps). However, data from the MBI Interactive Mapping Portal and pinpoints 10 BSLs (highlighted in Figure 2) are either **unserved** (receiving internet at speeds less than 25/3 Mbps) or **underserved** (receiving internet at speeds between 25/3 Mbps and 100/20 Mbps).

**Figure 2: Methuen’s Known Unserved and Underserved Broadband Serviceable Locations**



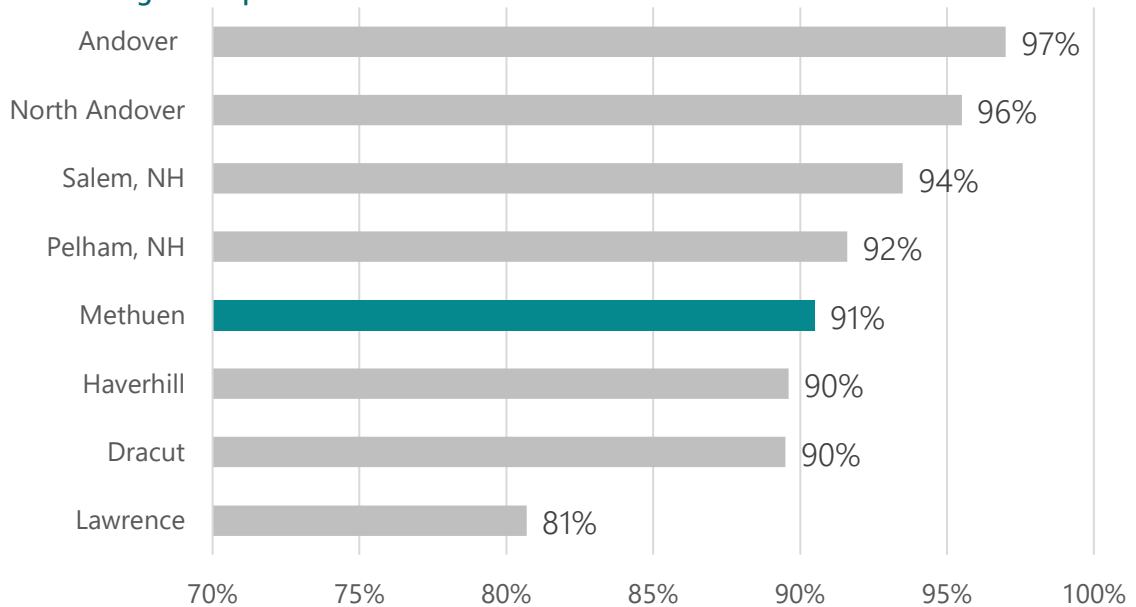
Source: MBI Interactive Mapping Portal (2023)

One nuance of broadband speed, service level, and data collection is the method used to gather this information. Speed test data available through the FCC and MBI reflects speeds reported by the ISPs. Conversations were held with stakeholders and Methuen residents throughout the planning process to better understand any potential discrepancies between the reported data and residents' actual experiences.

Households may experience poor internet connectivity due to structural issues or price barriers that prevent them from subscribing to a quality service. The City of Methuen should actively engage with ISPs in the area and advocate for greater transparency and improved customer service.

Even with internet availability, several factors may prevent households from subscribing to services— this challenge is referred to as **internet adoption**. According to the U.S. Census, 90.5% of Methuen residents have a broadband internet subscription, comparable to rates in surrounding towns, as shown in Figure 3. Conversely, approximately 9% of residents do not have an internet subscription.

**Figure 3: Percent of Households with Broadband Internet Subscriptions in Methuen Compared to Abutting Municipalities**

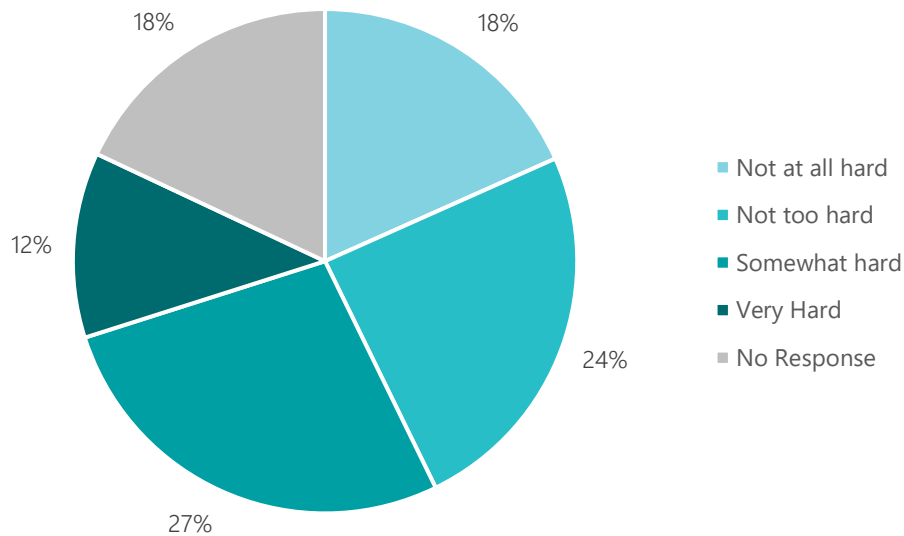


Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles. DP02 Selected Social Characteristics in the United States.

Of the 311 Methuen residents who responded to the Statewide Digital Equity Survey, ten (3.2%) responded that they had no internet service available at home. Of those ten, five identified as being either of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, three made less than \$29,000 annually, and one reported living in affordable housing. This data suggests a correlation between internet access and income or race, following regional and national trends.

Survey responses from the Statewide Digital Equity Survey indicated that the average monthly cost for internet is approximately \$115, while the median cost is \$100. **Figure 4** illustrates survey participants' responses regarding the difficulty of paying their monthly internet bills.

**Figure 4: Self-Reported Difficulty Paying Monthly Internet Subscription in Methuen**



Source: Statewide Digital Equity Survey (October 2024)

As of February 2024, 2,933 (15%) of Methuen's households were relying on financial assistance through the FCC's American Connectivity Program (ACP) to make internet subscriptions more affordable.<sup>4</sup> The ACP provided a discount of up to \$30 per month for internet services for eligible households.<sup>5</sup> Recipients of ACP could also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contributed more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price. Due to insufficient funding, the ACP program concluded on June 1, 2024. Consequently, the City anticipates former ACP recipients may need additional support to find and apply for alternative subsidy programs or discounted subscription options.

To address affordability barriers to internet adoption, the City, with support from local institutions, can inform residents of affordable subscription options and best practices to ensure they only pay for the services they need. Exploring alternative ISPs like Breezeline (currently installing in Haverhill) and increasing competition in the city could be a long-term goal to reduce the cost of internet service for residents.

## Connecting in the Community

Survey data and stakeholder input revealed that Methuen residents who are unable to access Wi-Fi at home turn to public facilities in Methuen as a space to access public Wi-Fi networks, devices, and informational resources for learning digital skills. These locations often include workplaces, schools, libraries, community centers, restaurants, cafés, or bookstores. If available, the use of cellular data is another way residents might access Wi-Fi at home or in public.

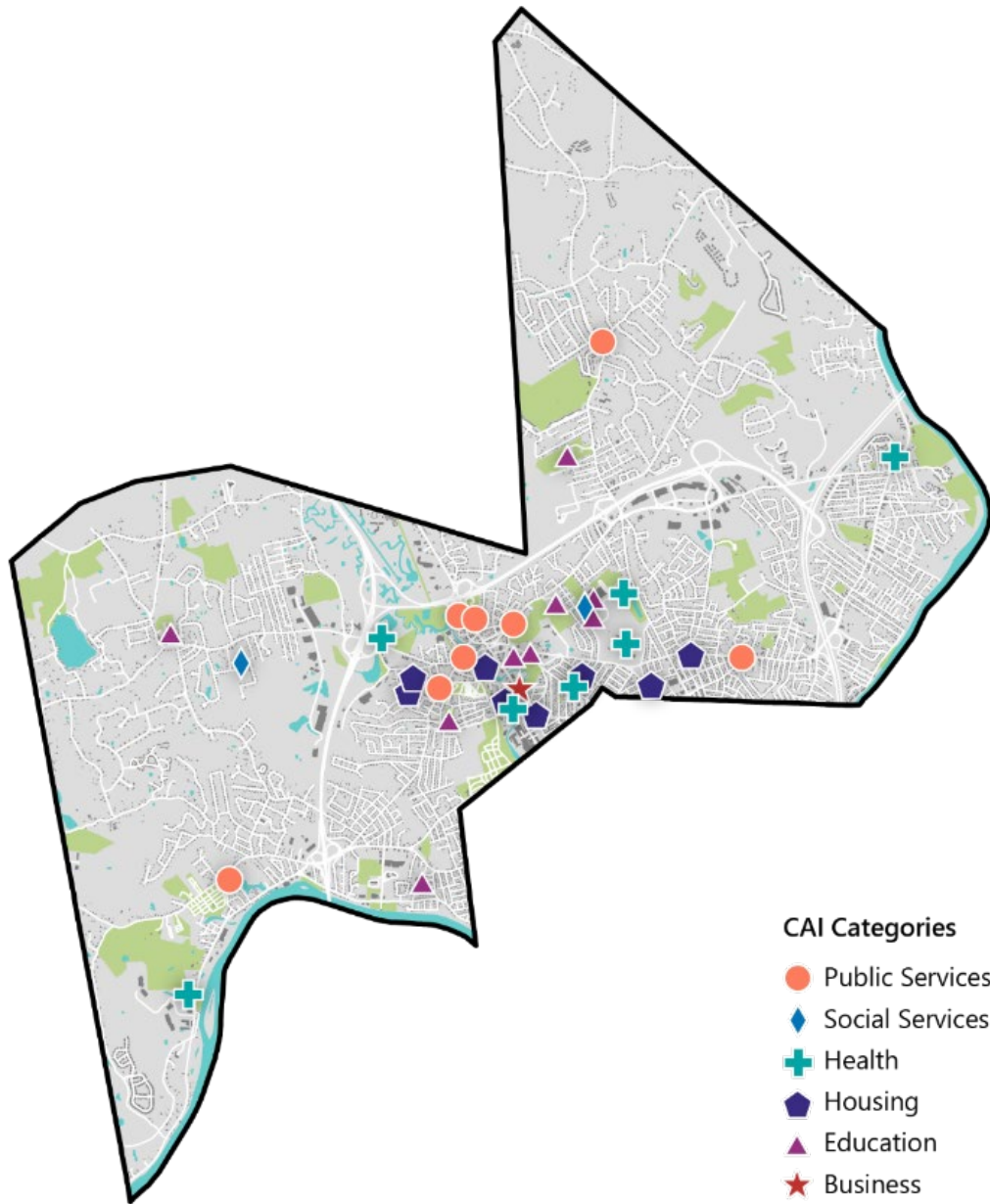
Key places where public Wi-Fi may be available are known as **Community Anchor Institutions**, or (CAIs). **Figure 5** illustrates where Methuen's CAIs are located, as determined by the FCC. CAIs are locations with that provide critical resources to facilitate greater use of broadband service by



vulnerable populations (including low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, children, the incarcerated, and older populations). Key CAIs in Methuen that provide public Wi-Fi include:

- › Nevins Memorial Library
- › Methuen Senior Activity Center
- › Methuen YMCA
- › Methuen Community Resource Center
- › City Hall

**Figure 5: Map of Methuen’s Community Anchor Institutions**



Source: MBI Interactive Mapping Portal

**Table 2: CAIs by Category in Methuen**

<b>Public Services</b>	Fire & Police Departments; Senior Center; City Hall; Nevins Memorial Library
<b>Social Services</b>	Fidelity House; Nicholson Stadium
<b>Health</b>	Methuen Family Health Center; Nevins Nursing & Rehabilitation Center; Andover Pediatrics; Kevin Berry MD.; Cedar View Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center; Steward Holy Family Hospital; GLFHC Corporate Headquarters
<b>Housing</b>	Village at Riverwalk Park; Halcyon House; Grace Morgan House; Edgewood Avenue Elderly; 22 & 24 Mystic St Elderly; Congregate Elderly; Oakland Avenue Elderly; J.F.K. Village
<b>Education</b>	Notre Dame Cristo Rey; Comprehensive Grammar School; Saint Ann’s Home School; Methuen High School; Tenney Grammar School; Timony Grammar School; Marsh Grammar School; St. Monica Elementary School; the Islamic Academy
<b>Business</b>	Mortgage Equity Partners



*Methuen High School, a Community Anchor Institution. Image Credit: VHB*

## Device Access

Digital devices play a crucial role in achieving digital equity by providing essential tools for accessing information, education, and services online, enabling individuals to participate fully in the digital society.

### Devices at Home

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 94.8% of households in Methuen have access to one or more types of computing devices.<sup>6</sup> The Census breakdown of device adoption is as follows: 82.8% of residents have access to a desktop or laptop, 88.5% have a smartphone, and 69.4% have access to a tablet or other portable wireless computer.

Of the 266 Methuen residents who responded to the Statewide Digital Equity Survey question, "Does everyone in your household have access to the computer devices they need to meet their everyday needs for internet use?", 236 people (89%) responded "Yes" whereas 30 (11%) responded "No."

When the same respondents were asked about which devices they used most frequently to connect to the internet, 247 (93%) had responses that included a cellphone, 196 (74%) included a laptop, 168 (63%) included a tablet, and 71 (27%) included a desktop.

However, data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates nearly 7% of Methuen residents have a smartphone with no other type of computing device. This can be problematic because smartphones have limited functionality compared to desktops or laptops, which are better suited for most online activities like typing documents, creating media, attending classes, accessing public benefits, etc. Additionally, approximately 5.2% of Methuen residents have no computing device at all. Affordability, distrust, and apathy are common reasons for people to avoid technology. To combat these fears and support people who wish to get online, Methuen CAIs can support and provide education about devices, safety, and benefits of using the internet.

### Devices in the Community

Ensuring resources at CAIs are accessible to all is an important aspect of digital equity initiatives. The following CAIs and local non-profits support device lending and distribution of devices at discounted rates, allowing more residents to access the tools and services they need.

**Nevins Memorial Library** is one of these critical institutions, providing patrons with access to computers that support basic word processing and research needs. This helps to fill gaps in device access in the City for residents, students, employees, and businesses. The Nevins Memorial Library also provides the community with critical internet and device access, including free public internet access for people with wireless-enabled portable computers, tablets, or smartphones. There are 20 hotspots available for lending at a maximum of three weeks at a time. Library administrators have noted that the hotspots are consistently borrowed by library patrons.

Nevins Memorial Library staff noted a need for expanded resources including **assistive technologies** to make resources more accessible for those with disabilities. Providing newer technologies and personalized device assistance will ensure disabled residents have the hardware needed to access the internet, fulfill their everyday needs, and fully benefit from modern devices. Partnerships with digital equity champions, digital navigators, non-profits, and other technology stakeholders should be explored to obtain assistive technology resources.



*Nevins Memorial Library provides patrons access to public devices and technology training. Image credit: VHB*

**The Methuen Public School District**, includes the Comprehensive Grammar School, Donald P. Timony School, Marsh Grammar School, Methuen High School, and Tenney Grammar School. The district is a significant source of technology resources in the City, supporting students, faculty, staff, and families. Between 2020 and 2023, the District received over \$640,000 in E-Rate funding to support data transmission services, internet access, and internal connectivity.

Chromebooks are supplied to students in grades K-8, requiring K-1 students to return the devices before dismissal, while allowing students in grades 2-8 to take them home. Methuen High School students are issued iPads, which are incorporated into the school's comprehensive educational program. Students with disabilities are unable to take digital devices home, requiring caregivers to bear the cost of assistive technologies for home use.

Community members have reported a knowledge divide within households, where children build digital skills faster than adults. Additional programming is needed to help parents learn about the devices their children use for school and the virtual platforms schools use for outreach.

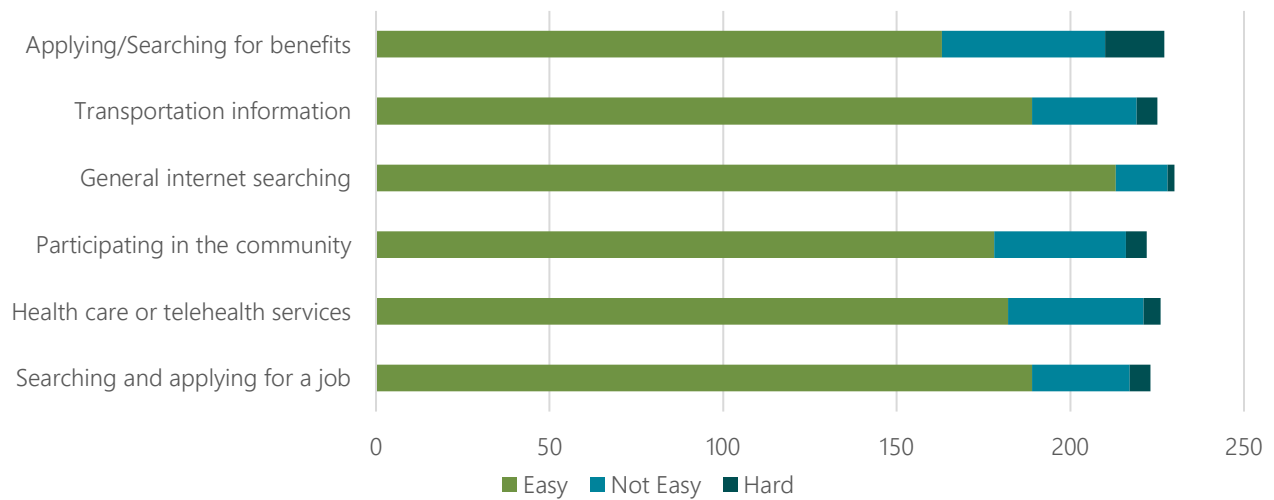
While students use the district's internet network to use their Chromebooks in school, they rely on their household internet service when using these devices at home. Inconsistent service quality at home can result in disparities in students' ability to effectively utilize their devices for completing school assignments, a phenomenon known as the **homework gap**.

## Digital Skills Training

Digital skills training empowers internet users to utilize devices effectively, navigate common software platforms, and safely and effectively participate on the internet. In a society where essential resources and services are increasingly online, digital skills training is critical for communication, finance management, education, healthcare, and support services.

While many Methuen residents are comfortable with using digital devices and the internet, some key considerations arose through the Statewide Digital Equity Survey. **Figure 6** indicates that among the top challenges experienced by residents included applying or searching for benefits, participating in the community, and accessing transportation information.

**Figure 6: Level of Difficulty of Various Internet Activities**



Source: Statewide Digital Equity Survey (October 2024)

In today's digital age, privacy and cybersecurity have become fundamental necessities to protect users' personal information and ensure safe online experiences. **Cybersecurity** is a state of protection against the criminal or unauthorized use of data, achieved through protective software and individual precautions. Cybersecurity training is critical for everyone who goes online. Older adults and young children are historically more susceptible to cybersecurity threats because they may be less familiar with the latest cybersecurity practices or fall victim to scammers. The below terms refer to the most common cybersecurity risks:

- › **Phishing:** Phishing is a form of cybercrime where attacker deceive individuals into revealing sensitive information.
- › **Ransomware:** A type of malicious software that intimidates victims by restricting access to their data, publishing it, or corrupting it unless a ransom is paid.
- › **Malware:** Malicious software designed to harm, exploit, or otherwise compromise the data or functionality of a computer system.
- › **Spyware:** Software that gathers information about a person or organization without their knowledge and sends it to another entity.
- › **DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service):** An attack where multiple systems overwhelm a targeted system, such as a server, with a flood of internet traffic, causing it to shut down.
- › **Botnet:** A network of infected computers controlled by a hacker to perform tasks like sending spam or launching attacks.

35% of Methuen Statewide Digital Equity Survey respondents (83 total) indicated concern about internet safety, with the most cited fear being about data being stolen or used without consent. Multiple responses that utilized the write-in option of the survey indicated that price of cybersecurity services was a barrier to being able to protect themselves online.

## Digital Skills Training Resources in Methuen

CAIs, including the Methuen Senior Activity Center, Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen Public School District, and the Police Department, facilitate the City's digital skills training opportunities.

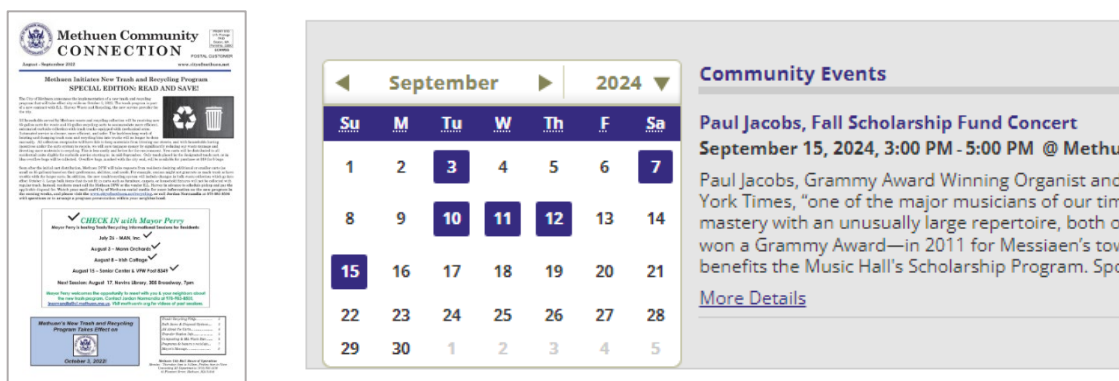
Nevins Memorial Library currently partners with Tech Goes Home and is on a waitlist to launch a new series of courses. Participants who complete the program receive a Chromebook and, if needed, 12 months of internet service as a reward for meeting the required class attendance. Currently the Police Department offers cyber security training for older adults at the Methuen Senior Activity Center, but it was noted that seniors could benefit from additional digital skills training. A formalized network of digital navigators with adequate knowledge and capacity to offer digital skills trainings would address these community needs.

Stakeholders from CAIs noted public awareness of available training programs as a significant challenge to digital access and safety. Many residents are unsure where to find public Wi-Fi, access computers, or obtain training. Methuen Community Studios said they would be willing to partner with institutions to better highlight active training programs and resources.

The Statewide Digital Equity Survey revealed Methuen residents prefer do-it-yourself training models and online classes as opposed to in-person classes.

## Municipal Outreach and Engagement

Technology is an important tool that municipalities can leverage in public outreach and service distribution. Currently, Methuen relies on the City's website, Facebook account, and newsletter, *Methuen Community Connection*, for simple outreach.



Screenshots of Methuen's City newsletter and event panel on the City website. Image Credit: City of Methuen

To be as accessible as possible, the City should consider making a dedicated webpage on the municipal website with comprehensive digital equity resources. This may include training events, device donation or repair days, discounted internet subscription offers, and names of device refurbishers and distributors. All material should be available in multiple languages so accommodate people who do not speak English as their first language.

## Local and Regional Partnerships

There is potential for the City to partner with local and regional groups and institutions to provide additional digital skills training opportunities, and expanded access to digital devices and internet. While the Nevins Memorial Library is the City's primary digital equity hub, other institutions, such as the YMCA, offer public Wi-Fi networks. In adjacent communities, non-profits like MakeIT Haverhill, an organization improving digital equity through the lens of workforce development, could also assist with digital skills training and device access.

There is also potential for collaboration with other municipalities in the region to create a shared network of **digital navigators** and instructors. Communication of digital equity achievements, obstacles, and implementation strategies between municipalities throughout the region will help to build upon proven successes and best use state and local funding.



### Regional Resources

#### Resources for low-cost subscription enrollment or Wi-Fi access.

- [Metropolitan Area Planning Council's \(MAPC\) Apartment Wi-Fi Program](#)
- [Essex County Community Foundation \(Danvers\)](#)

#### Resources for accessible devices or assistive technology.

- [Northeast Arc \(Danvers\)](#)
- [Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired \(Boston\)](#)
- [Bay State Council of the Blind \(Watertown\)](#)
- [MassAbility \(statewide\)](#)

#### Resources for low-cost devices.

- [UMass Lowell Innovation Hub \(Haverhill\)](#)
- [TEK Collaborative \(Amesbury\)](#)
- [Tech Goes Home \(Boston\)](#)

#### Resources for digital literacy support and cybersecurity training.

- [Tech Goes Home \(Boston\)](#)
- [Northstar Digital Literacy \(national\)](#)

#### Resources for day-to-day activities like job applications and healthcare.

- [MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center \(Lawrence\)](#)
- [FQHC Telehealth Consortium \(Boston\)](#)
- [MakeIT Haverhill \(Haverhill\)](#)

#### Resources for English language learners and immigrant populations.

- [New American Association of Massachusetts \(Lynn\)](#)
- [Rian Immigrant Center \(Boston\)](#)

#### Resources for youth technology support and STEM programs.

- [Kids in Tech, Inc. \(Lowell\)](#)
- [Code & Circuit \(Amesbury\)](#)

For a full list of Massachusetts' Digital Equity Assets, see [MBI's State Digital Equity Asset Inventory](#).

# 5

## Goals to Achieving Digital Equity in Methuen

Creating goals for digital equity generates a clear path forward for institutions and organizations driving change and innovation in communities and provides a unifying message for residents and visitors.

VHB and the Digital Equity Steering Committee created goals and objectives to address the issues highlighted through online data and the public digital equity charrette. These goals and objectives provide actionable strategies for community leaders, institutions, and organizations to follow to better support Methuen residents, especially members of vulnerable populations.



**Goal 1: Improve access to and affordability of high-speed internet for all residents.**

- a.** Investigate the feasibility and cost of building mesh networks or installing hotspots in and around well-used public spaces.
- b.** Ensure Methuen Housing Authority's senior housing common spaces are equipped with high-speed internet capable of support digital training classes.
- c.** Encourage market competition and affordable subscription prices.

Goal 1 addresses the first essential building block of digital equity: affordable, high-speed internet. Without broadband internet, residents cannot effectively use digital devices.

**a.** To achieve Goal 1, the City of Methuen can investigate the feasibility of creating mesh wireless networks to support Wi-Fi use in public spaces like parks or plazas. The City of Pittsfield in Berkshire County was recently awarded state funding to expand the existing municipal Wi-Fi network to Durant Park and to add signage across the city to inform residents of the network.<sup>7</sup> The City of Methuen could explore a similar project at locations like Neil Playstead, Veteran's Memorial Park, or in the downtown area.

**b.** A second action item is to ensure senior housing common spaces owned by Methuen Housing Authority are equipped with high-speed internet. This would allow low-income senior residents to access free broadband to complete work, apply for services, attend trainings, and more. As of November 2024, two programs—Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) [Apartment Wi-Fi Program](#) and MBI's [Residential Retrofit Program](#)—are channeling funds to deploy high-quality broadband services in more than 22,000 public and affordable housing properties across Massachusetts. Additionally, existing Wi-Fi services could be supplemented with hotspots procured from local ISPs including Comcast. Methuen Housing Authority can and should work with state and regional partners to address broadband gaps at their properties.

**c.** A third action item is to enhance market competition between ISPs and publicize low-cost internet subscription offers. Neighboring towns, including Haverhill, are actively working with market disrupters like Breezeline to bring new internet technology and speeds to their residents. Long term, this additional competition should bring down subscription costs and increase the quality of customer service. Simultaneously, the City of Methuen can support low-income households with accessing affordable, reliable internet today by promoting programs like Comcast's [Internet Essentials](#) or Verizon's [Verizon Forward](#), which offer discounted internet services to qualifying households. The NDIA has also cumulated an [honor roll of low-cost internet plans](#) that help qualifying households access broadband after the end of ACP.

**Goal 2: Enhance access to public digital devices and support device distribution to households that need them.**

- a.** Create a computer lab at a well-used public space.
- b.** Procure assistive technologies for public institutions and support distribution to individuals who qualify for devices.

Goal 2 addresses the second essential building block of digital equity: affordable, appropriate digital devices. Without digital devices, residents cannot access online tools and services.

- a.** To achieve Goal 2, the City of Methuen can create a public computer lab at a well-used and well-known public institution or organization like the Nevins Memorial Library or Methuen Community Studios. While public computers are already available for patron use at the Library, Methuen residents lack a dedicated space for accessing a variety of different devices like PCs, Macs, iPads, and virtual reality headsets. By creating a modern computer lab equipped with a variety of technologies, the City and its institutions can provide residents and visitors with devices that fit their unique needs.
- b.** A second action item is to procure assistive technologies (AT) that improve an individual's function and improve an individual's experience using digital devices. AT includes everything from wheelchairs and glasses to speech recognition devices and Braille e-books. Approximately 11.7% of Methuen residents (6,123) have a disability, with the following breakdown: 2.6% with a hearing difficulty; 2.6% with a vision difficulty; 4.8% with a cognitive difficulty; and 5.4% with an ambulatory difficulty.<sup>8</sup> Northeast Arc, operating out of Danvers, created the [Assistive Technology Lending Library](#) at the Center for Linking Lives, where visitors can test out and borrow a variety of AT applications. Another resource is the [Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) (MABVI), who supports individuals with vision loss or blindness through access technology training, volunteer help, and peer support services. MABVI offers services in multiple languages.

### Goal 3: Support and build upon existing digital literacy initiatives.

- a. Buy Northstar Digital Literacy subscriptions for Community Anchor Institutions.
- b. Hire additional staff to provide 1-on-1 training at Nevins Library and the Methuen Senior Activity Center.
- c. Prioritize relevant digital trainings for adults and kids in multiple languages.
- d. Establish funding mechanisms to replace digital devices in schools and cover insurance expenses.

Goal 3 addresses the third essential building block of digital equity: digital literacy and training. Even if individuals have broadband internet and digital devices, one needs the proper skills and education to use these devices safely and effectively.

a. To achieve Goal 3, the City should purchase [Northstar Digital Literacy](#) subscriptions for CAIs including the Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen Senior Activity Center, and Methuen Community Studios. Northstar Digital Literacy, a program of Literacy Minnesota, is a national tool providing subscribing organizations with training material including self-guided assessments, one-on-one digital navigation and instructor-led classes, and progress reports. Northstar is used by libraries, community colleges, healthcare systems, businesses, and more.

b. A second action item is to hire additional staff to provide one-on-one training at CAIs. While Methuen's CAIs have been making strides in addressing digital access and inclusion, having a dedicated staff member who can focus specifically on the goals and actions outlined in this report could go a long way to address gaps still prevalent in the community. One such program providing support services to municipalities is Lead for America's [American Connection Corps](#). ACC recruits, trains, and places corps members in digital disconnected communities to work alongside CAIs to organize and facilitate digital inclusion activities. MakeIT Haverhill is one organization who, with funding from MBI, was able to hire a fellow from Lead for America.<sup>9</sup> This fellow taught basic and intermediate computer classes at the organization's Haverhill office.

c. A third action item is to prioritize trainings for adults and kids in multiple languages. To best serve Methuen residents, CAIs should document attendance of digital literacy classes and survey the community to ensure digital training needs are being met. During the public digital equity charrette, one Nevins Memorial Library staff member noted that certain populations do not feel like the Library is "their place." To improve the Library's services and address populations that, historically, have been marginalized, Methuen's CAIs should endeavor to create training that serves individuals from all backgrounds.

d. A fourth action item is to establish responsible and sustainable funding mechanisms to maintain Methuen Public School District's one-to-one Chromebook program, originally created with state funding during the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate remote education. As COVID-19 funding comes to an end, the district must think creatively about how to sustainably fund the one-to-one programs. This could include establishing a city-district partnership, keeping an eye on E-Rate funding, and applying for grant funding.

#### Goal 4: Ensure inclusivity of historically vulnerable populations, including immigrants and first-generation Americans.

- a. Cultivate partnerships with established leaders serving historically underserved populations.
- b. Create and implement digital literacy trainings tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of marginalized groups.

Goal 4 addresses the needs of historically vulnerable populations, namely those eight groups outlined by the NTIA:

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

**a.** To achieve Goal 4, Methuen can lean into existing resources, programs, and organizations that support these populations, including the [UMass Lowell Innovation Hub](#) in Haverhill, the [New American Association of Massachusetts](#) in Lynn, and the [Rian Immigrant Center](#) in Boston.

Strategic partnerships can be most successful when the engaged parties identify goals and desired outcomes, take stock of resources and gaps, and create a formal communication plan through a liaison or joint steering committee.

**b.** An element underscoring this goal is the development of trust and sense of belonging in community institutions. By engaging key community leaders and stakeholders and creating programs that specifically cater to the needs and desires of targeted populations, Methuen organizations can more effectively engage with the populations most susceptible to the digital divide.

## Goal 5: Build internal and external awareness of resources and accessibility to institutions.

- a. Establish a Digital Equity Steering Committee to spearhead initiatives resulting from this report.
- b. Create a centralized webpage on the City of Methuen's website to consolidate and present local resources.
- c. Hire a grant writer to assist with securing digital equity funding.
- d. Expand public services through updated hardware and software.
- e. Use local resources like Local Access TV and radio to broadcast digital trainings.

Goal 5 addresses the internal organization and work that must occur among Methuen's CAIs to improve digital inclusion efforts in the City. These efforts may be, potentially, the easiest and fastest way to enhance access to broadband, devices, and training opportunities.

- a. To achieve Goal 5, the City should establish a Digital Equity Steering Committee to take ownership of digital inclusion initiatives coming out of this report, and to monitor ongoing trends relating to broadband access, device access, and training attendance. This Steering Committee should include representatives from institutions serving a diverse range of population groups, including but not limited to the Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen Public School District, Methuen Council on Aging, and the Methuen Community Resource Center. Steering Committee-led activities that could benefit the community include conducting an inventory of digital equity assets, collecting local data on internet adoption and use (see a guide from NDIA [here](#)), and pursuing state and funding to undertake digital inclusion programs.
- b. A second action item is to create a central webpage that exhibits available local and regional digital inclusion resources. This could be in the form of a page with external links to resources similar to what currently exists on [MethuenLife.com](#) or an interactive map like [this one created in Michigan](#). Any webpage created should be ADA accessible and available in multiple languages.
- c. A third action item is to hire a grant writer to assist with securing funding for digital equity inclusion activities. Apart from supporting with one-on-one digital skills training, someone hired through the Lead for America fellowship program could dedicate time to apply for state and federal grants coming through MBI and NTIA. Other parties who could apply for funding include the Library, Council on Aging, local ISPs, and more. In 2024, MBI announced the [Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program](#) that awards municipalities who complete a digital equity charrette or plan up to \$100,000 to execute a digital inclusion project outlined in their report. NTIA has additional funding in the pipeline that should be distributed in 2025 and 2026.
- d. A fourth action item is to expand public services with the appropriate hardware and software. Residents during the charrette noted that Reverse 911 communications systems that reach beyond landlines could be particularly useful in enhancing public safety and services in the area.
- e. A fifth action item is to broadcast digital inclusion resources through local TV and radio to increase awareness and utilization of initiatives and services. During the charrette, Methuen Community Studios offered to take ownership of this task.

## Implementing the Goals

The following matrix provides a blueprint for the City of Methuen to work towards achieving the digital equity goals and actions described above. These actionable strategies, shaped in conjunction with the community, stakeholders, and Steering Committee members, are essential for accomplishing the City's long-term digital equity vision. Certain actions were influenced by previous or ongoing plans, while others are based on new community feedback, existing best practices, and evolving technology trends.

The Implementation Matrix includes anticipated requirements for each strategy, addressing the following:

<b>Champion</b>	The City department/board/committee or organization that holds responsibility for implementation
<b>Partners</b>	Organizations or programs that could provide guidance to the Champion when completing an action item
<b>Cost</b>	An approximation of the financial cost (capital or operational), defined as "\$" (less than \$5,000), "\$\$" (\$5,000-\$10,000), "\$\$\$" (more than \$10,000)
<b>Funding Opportunities</b>	Potential funding agents or partners that could provide financial support, through grants or direct investment, to implement a certain strategy. See correlating numbers in <a href="#">Chapter 6: Available Funding</a> .
<b>Timeframe</b>	The anticipated length of time for completion of a given strategy, defined as "Short" (less than 6 months), "Medium" (6 months to 1 year), "Long" (more than 1 year)

While the actions in the previous section were arranged by goal, the Implementation Matrix is sorted by Champion to create a kind of checklist for the party responsible for those actions. The following organizations are included in this Implementation Matrix as Champions (header blocks) or Support Parties (embedded in the table):

- › Nevins Memorial Library (NML)
- › Digital Equity Steering Committee (DESC) [PROPOSED NEW COMMITTEE]
- › Methuen Community Studios (MCS)
- › Methuen Housing Authority (MHA)
- › Methuen IT Department (IT Dept)
- › Methuen Public School District (MPSD)
- › Methuen Council on Aging (COA)
- › Internet Service Providers (ISP)
- › Police and Fire Departments (P&F)

## Nevins Memorial Library

Action	Local Partners	Cost	Funding	Timeframe
<b>5a.</b> Establish a Digital Equity Steering Committee to spearhead initiatives resulting from this report.	MCS, MHA	\$	N/A	Short
<b>2b.</b> Procure assistive technologies for public institutions and support distribution to individuals who qualify for devices.	MHA	\$\$- \$\$\$	7, 14	Short
<b>3b.</b> Hire additional staff to provide 1-on-1 training at Nevins Library and the Methuen Senior Activity Center.	MCS, IT Dept	\$\$\$	2, 7	Short
<b>3c.</b> Prioritize relevant digital trainings for adults and kids in multiple languages.	MCS, IT Dept, COA	\$	2, 7, 14	Medium
<b>4b.</b> Create and implement digital literacy trainings tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of marginalized groups.	IT Dept	\$\$	2, 7, 14	Medium

## Digital Equity Steering Committee

Action	Partners	Cost	Funding	Timeframe
<b>3a.</b> Buy Northstar Digital Literacy subscriptions for Community Anchor Institutions.	NML, COA, MCS	\$	7, 14	Short
<b>4a.</b> Cultivate partnerships with established leaders serving historically underserved populations.	NML, COA	\$	N/A	Medium
<b>5c.</b> Hire a grant writer to assist with securing digital equity funding.	IT Dept	\$\$\$	7	Medium
<b>2a.</b> Create a computer lab at a well-used public space.	NML	\$\$\$	7, 14	Long
<b>1c.</b> Encourage market competition and affordable subscription prices.	ISP	\$\$	N/A	Long

## Methuen Community Studios

Action	Local Partners	Cost	Funding	Timeframe
<b>5e.</b> Use local resources like Local Access TV and radio to broadcast digital trainings.	IT Dept	\$	3	Short

### Methuen Housing Authority

Action	Local Partners	Cost	Funding	Timeframe
<b>1b.</b> Ensure Methuen Housing Authority's senior housing common spaces are equipped with high-speed internet capable of hosting digital training classes.	COA, ISP	\$	1, 8, 13, 14, 16	Short

### Methuen IT Department

Action	Local Partners	Cost	Funding	Timeframe
<b>5b.</b> Create a centralized webpage on the City of Methuen's website to consolidate and present local resources.	DESC	\$	7, 9	Medium
<b>5d.</b> Expand public services through updated hardware and software.	P&F	\$\$	7, 11, 14	Short
<b>1a.</b> Investigate the feasibility and cost of building mesh networks or installing hotspots in and around well-used public spaces.	DESC, ISP	\$\$	7, 11, 14	Long

### Methuen Public School District

Action	Local Partners	Cost	Funding	Timeframe
<b>3d.</b> Establish funding mechanisms to replace digital devices in schools and cover insurance expenses.	DESC	\$\$\$	4, 12	Long



# 6

## Available Funding

The City of Methuen can take advantage of the following funding programs to facilitate the implementation of this plan. The programs may fall into one or more of the following categories, represented next to each source by colored symbols.



Funding for  
Internet Access



Funding for  
Device Access



Funding for  
Digital Skills Training



Funding for  
Municipal  
Infrastructure and  
Services

### **1. AARP Community Challenge**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in March

The AARP Community Challenge grant program has awarded \$16.4 million through 1,370 grants since its debut in 2017. Grants are awarded through three separate opportunities: Flagship Grants (\$500-\$50,000), Capacity-Building Microgrants (\$2,500), and Demonstration Grants (\$10,000-\$20,000). Organizations in several communities (including Randolph and Worcester) have used AARP Community Challenge funds to tackle local digital equity projects including the purchasing of computers to community rooms and installing additional internet sources.<sup>10</sup> Eligible applicants include government entities, 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) nonprofits, and other types of organizations considered on a case-by-case basis.

***Methuen Housing Authority could apply for AARP Community Challenge funding to install public internet (via hotspot) in senior housing properties or to procure technology for a new computer lab at a Community Anchor Institution.***

### **2. AmeriCorps Lead for America | American Connection Corps**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annual

The Lead for America American Connection Corp (ACC) is a service membership focused on advancing economic prosperity and bridging the digital divide.<sup>11</sup> The ACC member network supports broadband development, digital inclusion, and civic leadership in communities through capacity-building services for the host organization or municipality. MBI has funding to cover

host-site funding matches for up to 15 municipalities in Massachusetts. Eligible applicants include government agencies or nonprofit organizations.

***Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen Community Studios, or a similar institution can apply to host an ACC Fellow to assist with public outreach and education regarding digital skills training opportunities and subsidies for broadband internet and devices.***

### **3. Essex County Community Foundation | Greater Lawrence Community Fund**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in October

The Greater Lawrence Community Fund (GLCF) funds initiatives or programs that address the basic needs of residents in Greater Lawrence communities including Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover, and Andover. Basic needs include food security, clothing, shelter, and education. Applications are accepted in October, with grant amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 being awarded in December. Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

***Nonprofits in Methuen could apply for GLCF funds to organize and host digital skills training at one or more Community Anchor Institutions.***

### **4. Federal Communications Commission | E-Rate Program**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in the summer

Administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under the direction of the FCC, the E-Rate program helps schools and libraries acquire telecommunications infrastructure and information services. Eligible institutions may apply individually or as part of a group, requesting funds under two categories of service: (1) data transmission services, and (2) internal connections. Discounts are determined by poverty levels and location (urban or rural) and range from 20% to 90% of service costs. Eligible applicants include public schools and libraries.

***Methuen Public School District or Nevins Memorial Library can use E-Rate funding to improve internet connectivity and create network redundancy, increasing network reliability. Between 2020 and 2023, Methuen Public Schools received over \$640,000 in E-Rate funding for data transmission, internet access tasks, and internal connections costs, with services provided by Comcast and ePlus Technology, Inc.***

### **5. Institute of Museum and Library Services | Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in September

This program aims to train and develop library and archives professionals to meet community information needs. Funding may be used for professional development and training programs or to support initiatives or programs encouraging diverse or underrepresented students to pursue careers in library and information science. Awards range from \$25,000 to \$1,000,000. Eligible applicants include public libraries.

***Nevins Memorial Library can apply for funding to support additional staff trainings or to fund training programs for students interested in library services.***



Funding for  
Internet Access



Funding for Device  
Access



Funding for Digital  
Skills Training



Funding for  
Municipal  
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## **6. Institute of Museum and Library Services | National Leadership Grants for Libraries**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in September

The National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program (NLG-L) funds projects that develop or share practices, programs, models, or tools to enhance library and archival services. The grants focus on meeting public learning needs and improving community well-being. Eligible programs can include initiatives in workforce development, digital inclusion, and informal STEM learning. Awards range from \$25,000 to \$1,000,000. Eligible applicants include public libraries.

***Nevins Memorial Library can apply for funding to support additional staff trainings or to fund training programs for students interested in library services.***

## **7. Massachusetts Broadband Institute | Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: One-time award, application open through July 2025

MBI's Municipal Digital Equity Implementation Program awards municipalities up to \$100,000 to undertake initiatives outlined in the community's municipal digital equity plan or study. Funds can be used to support one or more focus areas: staff capacity for digital equity; Wi-Fi access and innovative connectivity technology; public space modernization; connectivity for economic hardship; digital literacy; device distribution and refurbishment; and education, outreach, and adoption. Eligible applicants include municipal governments.

***The City of Methuen can collaborate with CAIs to apply for implementation funding to pursue one or more programs or projects in the [Chapter 4: Goals and Recommendations](#) section. This may include purchasing digital devices, expanding local public Wi-Fi networks, and hiring staff for digital skills training.***

## **8. Massachusetts Broadband Institute | Residential Retrofit Program**

Currently in its second round, MBI's Residential Retrofit Program deploys fiber infrastructure to public and affordable housing.

***As of December 2024, Methuen Housing Authority has submitted 15 properties (totaling over 600 residential units) to MBI that may be eligible for the Residential Retrofit Program.***

## **9. Massachusetts Community Compact Cabinet | Efficiency & Regionalization Grant Program**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in October

The Efficiency & Regionalization (E&R) Grant Program, administered by the Division of Local Services, is a competitive grant program that provides financial support for government bodies interested in regionalization and other efficiency strategies. Funds may be administered by government entities, regional school districts, regional planning agencies, and councils of governments. Example eligible expenses include equipment or software, technical assistance, or transition or project management costs for one year. All municipalities that are not grantees of the program's previous fiscal year-round are eligible.

***The City of Methuen or Methuen Public School District can apply for E&R Grant Program funding to improve collaboration and systems management between municipal departments and neighboring communities. The City has previously benefitted from E&R funding won by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) for development of a regional housing***

  
Funding for  
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*production plan, to support regional economic development, managed combined sewer overflows, and plan for long term management of the Merrimack River.*<sup>12</sup>

  **10. [Massachusetts Community Compact Cabinet | Municipal Fiber Grant Program](#)**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in April

The 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 grantees of the program’s previous fiscal year-round are eligible.

*The City of Methuen can apply for Municipal Fiber Grant Program funds to expand public services through updated hardware and software. The City has previously benefited from this grant program, receiving \$137,706 in 2023 for the construction of an additional fiber line connecting the Police Department building and Fire Department building.*

 **11. [Massachusetts Community Compact Cabinet | IT Grant Program](#)**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in February

The Massachusetts Community Compact IT Grant Program, administered by the Division of Local Services, provides grants of up to \$200,000 to support the implementation of innovative IT projects, including one-time capital needs related to planning, design, installation, implementation, and initial training, as well as Software-as-a-Service costs like subscriptions, cloud hosting, on-going maintenance, and operational costs. All municipalities that are not grantees of the program’s previous fiscal year-round are eligible.

*The City of Methuen can apply for IT Grant Program funds to expand public services through updated hardware and software. The City has previously benefited from this grant program, receiving \$200,000 in 2023 for the implementation of a records management system.*

   **12. [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education | Miscellaneous Grant Programs](#)**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Varies

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has a variety of annual grant programs available to public schools, many of which Methuen Public School District actively applies for and expends. In Fiscal Year 2024, Methuen Public School District received \$4,520,621 in grant funds to support device access and skills training for students.<sup>13</sup>

*Methuen Public School District should continue to apply for grant programs to enhance internet capacity, device access, and network security in the school system.*

 **13. [Massachusetts Department of Public Health | Community Health & Healthy Aging Funds](#)**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in the spring

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Community Health & Healthy Aging Funds are used to remove barriers to health by removing barriers to healthy living, including structural and institutional racism, poverty, and power imbalances, through community-centered planning and policymaking. Three funding streams make up the program: Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change; Healthy Aging; and Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP).

  
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Eligible applicants include Massachusetts-based nonprofit organizations with a 501(c)(3) status, quasi-governmental organizations and municipalities, and community development corporations.

*The City of Methuen's Health and Human Services Division can leverage Community Health & Healthy Aging Funds to expand services to older adults, including to educate and support residents with telehealth services.*

   **14. [Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities | Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Program](#)**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in the spring

Administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), the CDBG Program is a competitive grant program that helps communities address local needs, including housing, infrastructure, economic development, and public services. Eligible activities include the infrastructure development, internet access, wiring, hardware and software purchases, development of computer rooms, and digital literacy/workforce development training. Eligible applicants include municipal governments.

*The City of Methuen can apply for state CDBG funding to expand existing broadband infrastructure or organize/facilitate digital literacy classes or workforce development training.*

 **15. [Massachusetts Executive Office of Technology Services and Security | Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program](#)**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Annually in the fall

Administered by the Office of Municipal and School Technology (OMST), this program covers the costs for OMST-facilitated end-user training, evaluation, and simulated cybersecurity challenges. Eligible applicants include municipal governments, public school districts, municipal libraries, police and fire departments, planning commissions, municipally-operated utility departments, and housing authorities.

*The City of Methuen, Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen Public School District, and other organizations can leverage this grant program to enhance employees' cybersecurity skills.*

 **16. [Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\) | Apartment Wi-Fi Program](#)**

Funding Cycle/Deadline: Ongoing

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.

*Methuen Housing Authority can speak with MAPC to learn about the Apartment Wi-Fi Program and find out if there are any opportunities to leverage this program in Methuen's affordable housing properties.*

  
Funding for  
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Funding for Device  
Access

  
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# Glossary of Terms

**Botnet:** A network of infected computers controlled by a hacker to perform tasks like sending spam or launching digital attacks.

**Broadband access:** the ability and use of high-speed internet services through technologies like fiber, coaxial cable, fixed wireless, DSL, and satellite. Key aspects of broadband access include availability, affordability, and adoption through internet subscriptions.

**Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL):** A BSL is a business or residential location in the United States at which mass-market fixed broadband internet access service is, or can be, installed. (FCC)

**Broadband/internet adoption:** Broadband adoption has traditionally been defined as residential subscribership to high-speed internet access. But for those in the field working to increase the digital capacity of communities, broadband adoption is daily access to the internet:

- At speeds, quality and capacity necessary to accomplish common tasks,
- With the digital skills necessary to participate online, and
- On a personal device and secure, convenient network. (NDIA)

**Broadband:** A transmission system granting users access to the internet. Broadband refers to a high-capacity transmission technique using phone lines, coaxial cable (“coax”), or fiber optic cable, enabling a large amount of information to be communicated simultaneously.

**Charrette:** A focused workshop designed to gather information on community needs.

**Coaxial cable:** Coaxial cable (or simply coax) is a type of electrical cable that is used as a transmission line for radio frequency signals. Coax networks operate at faster speeds and higher reliability than DSL but is slower than fiber.

**Community Anchor Institution (CAI):** NTIA defines “Community Anchor Institution” as an entity such as a school, library, health clinic, health center, hospital or other medical provider, public safety entity, institution of higher education, public housing organization, or community support organization that facilitates greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including, but not limited to, low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, children, the incarcerated, and aged individuals.

**Copper:** Copper broadband infrastructure refers to telecommunications networks that primarily use copper cables for the transmission of internet, television, and phone services. It uses electrical signals sent over copper lines to provide broadband services. It often provides slower speeds than fiber-optic networks.

**Covered household:** A household, the income of which for the most recently completed year is not more than 150% of an amount equal to the poverty level, as determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census. (Digital Equity Act of 2021)

**Covered population:** Individuals who live in covered households; aging individuals; incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier (i.e., those who are English learners and have low levels of literacy); individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area. (Digital Equity Act of 2021)

**DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service):** An attack where multiple systems overwhelm a targeted system, such as a server, with a flood of internet traffic, causing it to shut down.

**Device access:** the ability of individuals to use electronic tools that process, store, and transmit digital data, including computers, tablets, smartphones, smartwatches, and other connected devices. Key aspects of device access include availability, affordability, and adoption through internet subscriptions.

**Digital divide:** The digital divide is the gap between those who have affordable access, skills, and support to effectively engage online and those who do not.

**Digital Equity Act of 2021:** Included in the Infrastructure Investment in Jobs Act, the Digital Equity Act asserts that a broadband connection and digital literacy are progressively more essential for individuals to engage in societal, economic, and civic institutions, access healthcare and vital services, receive education, and develop their careers. The Act established two grant programs to be administered by the NITA: the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the State Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program.

**Digital equity:** a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.

**Digital inclusion:** The activities that are necessary to ensure that all individuals in the United States have access to, and the use of, affordable information and communication technologies, such as reliable fixed and wireless broadband internet service; internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; and applications and online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration." Further, it "includes obtaining access to digital literacy training; the provision of quality technical support; and obtaining basic awareness of measures to ensure online privacy and cybersecurity." (Digital Equity Act of 2021)

**Digital literacy:** refers to the set of skills required to navigate, evaluate, and create information using technology effectively and responsibly. These skills are crucial for using technology for education, employment, healthcare, civic activities, and social interaction.

**Digital navigators:** Digital navigators are trusted guides who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices. Digital navigation services include ongoing assistance with affordable internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support. (NDIA)

**Federal Communications Commission (FCC):** The FCC, established by the Communications Act of 1934, is an independent agency of the U.S. government that regulates all non-federal government use of the radio spectrum and both interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite, and cable.

**Fiber:** Fiber optic cable is a type of high-speed cable that transmits data as pulses of light. Fiber is referred to as the "gold standard" for telecommunications networks because of its speed, reliability, and resiliency.

**Fixed wireless:** transmits data across radio waves using broadcast towers.

**High-speed internet:** The FCC defines high-speed broadband as internet service at speeds that exceed 100/20 Mbps. This standard, adopted March 2024, replaced the previous standard of 25/3 Mbps.

**Homework Gap:** The homework gap refers to the disparity between students who have reliable, high-speed internet access at home and those who do not. This gap can hinder students from completing homework assignments, conducting research, and accessing educational resources online and disproportionately affects low-income, rural, and minority students. The gap became

increasingly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic as schools moved to remote learning platforms.

**Malware:** Malicious software designed to harm, exploit, or otherwise compromise the data or functionality of a computer system.

**Phishing:** Phishing is a form of cybercrime where attacker deceive individuals into revealing sensitive information.

**Ransomware:** A type of malicious software that intimidates victims by restricting access to their data, publishing it, or corrupting it unless a ransom is paid.

**Satellite:** transmits data from a satellite to an antenna, and then to a router or device. Traditionally used for remote locations.

**Served:** meaning the BSL has the capability to link to wired broadband ISPs that provide internet at speeds of at least 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 20 Mbps upload (written 100/20 Mbps)

**Spyware:** Software that gathers information about a person or organization without their knowledge and sends it to another entity.

**Underserved:** refers to BSLs receiving internet at speeds between 25/3 Mbps and 100/20 Mbps.

**Unserved:** refers to BSLs receiving internet at speeds less than 25/3 Mbps





# Appendices

# Appendix I: Stakeholder Interview Meeting Notes

Date:	Tuesday, September 10, 2024	Notes Taken By:	Janelle Franklin & Jennifer Nelson
Place:	Teams	Re:	Methuen Digital Equity Charrette
Project No.:	15912.10	Re:	Methuen Digital Equity Charrette

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## Attendees:

Jennifer Nelson, Project Manager, VHB  
Janelle Franklin, Urban Planner, VHB  
Christa McGaha, Urban Planner, VHB  
Anne-Marie Moglia, Director of Leasing & Occupancy, Methuen Housing Authority  
Catherine Redard, Executive Director, Methuen YMCA  
Christina St. Onge, Senior Branch Relationship Manager/VP, Enterprise Bank  
Erika Rondeau, Branch Manager, Methuen Federal Credit Union  
Giselle Peguero, Associate Director of Lawrence Campus & Community Relations at Northern Essex Community College, Northern Essex Community College  
Joseph Cosgrove, Environmental Planner / Energy Manager, City of Methuen  
Karen Hayden, Executive Director, Methuen Community Studios  
Michelle Houle, Community Services Manager, Methuen Community Studios  
Nancy Lopez, Director of Technology, Methuen Public Schools  
Stephen Angelo, Superintendent of Parks, City of Methuen  
Luis Santiago, Information Technology Department, City of Methuen  
José Rodríguez, Radio Católica  
Daniel Allie, Librarian, Nevins Library

## Introductions & Agenda:

1. Schedule of meeting:
2. Introductions
3. Meeting Purpose & Project Overview
4. Defining Digital Equity
5. Baseline Conditions
6. Discussion and Next Steps

## Open Discussion:

Discussion Points:

- How do you consider what kinds of limitations there might be with the MBI survey/ limitations there might be from just a survey?
  - There is limited funding from the grant to do a lot of community research. A larger meeting format (charrette) will come later, but there will only be one public event. The importance of this kick-off is to get the word out about the survey and get as many responses as possible.
  - MBI doesn't provide contacts for each of the CAIs listed. Having support to identify those connections is crucial.
  - JC: Methuen has one census tract (2524) that meets criteria for being disadvantaged, but it doesn't look like any of those known unserved and underserved locations are in that census tract.

JN: That's part of the issue. We know this data is incomplete. Speed Test data can help identify these areas of need. It would be great if we can have households responding to the survey from that tract known to already be disadvantaged.

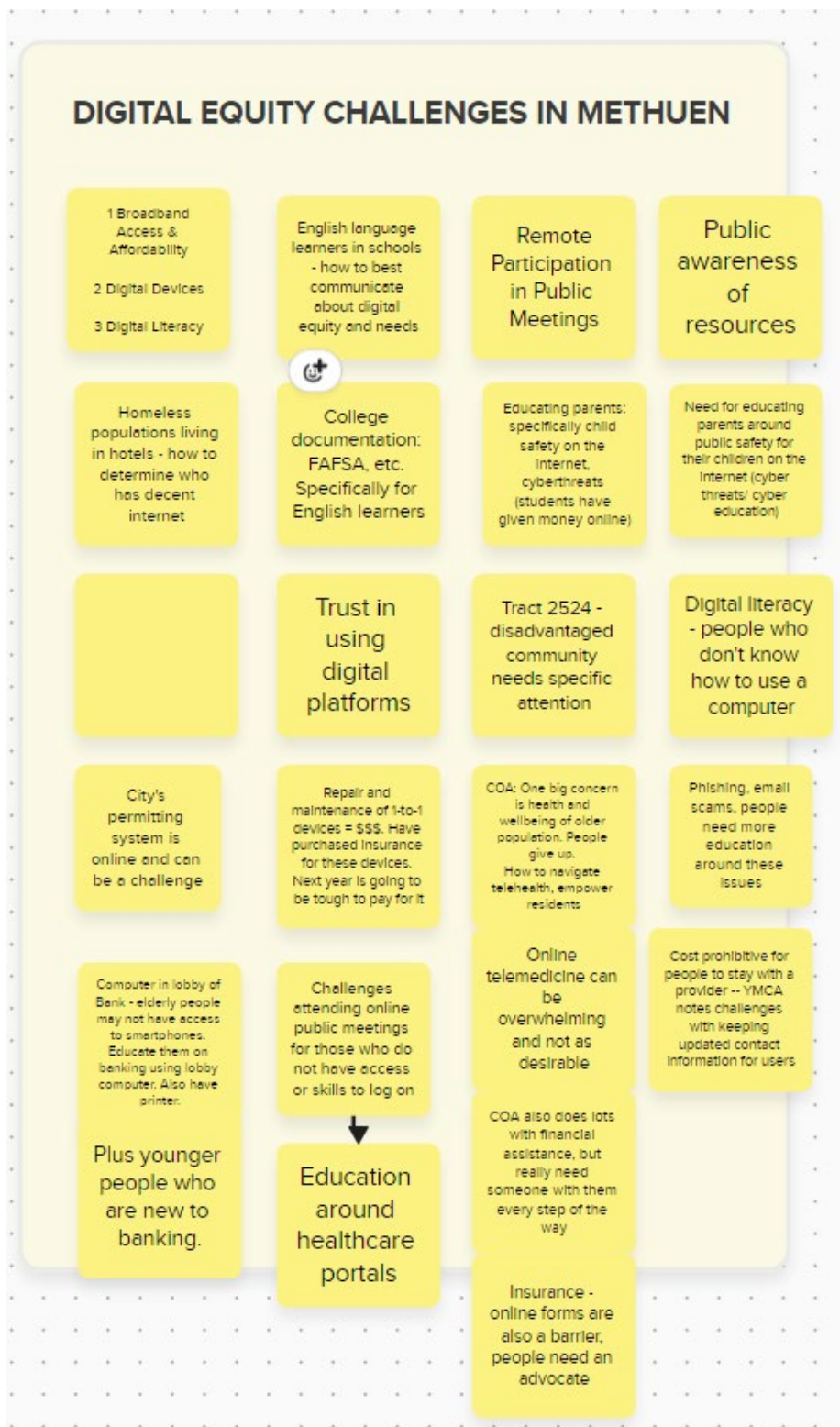
- › KM: Do these existing conditions seem real to us? Does this seem accurate?
- › At Methuen Public Schools all students get a Chromebook and HS kids get an iPad. They must have internet at home, but we don't know how fast it is. We're thinking about unhoused people with temporary shelter at hotels. We don't know how good their speeds are. We could send out a survey from the school most definitely, but the people we want to reach are harder to get to.
  - There is a disconnect between students and parents regarding using internet.

### **Mural Activity:**

Within the open discussion portion of the meeting participants used Mural to visualize the state of digital resources in Methuen. Categories included challenges, things that are working well, and specific needs to achieve digital equity. The following are notes that came up from this activity, the completed notes from Mural can be seen at the conclusion of this document. The following list includes highlights from the discussion during the Mural activity.

- › We need technical skills training for younger and older generations to achieve better financial literacy and knowledge for how to use online banking.
  - At MPSD, it's going to be tough to pay for the insurance for the 1-1 program for Chromebook.
  - AS: Primary care providers of elderly are retiring which poses a problem. It's tiring to find a new provider at that stage without an advocate.
- › Council on Aging would be happy to host more trainings. One challenge is getting seniors who need help to reach out for assistance. It takes a lot to get to that point.
  - CR: Navigating all the insurance information that is online is tough. If seniors don't have an advocate, it's seemingly impossible. How are they doing anything?
  - Another challenge many hospitals have a patient portal. And if patients don't have a device or know how to use it, what do they do?
  - JC: Permitting system is all online, which can be a challenge for some. Accessing public meetings is also a challenge.
  - KM: Educating parents around child safety online. That's an important piece, educating parents. We see a lot of people at Nevins who have a device but don't really know how to use it.
  - TC: We also need to be aware of cyber threats. Need to know about texts and emails and the threats that can come with each.
  - Police Dept provides digital literacy trainings to the Council on Aging.
- › Daniel (Nevins): People have access to 20 different hotspots that they can borrow these devices for up to three weeks. We are having a hard time keeping up with public demand and devices. We're on a waitlist for devices for Tech Goes Home. Multiple languages are represented by those interested in the Tech Goes Home program. Nevins doesn't have the space to accommodate the demand for these classes either. We're hoping to get the resources to lend assistive technologies for people with disabilities like digital magnifiers etc. The main limitations are funding and space.
  - Karen: Methuen Community Studios can help with access to TV, internet, and radio. MCS also helped a lot of folks during the pandemic and could provide more trainings. Biggest obstacle is making people aware of services. How do we get the word out?
  - Therese C: Connection with Community Inroads? Joan C has people that assist with a specific need like how to run a Board. Something to investigate if we want to collaborate with Community Inroads. Think they work with Haverhill and Lawrence but could possibly work with Methuen as well.
  - CR: It's cost prohibitive for a lot of people to have cellphones and internet.

- › TC: It's possible the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) help manage funds for individuals within its programs. Possibly free access to cellphones or tablets through DTA programs. If true, people need to be made aware of these options. Other programs like Women's Money Matters should also be promoted so that people take advantage of the aid they can provide.



## WHAT IS WORKING WELL RIGHT NOW?



## WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED?

Programs?  
Devices?  
Accessibility?  
Translation?  
Personnel?  
Funding?  
Outreach?



Collaborating with  
Community Inroads  
(Joan C.)? Classes for  
Board Governance, IT  
assistance. Targets  
just Lawrence and  
Haverhill?

Public awareness of  
available resources:  
perhaps a webpage  
(one stop shop)  
dedicated to public  
services. One can be  
Internet or device  
services

Define  
what / how  
training is  
best done

DTA programs to  
provide tablets or  
cellphones. Women  
Money Matters -  
budget income and  
see what's a need  
versus a want

### Next Steps:

- The Charette must be scheduled! Updates to follow once a date and time has been decided
- Promote MBI's Statewide Digital Equity Survey

# Appendix II: Public Charrette Outreach and Meeting Notes

**Date: October 21, 2024**

**Location: Nevins Memorial Library**

## **Agenda**

6:00 – Presentation

6:30 – Breakout Sessions

    What Needs to be Improved?

        Current Challenges

        Potential Solutions

7:30 – Reconvene and summarize notes received

7:45 – Close of meeting

## Meeting Flyer (Multilingual)



# Tired of unreliable internet? Worried about scams or phishing? Join us to talk about computers, internet, and computer classes!

**Monday, 10/21  
6:00 - 8:00 PM  
Nevins Library  
305 Broadway,  
Methuen**



We're planning a **community meeting** where you can share your experiences, challenges and ideas about these important topics.

Let's work together to **develop some solutions** to help everyone have equal access to technology, the internet, and the classes to help use them all well and safely.

**See you there!**

Estamos organizando una reunión comunitaria en la que podrá contar sus experiencias, dificultades e ideas sobre estos temas importantes. Colaboremos para desarrollar soluciones que sirvan para que todos tengan un acceso igualitario a la tecnología, internet y las clases que ayudarán a usar todos estos recursos de manera segura y eficaz. **¡Nos vemos allí!**

N ap planifye yon rankont kominotè kote ou kapab pataje eksperyans ou, defi ak ide w yo sou sijè enpòtan sa yo. Ann travay ansanm pou n devlope kèk solisyon pou ede chak grenn moun gen aksè egalego a teknoloji, entènèt la ak kou yo pou ede yo itilize tout bagay sa yo byen e san danje. **N ap wè byento!**

نحن نخطط لعقد اجتماع مجتمعي يمكنك من خلاله مشاركة خبراتك وتحدياتك وأفكارك حول هذه المواضيع المهمة. دعونا نعمل معًا لوضع بعض الحلول من أجل مساعدة الجميع على الحصول على فرص متكافئة للاستفادة من التقنيات والإنترنت والفصول التعليمية للمساعدة في استخدامها جميعًا بشكل جيد وآمن. **نلتاكرم هناك!**



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



## Meeting Flyer (English)



# Tired of unreliable internet? Worried about scams or phishing? **Join us to talk about computers, internet, and computer classes!**

We're planning a **community meeting** where you can share your experiences, challenges and ideas about these important topics.

Let's work together to **develop some solutions** to help everyone have equal access to technology, the internet, and the classes to help use them all well and safely.

**See you there!**

**Monday, October 21  
6:00 - 8:00 PM  
Nevins Memorial Library  
305 Broadway, Methuen**



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## Meeting Flyer (Spanish)



¿Cansado de un servicio de Internet poco confiable?  
¿Le preocupan las estafas o el phishing?  
**¡Acérquese para hablar sobre computadoras, internet y clases de computación!**

Estamos organizando una reunión comunitaria en la que podrá contar sus experiencias, dificultades e ideas sobre estos temas importantes.

Colaboremos para desarrollar soluciones que sirvan para que todos tengan un acceso igualitario a la tecnología, internet y las clases que ayudarán a usar todos estos recursos de manera segura y eficaz.

**¡Nos vemos allí!**

**Lunes 21 de octubre  
6 a 8 p. m.  
Nevins Memorial Library  
305 Broadway, Methuen**



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## Meeting Flyer (Haitian Creole)



Ou fatige ak entènèt ki pa fyab?  
Ou gen enkyetid konsènan eskam oswa  
amsonaj?

**Patisipe ak nou pou diskite sou òdinatè,  
entènèt ak kou enfòmatrik!**

N ap planifye yon rankont kominotè  
kote ou kapab pataje eksperyans ou,  
defi ak ide w yo sou sijè enpòtan sa yo.

Ann travay ansanm pou n devlope kèk  
solisyon pou ede chak grenn moun gen  
aksè egale a teknoloji, entènèt la ak  
kou yo pou ede yo itilize tout bagay sa  
yo byen e san danje.

**N ap wè byento!**

**Lendi 21 oktòb  
6:00 - 8:00 PM  
Nevins Memorial Library  
305 Broadway, Methuen**



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## Meeting Flyer (Arabic)



هل سئمت من الإنترنت الذي لا يُعتمد عليه؟  
هل أنت قلق بشأن عمليات الاحتيال أو التصيد  
الاحتيالي؟

**انضم إلينا للتحدث عن أنظمة الكمبيوتر  
والإنترنت والفصول التعليمية للكمبيوتر!**

نحن نخطط لعقد اجتماع مجتمعي يمكنك  
من خلاله مشاركة خبراتك وتحدياتك  
وأفكارك حول هذه المواضيع المهمة.

دعونا نعمل معًا لوضع بعض الحلول من  
أجل مساعدة الجميع على الحصول على  
فرص متكافئة للاستفادة من التقنيات  
والإنترنت والفصول التعليمية للمساعدة  
في استخدامها جميعًا بشكل جيد وآمن.

**نلتاكن هناك!**

**الاثنين، 21 أكتوبر  
6:00 - 8:00 م**

**Nevins Memorial Library  
305 Broadway, Methuen**



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## Meeting Summary

- › Jennifer Nelson, Urban Planner at VHB, opened the workshop, introduced her team, and thanked everyone for attending. Krista McLeod introduced herself as the Director of the Nevins Memorial Library and emphasized the role digital equity has in what public libraries have to offer and the importance of the Charrette.
- › Jennifer Nelson and Janelle McGlasson from VHB provided an overview of existing conditions, including digital equity (access to high-speed broadband internet at home; access to digital computing devices; and information on where to learn how to use the internet).
- › Following the overview presentation, meeting attendees provided input on community challenges and potential solutions at three different breakout stations.



## Summary of the comments made by the public.

Station	Top Concerns	Potential Solutions
1: Led by Janelle McGlasson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Shame of not being more digitally literate is keeping people from reaching out for help. Digital literacy is not common knowledge, especially for people trying to settle in a new country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Partner with banks to provide aid to low &amp; moderate-income families. Expand upon basic digital literacy trainings to offer more advanced classes for telehealth and online banking. Build trust with underserved populations and offer more classes in languages other than English.</li> </ul>
2: Led by Jennifer Nelson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› There should be improved efforts to educate parents on how children are using technology for school and on ways to ensure their safety while doing so. People are unaware of available resources for digital equity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› There needs to be a centralized location for digital equity news on the City website. Infrastructure upgrades should be made to allow for more people to access the internet.</li> </ul>
3: Led by Christa McGaha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Accessibility of trainings is as important as offering them. Navigating to the library can be difficult due to poor signage around town. Residents with English proficiency limitations are interested in digital literacy trainings, but would need them offered in Spanish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Work with the City to provide signage that makes it easy for residents to navigate to the library. Look at funding opportunities to provide Tech Goes Home classes in languages other than English.</li> </ul>

## Discussion Boards

The following are notes collected from the breakout sessions. Pictures of the boards are followed by typed notes.

### Station 1: Led by Janelle McGlasson

#### Existing Issues:

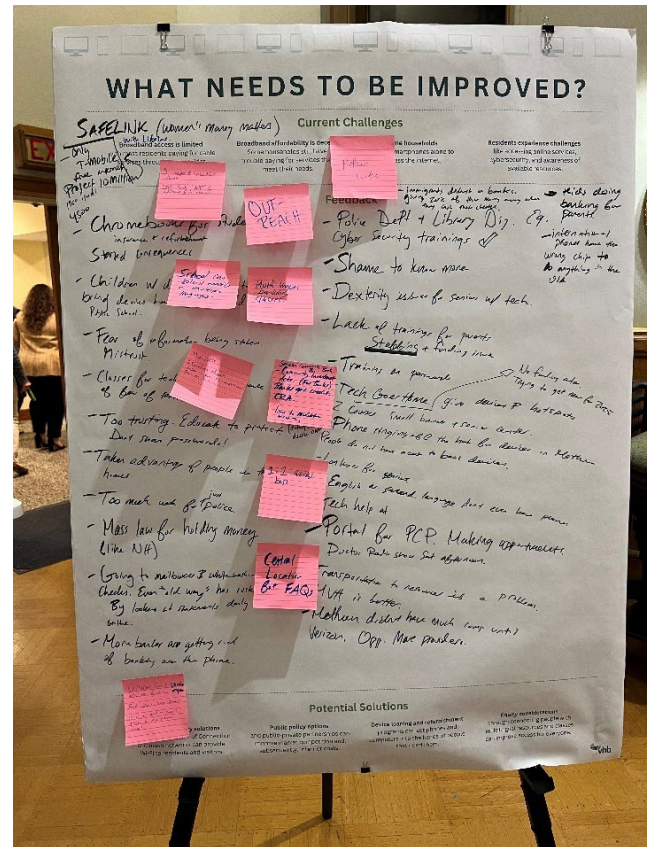
- Distrust of existing resources
- Shame in participating in digital literacy trainings (fear of not knowing enough)
- Scamming & fear of technology
- Vulnerable populations are hit harder than others

#### Potential Solutions:

- Partner with local institutions like Safelink, Methuen Life, local churches such as St. Joesphs & Lavereth's House, Childcare Circuit, Salem Community Bank, The Patch, Methuen Community Resource Center, Methuen Public Schools.

## Challenges/Concerns:

- Chromebooks for students are expensive to upkeep with insurance and refurbishment costs
- Children with disabilities not allowed to bring devices home if they're in special education
- Fear of information being stolen, and mistrust is a challenge
- Classes for tech not attended because of fear of tech
- Some people are too trusting. We Must educate to protect, like teaching people about proper password management.
- People are being taken advantage of in their homes. The scams are elaborate, scammers coming to peoples doorsteps for the bit.
- Teachings and trainings are too much for just the police
- It would be nice if MA had a law similar to NH where bankers could hold money for a certain period of time if they thought the transaction was suspicious
- Scams are still a risk for people "practicing the old way". Mail is going to people's houses and then scammers are whitewashing checks. If we can teach people to look at their statements daily online, we can help fix this.
- More banks are getting rid of banking over the phone. It's archaic.
- The Police Department and the Library offer cyber security trainings
- People feel shame and like they should know more and that prevents them from going to trainings
- Seniors have dexterity issues with using technology
- Lack of training for parents. Schools say staffing and funding are issues
- Tech Goes Home gives people devices and hotspots and courses for small businesses and the senior center.
  - They check now if people have a device already. This is based on the honor system.
  - No funding now, trying to get more for 2025
  - People lack access to basic devices
- Loneliness is an issue for seniors
- English as a second language households sometimes don't even have access to phones
- Portal for PCP. Knowing how to use it is essential. It's how you make doctors' appointments.
- Doctor radio show happens on Saturday afternoon and could be a resource for training how to use the portal.
- Transportation to resources is a problem. MVA is better
- Methuen didn't have much competition until Verizon. More opportunities for more providers is always better.
- Immigrants distrust banks. They give 20% of their money away when they cash their checks.
- Kids are doing banking for parents.
- International phones have the wrong chip to do anything in the USA
- Data restrictions limit people's participation.
- Multilingual banking classes are a must
- People don't have emails, and people don't know how to use email.



- "Tech is not common sense!"

**Solutions/Ideas:**

- Make childcare available during digital equity training offerings
- Partner with leading local organizations to strengthen digital equity offerings
  - Identify potential partnerships that would be trustworthy resources for immigrants and older adults who might struggle to trust digital equity lessons
- Utilize Methuen schools to blast emails in multiple languages
- Create a central Location for Digital Equity FAQs
- Note that 1:1 trainings tend to work best, try to support these
- Hire a grant writer to help acquire funding for these initiatives

**Station 2: Led by Jennifer Nelson**

**Existing Issues:**

- Limited communications between Community Anchor Institutions create pitfalls of care
- Lack of knowledge about existing resources due to not having a centralized location for people to use
- Safety concerns for modern scams
- Language translation for digital equity resources

**Potential solutions:**

- Create a City webpage repository for digital equity news and resources
- Offering digital equity resources in Spanish

**Challenges/Concerns:**

- Housing Authority is not sure residents know they're behind
- There are common rooms in senior housing, not in family housing
- Language translation is a barrier
- Small scale project at stadium (paid by city) for mesh network (ongoing)
- Library
- Awareness of Spanish translation services
- Funding for Tech Goes Home
- More devices Have waitlist.
- Scamming is a major concern.
- People don't know what to look for
- People have difficulty logging in or getting banking app
- Account hacking/ fraud in younger communities through social media
- Disconnect between parents + students re: school software
- Lack of awareness about cybersecurity and digital citizenship technology
- Website configuration + monitoring on school devices





## Solutions/Ideas:

- Inquire about the six computers the Methuen Credit Union has to donate and how else they might support underserved residents. Potential to open conference spaces for residents.
- Video Training could be offered at Methuen Community Studios
- Partner with Library or Senior Center to offer classes at housing authority community room
- Get the Community Room connected to Wi-Fi
- City webpage repository for digital equity resources

## Station 3: Led by Christa McGaha

### Existing Issues:

- Transportation to resources and trainings are poorly marked and not easily accessible
- Basic trainings are not provided in Spanish
- Assistive technologies are needed for residents with disabilities and older adults

### Potential Strategies

- Offer Tech Goes Home classes in Spanish
- Utilize Local Access Television to provide trainings

### Challenges/Concerns:

- MEVA Shelter at the library. It is hard to find bus routes on website and there is a lack of signage.
  - Methuen wants to maintain small town feel which is an issue when there is a push back for necessities like bus shelters.
  - City needs better tools to communicate w/ population. Need signage on bus routes
- Concerned about children's access to internet
- Blind/low vision people ask about device to have at home. Need home devices.
- Children do not have patience to train their parents.
- The library does not have the space for a computer lab
- Many parents do not expose young children to computers
- As technology evolves the people who are not connected become more isolated.
- Library offers some beginner courses. Want to do them in Spanish. Do not have enough capacity.
- Misinformation online is a gauge issue.
- There is no one source where everyone gets information (used to be newspaper). Now everyone looks to different sources.
- Increasing homelessness is a concern in Methuen. Have cell phone/ come to library for computers
- Older adults call the library and are afraid they will die alone. Library is one of the only resources (by phone) because they are not connected.
  - Connection to the internet can help people feel less alone and can help people find community and resources.
- Does the Reverse 911 Communication system reach everyone or just land lines?



- Tech Goes Home training with interpretations has a long waitlist
  - 200+ people on the waiting list for general Tech Goes Home training. Methuen is on the list if they get additional grant funding for the Family program.
- Libraries would love to loan laptops, problem with Tech Goes Home is the Chromebook and PC divide.
- Chromebook screens are too small for elderly people.
- Concern with loaning laptops to public is getting them back. Same with hotspots.
- Library would like to do all types of training: general, business, seniors, multilingual but they don't have the space or money.

**Solutions/Ideas:**

- Strengthen the other technology drop-ins at the Library.
- Set up table with community resources on election day.
- Utilize Local Access TV to televise trainings for cybersecurity.
- St. Andrews Church has space that could be rented for computer lab.
- Comprehensive list of digital equity resources in multiple languages available to families when enrolling in school.
- Alternative location is Methuen Community Studios. Hard to find a space for the program.
- Student enrollment is a good time to note if a family needs help with internet or device access. This is a good time to offer a hotspot if needed.
- Social media is the way to send information out to older adults.
- Newsletters should be sent to all members of the public in all languages.
- Set up a table with community resources on election day.
- PTOs: Parent Teacher Organizations are a great way to reach the population.
- Offer a small business training course with multilingual translators through a grant.
- Implementation funding should be focused on Tech Goes Home style programs and expand on that style for general computer business family training where you get to take a home a device. Also want to provide social media and interact safely/cyber security. Training and space are issues for this.

# Appendix III: Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Survey Responses (in City of Methuen)

MBI Survey:

## Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Survey

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) wants to hear from you about your experiences with getting and using internet service! This survey is completely anonymous and should be completed by one individual per household. **Your feedback is vital to understand barriers to internet access, affordability, and adoption to help close the digital divide.** Thank you for your time and participation.

### Section 1: Please answer the following questions.

1. What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which Massachusetts municipality do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Do you have internet service in your home?

- YES** – Please proceed to Section 2 below
- NO** – Please skip to Section 3 (flip this page over)

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### Section 2: Please answer the following questions only if you CAN connect to the internet from home.

3. Who is your internet service provider? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of internet service do you have at home? Please check all that apply.
  - A data plan for a smartphone, hotspot, or tablet
  - Home wireline connection (cable, fiber, DSL, etc.)
  - Dial-up internet
  - Satellite internet
5. How well does your home internet service work?
  - Good enough to meet my household's needs
  - Not good enough to meet my household's needs
  - I don't know
6. Is your home internet service bundled with other services such as telephone or TV?
  - Yes
  - No
7. How much do you pay for the internet every month? \$\_\_\_\_\_
8. How hard is it for you to pay your internet bill?
  - Very hard
  - Somewhat hard
  - Not too hard
  - Not at all hard
9. Have you heard about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that provides discounted internet service for low-income households?
  - Yes
  - No
  - I don't know

*For more information and to find out if you qualify for ACP, call the Federal Communication Commission's ACP Support Center: 877-384-2575.*

**When complete, skip to section 4 below.**

**Section 3: Please answer the following questions only if you CANNOT connect to the internet at home.**

10. If you do not have internet service in your home, what is the reason?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service is not available in my area                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> I can't afford or access a device to use the internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service is too expensive   | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want / don't use the internet.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am concerned about online privacy or safety                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't feel confident navigating the internet or using online tools |  |

11. If you do not have internet at home, where do you go to use the internet? Please check all that apply.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A workplace  | <input type="checkbox"/> A public space such as a park or government building            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A friend or family member's home   | <input type="checkbox"/> On public transit   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School, college, or university   | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not regularly access internet in these or any other spaces |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A library or community center  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A business such as a restaurant, cafe, or bookstore (e.g., McDonald's, Taco Bell, Starbucks, etc.) |  |

**When complete, proceed to section 4 below.**

**Section 4: All respondents should answer these questions.**

12. Does everyone in your household have access to the computer devices they need to meet their everyday needs for internet use? (Computers, smartphones, tablets, or other internet enabled devices)?

- Yes  
 No

13. Which of the following devices do you use most of the time to connect to the internet? (Check all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cellphone        | <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet (or similar device)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desktop computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop computer  |  |

14. How much would you be able to pay for a laptop or desktop computer?

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0-50    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150-250         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50-100  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250-500         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100-150 | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$1,000 |

15. Are you able to regularly use the internet for online activities?

- Yes  
 No

16. Please rank the level of difficulty for what you use the internet for. (Easy, Not easy, Hard)

	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Not easy</i>	<i>Hard</i>
Searching and applying for a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care or telehealth services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in your local community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General internet searching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching and/or applying for benefits or resources for you or your family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. If you do not have regular access to the internet, what would most like to use it for if you could?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Searching and applying for a job      | <input type="checkbox"/> Searching and/or applying for benefits or resources for you and your family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health care or telehealth services    | <input type="checkbox"/> Something else  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in your local community | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to use the internet regularly                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General internet searching            |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation information            |  |

18. What kind of digital skills support would you be most interested in?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In person classes | <input type="checkbox"/> In person support from a friend or instructor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online classes    | <input type="checkbox"/> A do-it-yourself training module              |

19. How concerned are you, if at all, about internet safety?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very concerned     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very concerned   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat concerned | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all concerned |

20. What are you most concerned about? (Select all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> That my data could get stolen or used without my consent | <input type="checkbox"/> That I could be tracked or surveilled                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> That I or a loved one could get scammed or tricked       | <input type="checkbox"/> That I or a loved one could be harassed or abused online |

21. Are you aware of tools or resources you can use to stay safe online?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have tools and resources I use stay safe online         | <input type="checkbox"/> I know of tools or resources to stay safe online, but they don't work for me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, I don't know of any tools or resources to stay safe online | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) : _____   |

22. How accessible are online government services like benefits portals, RMV services, or paying for permits or tickets to you?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very accessible     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very accessible   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all accessible |

23. When you have used online government services like benefits portals, RMV services, or paying for permits or tickets, how well did they work for you?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not too well    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat well | <input type="checkbox"/> Not well at all |

**When complete, proceed to section 5 below.**

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**Section 5: All respondents should answer these questions.** We collect demographic information so that we can make sure we are representing all neighborhoods, towns, cities and groups across the Commonwealth.

24. What is your age?

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 to 74             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 and older         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 59 |   |

25. What is your gender identity?

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woman      | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender fluid         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Man        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |

26. How many people, including yourself, currently live in your household? (Note: A household is defined as all the people who currently occupy the housing unit where you live).

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 7                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 or more            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |   |

27. How many children under age 18, currently live in your household? (Note: A household is defined as all the people who currently occupy the housing unit where you live).

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |   |

28. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school, or high school incomplete (Up to grades 9-11 or Grade 12 with NO diploma) | <input type="checkbox"/> Four-year college or university degree/Bachelor's degree (e.g., BS, BA, AB)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate (Grade 12 with diploma or GED certificate)                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate or professional degree, including master's, doctorate, medical or law degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year associate degree from a college or university   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer  |

29. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?

- Yes  
 No  
 Prefer not to answer

30. Which of the following best describes your race? (Select all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White or Caucasian                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Some other race (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian-American                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native |   |

31. Do you belong to a North American Indigenous, Native, or Tribal group?
- Yes  Prefer not to answer
- No
32. What is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes?
- Less than \$22,000  \$45,000 to \$52,999
- \$22,000 to \$29,999  \$53,000 to \$59,999
- \$30,000 to \$36,999  \$60,000 or more
- \$37,000 to \$44,999  Prefer not to answer
33. Do you identify as a person with a disability? *(Note: Disability is defined as physical, emotional, or mental health conditions that result in limitations of activities or restrictions to full participation at school, at work, at home, or in the community).*
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer
34. If you identify as a person with a disability, do you have difficulty in any of the following areas? Please check all that apply.
- Seeing even if wearing glasses  Communicating, for example understanding or being understood
- Hearing even if using a hearing aid  Prefer not to answer
- Walking or climbing steps  I do not identify as a person with a disability
- Remembering or concentrating
- Self-care
35. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community?
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer
36. Did you serve on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer
37. Do you live in affordable housing? *(Note: Affordable housing is defined as housing subsidized by a housing authority, paid for through a voucher, or in a building run by a private developer.)*
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer
38. Where did you hear about this survey? Please check all that apply.
- From a government website, email list, flyer, or other outreach  From an organization's website, email list, flyer, or other outreach
- From a friend, colleague, or acquaintance  Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- From a community meeting, community anchor such as a library or school, or other local institution

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## Thank you for taking the survey!

Your response will help shape Massachusetts's policies and future funding allocations to close the digital divide for all its residents. If you would like to learn more, please visit <https://broadband.masstech.org/>.



**Q1 - Are you a resident of Massachusetts?**

Yes	311	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q2 - Are you 18 or over?**

Yes	311	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q3 - What is your zip code?**

01844	309	100%
01843	1	0%
01845	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q4 - Which Massachusetts municipality do you live in?**

Methuen	311	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q5 - Do you have internet service in your home?**

Yes	301	97%
No	10	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q7 - Who is your internet service provider?**

Verizon Communications	155	50%
Xfinity	87	28%
Comcast Cable Corporation	34	11%
No response	23	7%
Other	5	2%
T-Mobile USA	4	1%
Cox Communications	1	0%
AccessPlus Communications	1	0%
AT&T	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q8 - What kind of internet service do you have at home? (Select all that apply)**

Home wireline connection (cable, fiber, DSL, etc.)	168	54%
A data plan for a smartphone, hotspot, or tablet	94	30%
Fixed wireless internet	90	29%
Satellite internet	2	1%
No internet service of any kind	2	1%
I don't know	23	7%
No response	29	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q9 - How well does your home internet service work?**

Good enough to meet my household's needs	213	68%
Not good enough to meet my household's needs	63	20%
I don't know	5	2%
No response	30	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q10 - Is your home internet service bundled with other services such as telephone or TV?**

Yes	139	45%
No	139	45%
No response	33	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q11 - Not counting the costs of other services in your bundle, how much do you pay for your internet per month?**

Average	\$114
Median	\$100
Max	\$500
Min	\$10

**Q12 - How hard is it for you to pay your internet bill?**

Not at all hard	57	18%
Not too hard	76	24%
Somewhat hard	85	27%
Very Hard	37	12%
No response	56	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q13 - Have you heard about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that provides discounted internet service for low-income households?**

Yes	62	20%
No	194	62%
No response	56	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q14 - If you do not have internet service in your home, what is the reason?**

Service is too expensive	6
I can't afford or access a device to use the internet	3
Other (please specify):	2

**Q15 - If you do not have internet at home, where do you go to use the internet? Please check all that apply**

A friend or family member	3
Other	2
A workplace	4
A library or community center	3
School, college, or university	2

**Q16 - Does everyone in your household have access to the computer devices they need to meet their everyday needs for internet use? (Computers, smartphones, tablets, or other internet enabled devices)?**

Yes	236	76%
No	30	10%
No response	45	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q17 - Which of the following devices do you use most of the time to connect to the internet?**

Cellphone	247	79%
Laptop	196	63%
Tablet	168	54%
Desktop	71	23%
Other	31	10%
No response	45	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Other:**

tV-eleVision	home server
Television	TV, laptop, locks, lights most everything
Gaming system	TelevisiÃ³n
Consoles	Video game consoles
Xbox	Nintendo switch
tv	Security cameras
Bcv	Smart TV, smart speakers , security system, ring bell
Television	Printer
Amazon echo devices	PlayStation 3, 4, 5, Xbox One, & Switch Consoles
smart tv - streaming	Apple TV and Smart TV
gaming console	

**Q18 - How much would you be able to pay for a laptop or desktop computer?**

\$0-50	53	17%
\$100-150	25	8%
\$150-250	38	12%
\$250-500	50	16%
\$500-1,000	43	14%
\$50-100	27	9%
More than \$1,000	26	8%
No response	49	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q19 - Are you able to regularly use the internet for online activities?**

Yes	253	81%
No	9	3%
No response	49	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	

	Easy	Easy (%)	Not Easy	Not Easy (%)	Hard	Hard (%)
Q20_4 - Searching and applying for a job	189	85%	28	13%	6	3%
Q20_5 - Health care or telehealth services	182	81%	39	17%	5	2%
Q20_6 - Participating in your local community	178	80%	38	17%	6	3%
Q20_7 - General internet searching	213	93%	15	7%	2	1%
Q20_8 - Transportation information	189	84%	30	13%	6	3%
Q20_9 - Searching and/or applying for benefits or resources for you or your family	163	72%	47	21%	17	7%

**Q23 - What kind of digital skills support would you be most interested in?**

A do-it-yourself training module	100	32%
Online classes	73	23%
In person classes	19	6%
In person support from a friend or instructor	19	6%
No response	100	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q24 - How concerned are you about internet safety?**

Somewhat concerned	115	37%
Very concerned	83	27%
Not very concerned	30	10%
Not at all concerned	8	3%
No response	75	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q25 - What are you most concerned about? (Select all that apply)**

That my data could get stolen or used without my consent	194	87%
That I could be tracked or surveilled	117	52%
That I or a loved one could get scammed or tricked	163	73%
That I or a loved one could be harassed or abused online	144	65%
<b>Total unique respondents</b>	<b>223</b>	

**Q26 - Are you aware of tools or resources you can use to stay safe online?**

Yes, I have tools and resources I use stay safe online	125	40%
No, I don't know of any tools or resources to stay safe online	77	25%
I know of tools or resources to stay safe online, but they don't work for me	12	4%
Other (please specify):	5	2%
No response	92	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q27 - How accessible are online government services like benefits portals, RMV services, or paying for permits or tickets to you?**

Very accessible	136	44%
Somewhat accessible	69	22%
Not very accessible	14	5%
Not at all accessible	5	2%
No response	87	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q28 - When you have used online government services like benefits portals, RMV services, or paying for permits or tickets, how well did they work for you?**

Very well	110	35%
Somewhat well	94	30%
Not too well	13	4%
Not well at all	3	1%
No response	91	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q29 - What is your age?**

18 to 24	2	1%
25 to 34	24	8%
35 to 44	102	33%
45 to 59	84	27%
60 to 74	8	3%
No response	89	29%
Prefer not to answer	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q30 - What is your gender identity?**

Woman	157	50%
Man	55	18%
Gender fluid	2	1%
No response	89	29%
Prefer not to answer	8	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q31 - How many people, including yourself, currently live in your household? (Note: A household is defined as all the people who currently occupy the housing unit where you live).**

2	13	4%
3	56	18%
4	81	26%
5	43	14%
6	14	5%
7	5	2%
8 or more	4	1%
No response	90	29%
Prefer not to answer	5	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q32 - How many children under age 18, currently live in your household? (Note: A household is defined as all the people who currently occupy the housing unit where you live).**

0	9	3%
1	79	25%
2	94	30%
3	27	9%
4	5	2%
5 or more	2	1%
No response	90	29%
Prefer not to answer	5	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q33 - What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?**

Less than high school, or high school incomplete (Up to grades 9-11 or Grade 12 with NO diploma)	12	4%
High school graduate (Grade 12 with diploma or GED certificate)	52	17%
Two-year associate degree from a college or university	29	9%
Four-year college or university degree/Bachelor's degree (e.g., BS, BA, AB)	68	22%
Postgraduate or professional degree, including master's, doctorate, medical or law degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD)	52	17%
Prefer not to answer	7	2%
No response	91	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q34 - Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?**

Yes	57	18%
No	145	47%
Prefer not to answer	18	6%
No response	91	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q35 - Which of the following best describes your race? (Select all that apply)**

White or Caucasian	145	47%
Black or African-American	15	5%
Asian or Asian-American	6	2%
White or Caucasian ,Black or African-American	2	1%
Other (please specify)	20	6%
Prefer not to answer	30	10%
No response	93	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q35\_9\_TEXT - Other (please specify)**

latino	Hispano
Wiiiiiiii!!!!!!	Latina
Hispano Latino	Dominican
Islas del caribe	Dominican latino
Puerto Rican	Nwa
Portuguese	Middle Eastern Lebanese
Armenian & Spanish	Hispanic
Mestiza	Hispana
AmeriCAN	Afro-latino, Caribbean

**Q36 - Do you belong to a North American Indigenous, Native, or Tribal group?**

No	200	64%
Yes	1	0%
Prefer not to answer	17	5%
No response	93	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q37 - Do you identify as a person with a disability? (Note: Disability is defined as physical, emotional, or mental health conditions that result in limitations of activities or restrictions to full participation at school, at work, at home, or in the community).**

\$22,000 to \$29,999	9	3%
\$30,000 to \$36,999	7	2%
\$37,000 to \$44,999	16	5%
\$45,000 to \$52,999	14	5%
\$53,000 to \$59,999	7	2%
\$60,000 or more	113	36%
Less than \$22,000	10	3%
No response	93	30%
Prefer not to answer	42	14%

**Q38 - Do you identify as a person with a disability? (Note: Disability is defined as physical, emotional, or mental health conditions that result in limitations of activities or restrictions to full participation at school, at work, at home, or in the community).**

Yes	18	6%
No	190	61%
Prefer not to answer	10	3%
No response	93	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q39 - If you identify as a person with a disability, do you have difficulty in any of the following areas? Please check all that apply.**

I do not identify as a person with a disability	167	75%
Hearing even if using a hearing aid	5	2%
Seeing even if wearing glasses	12	5%
Walking or climbing steps	6	3%
Remembering or concentrating	11	5%
Communicating, for example understanding or being understood	4	2%
Self-care	4	2%
Prefer not to answer	14	6%
<b>Total unique respondents</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q40 - Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community?**

Yes	10	3%
No	187	60%
Prefer not to answer	20	6%
No response	94	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Q41 - Did you serve on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?**

Yes	5	2%
No	204	66%
Prefer not to answer	8	3%
No response	94	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q42 - Do you live in affordable housing? (Note: Affordable housing is defined as housing subsidized by a housing authority, paid for through a voucher, or in a building run by a private developer.)**

Yes	6	2%
No	195	63%
Prefer not to answer	15	5%
No response	95	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q43 - Where did you hear about this survey? Please check all that apply**

From an organization's website, email list, flyer, or other outreach	41
From a community meeting, community anchor such as a library or school, or other local institution	110
From a government website, email list, flyer, or other outreach	36
Other (Please specify)	31
From a friend, colleague, or acquaintance	5

**Q43\_8 - Other (Please specify)**

No response	280
School	6
Email	2
School email	2
Library website	1
A través de la escuela tenney Gramma School	1
public school k12	1
This	1
School district email.	1
Email received from child's school	1
Child's school	1
Escuela	1
School email blast	1
Received an email	1
middle school	1
Methuen Public School	1
Child's school	1
Methuen Public Schools	1
School email	1
Sent from Child's school	1
PyÃ@s moun	1
Email from my children's school	1

Child's school email	1
Son's grade school	1
school email received	1

**Submission Language**

English	288	93%
Spanish	21	7%
Portuguese	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

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<sup>1</sup> National Digital Inclusion Alliance. (n.d.). *The words behind our work: the source for definitions of digital inclusion terms*. NDIA. Retrieved November 13, 2024 from <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/definitions/#:~:text=Digital%20equity%20is%20a%20condition%20in%20which%20all,employment%2C%20lifelong%20learning%2C%20and%20access%20to%20essential%20services>

<sup>2</sup> Federal Communications Commission. (2024). *About the fabric: what a broadband serviceable location (BSL) is and is not*. FCC Broadband Data Collection Help Center. Retrieved November 13, 2024 from <https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/16842264428059-About-the-Fabric-What-a-Broadband-Serviceable-Location-BSL-Is-and-Is-Not>

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Broadband Institute. (n.d.). *Interactive Massachusetts broadband map - public beta*. Retrieved December 9, 2024 from <https://broadband.masstech.org/map-gallery>

<sup>4</sup> Benton Institute. (2024). *Affordable Connectivity Program Enrollment Performance Tool*.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Communications Commission. (n.d.). *Affordable Connectivity Program*. Federal Communications Commission. Retrieved August 29, 2024, from <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2801*. Retrieved December 9, 2024, from [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S2801?q=S2801:Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions&g=060XX00US2500940710](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S2801?q=S2801:Types%20of%20Computers%20and%20Internet%20Subscriptions&g=060XX00US2500940710).

<sup>7</sup> Polito, Brittany. (2024 October 30). *Berkshire County Sees Over \$300K for Digital Equity*. iBerkshires.com. Retrieved November 13, 2024 from <https://www.iberkshires.com/story/77072/Berkshire-County-Sees-Over-300K-for-Digital-Equity.html>

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Disability Characteristics. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1810*. Retrieved December 9, 2024, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1810?q=methuen&t=Disability&g=160XX00US2516840>.

<sup>9</sup> LaBella, Mike. (2023 December 21). *Grant will enable MakeIT Haverhill to expand its course offerings, hire more instructors*. The Haverhill Gazette. Retrieved from [https://www.hgazette.com/news/local\\_news/grant-will-enable-makeit-haverhill-to-expand-its-course-offerings-hire-more-instructors/article\\_c75e37d3-0449-5700-afe5-642d92216370.html](https://www.hgazette.com/news/local_news/grant-will-enable-makeit-haverhill-to-expand-its-course-offerings-hire-more-instructors/article_c75e37d3-0449-5700-afe5-642d92216370.html)

<sup>10</sup> AARP. (n.d.). *2024 AARP community challenge grantees*. AARP. Retrieved December 9 2024 from <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2024/2024-grantees.html>

<sup>11</sup> AmeriCorps. (n.d.). *Home*. American Connection Corps. Retrieved December 9 2024 from <https://www.americanconnectioncorps.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (n.d.). *Efficiency and regionalization grant recipients*. Mass.gov. Retrieved December 9 2024 from <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efficiency-and-regionalization-grant-recipients>

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). *State and federal entitlement and allocation grants by district*. DOE.Mass.edu. Retrieved December 9 2024 from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/entitlement-allocation.aspx?view=district&fy=2024&code=0181>