Bristol County Digital Equity Plan

Rehoboth • Dighton • Berkley



MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE | at the MassTech Collaborative

SRPEDD Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

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Image 1. Town of Dighton Overhead Image of 5G Towers

Acknowledgments

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SRPEDD Consultant Team

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Project Background

Three towns in Bristol County have partnered with Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) to increase digital equity and internet access. SRPEDD established its partnership with MBI in 2023, when SRPEDD staff helped identify over 120 digital equity assets across the region, including digital equity programming, digital skills classes, and plans or documents related to digital equity.[1]

In 2025, MBI announced a new round of funding for Digital Equity Plans focused on regional coordination and rural communities. Over the past two years, staff have developed two local digital equity plans – one in Freetown and one in Swansea – and one regional plan for Rochester, Marion, and Mattapoisett. These planning processes helped staff gain knowledge of broader regional needs (particularly in rural communities); In 2025, MBI announced a new round of funding for Digital Equity Plans focused on regional coordination between rural communities – SRPEDD saw great potential in developing plans for adjoining rural towns and received funding to develop this regional digital equity plan for Dighton, Rehoboth, and Berkley.

1 MBI, "Public Digital Equity Asset Inventory",https://airtable.com/apppYdKn8YlQhyAVj/shrYfrxtlmegzUI-hs/tblZJk7trvcQKW17l

Why are these three towns in Bristol County creating a regional plan?

Rehoboth, Dighton, and Berkley exist within the boundaries of Bristol County – an offshoot of the historic Plymouth Colony and one of the first counties established after the division of the colony in 1685.[2]

Over the past 300 years, these three towns have been able to maintain a shared sense rural character and continue to represent a meaningful aspect of the Bay Stater identity. While there are several ways rural residents benefit from a slower pace of life or better access to preserved land, the drawback of sprawled out homes or community resources makes connecting to one another difficult. This has proliferated in gaps in access to basic utilities such as broadband. SRPEDD approached Dighton, Rehoboth, and Berkely since they represent three out of four rural towns in Bristol County and have existing community connections through school districts.[3] Throughout the planning process, community stakeholders and SRPEDD staff learned how these three communities face unique yet similar issues in accessing affordable broadband access and understanding Bristol County's digital equity needs.

Plan Timeline

Jan 2026:

Stakeholder kickoff, Project branding, steering committee formation, and charrette planning

Spring 2026:

Existing Conditions Analysis, Survey and Event Promotion (Tabling/Fliers), and Stakeholder Interviews

Summer 2026:

Plan Writing and Engagement Follow Ups with Community Stakeholders

Fall 2026:

Finalize Plan

2 "Bristol County, Mass, USA", 2008, www.sites.rootsweb.com/~mabristo/bris_twn.htm.

3 *As defined by Massachusetts Office of Rural Health*, MA Office of Rural Health , "State Office of Rural Health Rural Definition" www.mass.gov/info-details/state-office-of-rural-health-rural-definition.

Introduction to Digital Equity

How would you live your life without an internet connection in 2026? Would you be able to do your job? Pay your bills? Find a doctor? What if you had a connection but it kept cutting out? Or what if your computer was broken? Would you be able to fully participate in your social, professional life or even manage your personal affairs? Society has moved online since the introduction of personal computers in the late 1980s and early 1990s; The Covid-19 pandemic exposed how lack of internet access, tech skills, or reliable equipment have left several underserved communities across the United States behind – unable to fully particulate in working, learning, socializing, or even managing personal affairs online.

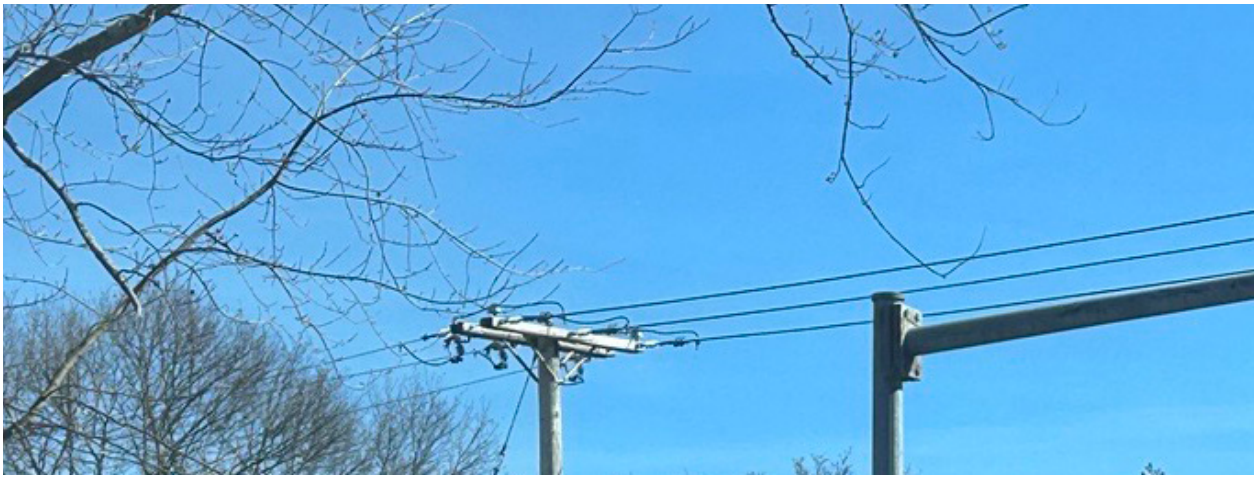


Image 2. Powerlines in Dighton (Above)

According to a 2021 article by the Pew Research Center, 30% of Americans possess lower "tech readiness" skills – meaning 30% of Americans lack the skills necessary to operate a computer, smartphone, tablet, or other device. This percentage grows higher with age, with 54% of Americans ages 65-74, and 68% of Americans aged 75 or older having lower tech readiness.[4] In an increasingly digital world, this means that the need for digital literacy and digital skills classes will become even more for necessary this group of Americans. Furthermore, rising costs of internet plans and devices or unreliable connections due to inadequate infrastructure in rural areas also continue to illuminate why the need for digital equity plans and programs is more important now than ever before.

4 Pew Research Center, "The Internet and the Pandemic", 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/09/01/the-internet-and-the-pandemic/

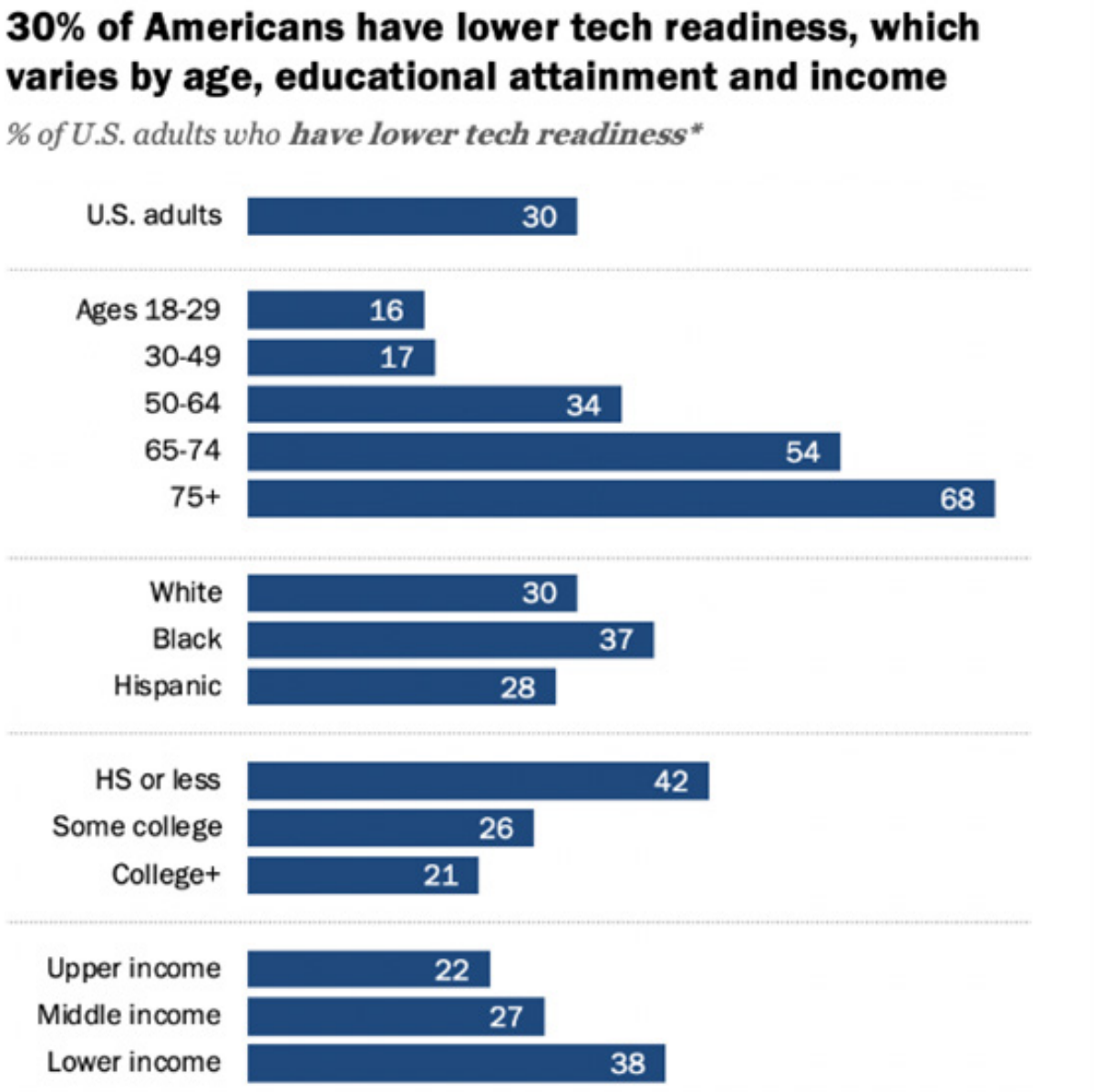


Image 3. Percent of US Adults who have lower tech readiness, Pew Research Center

What is digital equity?

"Digital equity" is the condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in society, democracy, and the economy. It means ensuring that everyone has access to routers and computers, the ability to afford a fast and stable connection, and the skills necessary to navigate and troubleshoot their technology. Achieving digital equity is essential for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to community services.

The digital divide is created when everyone does not have equal access to these things. This gap affects social connectivity, healthcare access, workforce preparedness, educational opportunities, civic participation, and financial resources and blocks vulnerable populations from participating in everyday life.

There are three main ways to understand digital equity and barriers to digital access: connection, devices, and literacy. These are known as the "three pillars" of digital equity.

Think of these pillars like a stool – in order for it to stand and be supportive, all three legs of the stool must be present. To achieve digital equity, a community's residents must have adequate access to a stable internet connection, an adequate device, and the digital literacy skills necessary to use the internet and their devices.

Digital Equity Pillars

Connection:

A fast affordable, and stable connection to the internet.

A foundational aspect of digital equity is access to a fast, affordable, and stable internet connection in their home. The reliability, speed, and affordability of a home internet connection may vary based on an individual's everyday needs including the ability for an individual to freely access to an internet connection outside the home.

Devices:

The portal or hardware that lets you navigate the internet.

In today's ever evolving digital world, a proper internet-enabled device is needed for participation in education, career development, socialization opportunities, and more. Fulfillment of this digital equity pillar means everyone in a community has access to a computer, hand-held devices, wireless router, mobile hotspots or other physical devices to enable an internet connection.

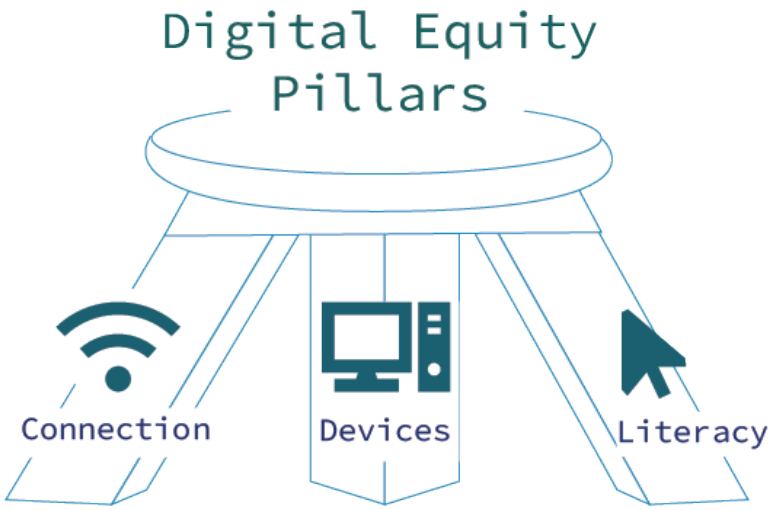
Literacy:

The capability to maintain devices and evaluate online information

Full digital literacy includes an individual's ability to maintain devices, evaluate online information and security risks, and navigate the internet to meet one's needs. Communities may work to support digital literacy through scam awareness campaigns or computer classes at local community anchor institutions.

Digital Equity Pillars (cont)

Image 4. Digital Equity Pillars



Zero or slow **Connection** means laggy user experience or inability to use the internet

Barriers can include connectivity interruptions, digital redlining, or the inability to afford or access services

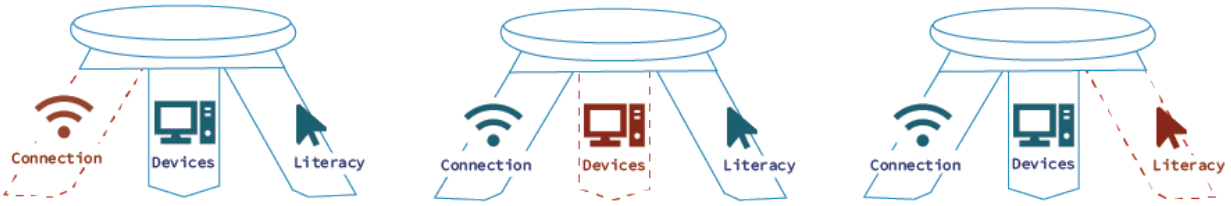
No **Device** means no portal to or way to get online.

Barriers can include having outdated software or lack of an affordable device.

Lack of **Literacy** means inability for user to fully engage with online platforms and cyber security risks

Barriers can include limited digital skills, fear or shame in asking for help to use the internet, or inaccessible digital literacy or skills classes.

Image 6. Digital Equity Barriers



Digital Equity Gap Impacts

What happens when digital gaps are present in an individual's life? How may lack of internet access impact on the way underserved populations live day-to-day life? Internet access is no longer a luxury in the United States, but a necessity full participation in modern society. Understanding the facets of life that are impacted by digital inequities can help a community develop targeted solutions.

Social Connectivity:

Interaction with friends, family, and general community.

Pre Internet Expectation:
Writing Letters
Current 'Information Age' Expectations:
Being active on social media platforms or understanding how to navigate an email account
Digital Inequity Impact:
Social isolation

Health Care Access:

Seeking medical help/ communicating with medical professionals.

Pre Internet Expectation:
Calling the Doctor
Current 'Information Age' Expectations:
Signing up or logging on to a patient portal or insurance portal to access testing results or medical records; Using a two-factor authentication
Digital Inequity Impact:
Negative health outcomes

Financial Resources:

Managing money or accessing assistance.

Pre Internet Expectation:
Visiting the Bank in Person
Current 'Information Age' Expectations:
Using mobile banking apps to move money or pay bills; Discernment for safely managing personal resources
Digital Inequity Impact:
Susceptibility to online scams

Educational Opportunities:

Completing assignments or seeking new opportunities.

Pre Internet Expectation:
Paper homework or in-person class

Current 'Information Age' Expectations:
Navigating online enrollment; Access to stable internet connection to complete homework

Digital Inequity Impact:
Shame or inability to fully participate in educational opportunities

Workforce Preparedness:

Having skills or access to personal equipment to complete work tasks.

Pre Internet Expectation:
'Pounding the pavement' or other workforce training

Current 'Information Age' Expectations:
Navigating online application platforms Access to stable internet connections to complete work at home; Advanced tech skills

Digital Inequity Impact:
Lack of personal fulfillment and financial gain

Civic Participation:

Awareness of civic opportunities and public meeting accessibility.

Pre Internet Expectation:
Reading the local paper
Current 'Information Age' Expectations:
Ability to navigate online video conferencing such as Zoom;Updating online voter registration information
Digital Inequity Impact:
Unengaged citizenry

What is a digital equity plan?

A digital equity plan aims to guide municipal decision-making related to services and infrastructure that seek to close digital gaps in underserved communities.[5] This plan analyzes the current state of internet access and digital equity, ultimately providing goals and recommendations to address key concerns identified throughout the planning process.

Key findings were collected by SRPEDD staff through data analysis, research, and outreach to the public. Throughout the project, residents were given the opportunity to think about their own community and determine who is most affected by the lack of broadband access and digital literacy skills. The plan will serve as a tool for grant proposals and existing or forthcoming state or federal programs supporting digital equity activities; these include community partnerships and coordination support between towns, providing residents with more internet options, and assisting covered populations with safely navigating the internet. These implementation recommendations, as well as funding guidance, are discussed in the Recommendations section of this plan.

Image 7. Covers of Three Recent Digital Equity Plans



5 MBI, "Citizen Planning Training Collaborative (CPTC) Presentation, 2023



Image 8. Overhead of Town of Berkley Waterfront

Bristol County Digital Equity Plan Reccomendations

Goal 1: Spread awareness about plan findings and leverage information to continue creating conversations around digital equity.

- Promote and explain findings of digital equity plan to align goals with existing and ongoing planning.
- Seek opportunities in existing community groups to oversee Bristol County Digital Equity Plan Implementation.
- Leverage or seek relationships with larger entities or regional partners to develop implementation projects.

Goal 2: Develop and maintain programming that meets the needs of various residents and evolving demographics.

- Expand device lending programs to include tablets.
- Add more digital literacy classes to community anchor institution programming and offer opportunities for advanced learners.
- Explore hiring or contracting a regional digital navigator.
- Advertise and increase awareness of individual internet plans.

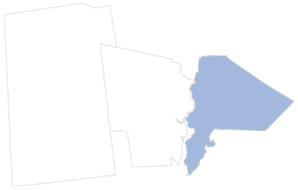
Goal 3: Support community anchor institutions and increase access to existing community resources for vulnerable and underserved populations.

- Maintain or upgrade facilities to prioritize physical accessibility and reliable internet connections.
- Acquire help from existing non-profits or other town-owned institutions, such as public schools.
- Develop local or regional digital equity education kits for outreach coordinators that conduct in-person visits.
- Find unique ways to deliver messages to non-responsive or unengaged audiences.

Goal 4: Continue prioritizing and assessing larger scale projects that address broadband limitations in rural communities.

- Set realistic goals based on community needs and financing options.
- Continue advocating for the expansion of municipal fiber connection to support community services.

Berkley
Community Snapshot



Located on the federally designated "Wild and Scenic" Taunton River, Berkley was named for George Berkeley, an Irish philosopher and bishop.

Berkley is the home of the mysterious, petroglypch-covered Writing Rock, now known as Dighton Rock. Dighton Rock State Park provides shade trees, picnic tables, a museum, and access to the Taunton. Berkley is also home to a well-loved and insanely good pizza joint.

Image 9. Berkley Powerlines in Town Center



Table 1. Town of Berkley Overview

Town Overview	
Total Area	16.5 sq mi
People per sq mi	413
Population Total	6,822
Median Age	43.4

Table 2. Income Breakdown in Berkley

Income Breakdown	
Median household income	$123,877
% Households Living Below 200% Poverty Line	18%
% Household income less than $25,000	3%
% Household income less than $50,000	12%

Digital Equity in Berkley

Map 1. Community Anchor Institutions in Berkley

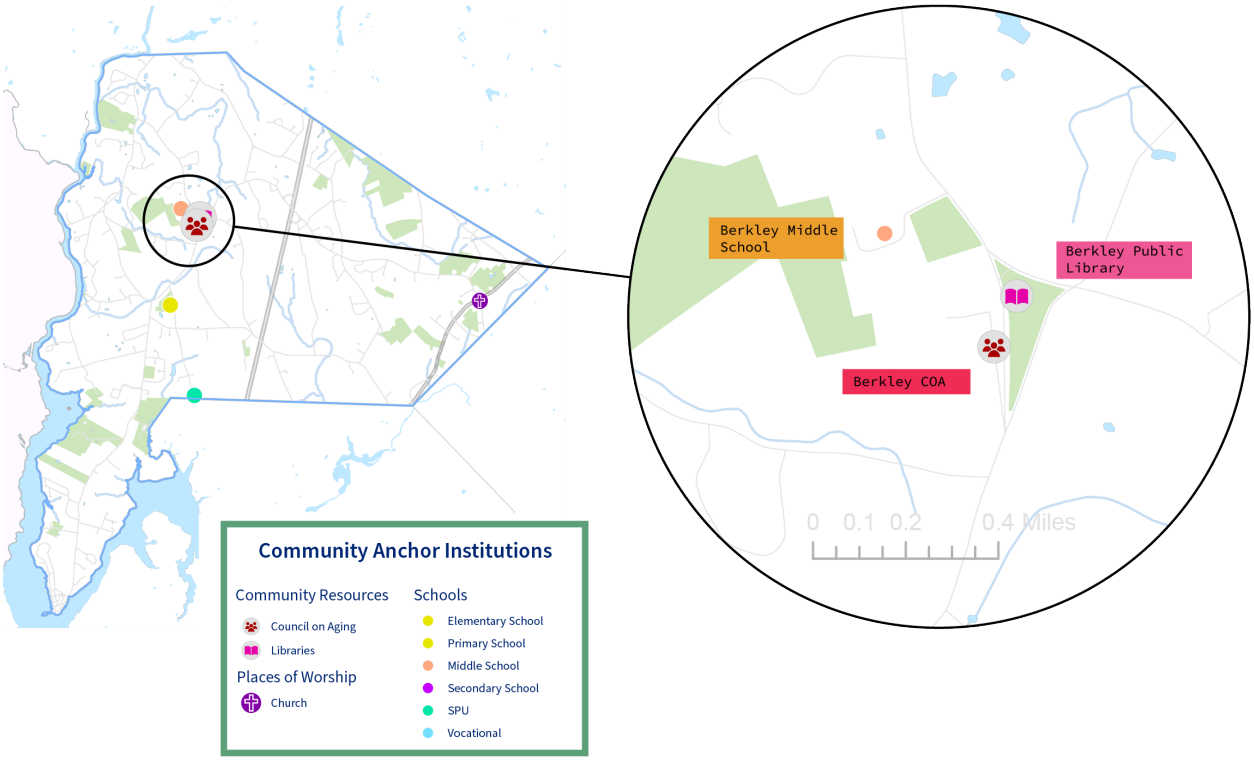


Table 3. Personal Device Access in Berkley

Personal Device Access	
% of households with no computer	1.6%
% households that have a smartphone with no other type of computer	2.4%

Table 4. Covered Populations in Berkley

Covered Populations Data	
% Older Adults (65 and over)	14.70%
% Non-White Population	11%
% Disabilities	8.80%
% Limited English-speaking households	4%
% of Veterans	6.30%

Connectivity in Berkley

Table 5. Ookla Speed Test Data in Berkley

Speed Test Data	
Total Tests	1123
Unique ID Tests	148
Jitter > 50	69
Latency > 100 ms	2
Speeds > 500 ms	1
Speeds < 25 x 3 Mbps	12
Speeds < 50 x 10 Mbps	52
Speeds < 100 x 20 Mbps	161
Speeds at least 25 x 3 Mbps	1018
Speeds at least 50 x 10 Mbps	849
Speeds at least 100 x 20 Mbps	479
Speeds at least 100 x 100 Mbps	168

Table 6. Connectivity Overview for Berkley

Connectivity Overview	
Total BSLs	2391
% of Households without a Broadband Internet Subscription	5%
% Households using only cellular data plan	2.40%
% of Served BSLs	99.71%
% of Underserved BSLs	0.29%
% of Unserved BSLs	0%

Table 7. Number of Internet Service Providers

Number of ISPs	
0 Providers	0.00%
1 Provider	5.61%
2 Providers	47.11%
3 Providers	42.67%
4 or More Providers	4.61%

Table 8. Table X: Internet Service Providers in Berkley

Provider Name	Technology	Max Advertised Download Speed (Mbps)	Max Advertised Upload Speed (Mbps)	# of BSLs Serviced	% of BSLs Serviced
Comcast Cable Communications, LLC	Cable	1200	35	2402	99%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	25	3	995	41%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	100	20	77	3%
Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant	Fiber	1000	1000	315	13%
Verizon Communications Inc., dba Verizon New England Inc.	Fiber	940	880	2139	89%

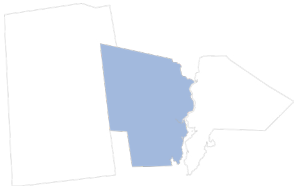
Table 9. Maximum Internet Speeds in Berkley by BSL

Maximum Speeds	
% BSLs that reach 100/20 Mbps Max Speed	10.47%
% BSLs that reach 100/100 Mbps Max Speed	76.44%
% BSLs that reach 1000/1000 Mbps Max Speed	13.09%

Table 10. Internet Subscriptions By Income

Internet Subscriptions By Income	Less than $20,000	$20,000 to $74,999	$75,000 or more
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	0%	0%	1%
With a broadband Internet subscription	100%	96%	95%
Without an Internet subscription	0%	4%	4%

Dighton
Community Snapshot



Dighton is rural southeastern Massachusetts at its best.

Villages and country sides, neighborhoods and farms, and small-town charm. The town's coastline on the federally designated "Wild and Scenic" Taunton River gives some parts of Dighton a coastal vibe. Dighton prides itself on excellent schools (in partnership with neighboring Rehoboth), a variety of small businesses, the newly created Sweets Knoll State Park, and a "can-do" New England attitude.

Image 10. 5G Towers in Dighton



Table 11. Town of Dighton Overview

Town Overview	
Total Area	22 sq mi
People per sq mi	379
Population Total	8,348
Median Age	42.7

Table 12. Income Breakdown in Dighton

Income Breakdown	
Median household income	$137,616
% Households Living Below 200% Poverty Line	22%
% Household income less than $25,000	3%
% Household income less than $50,000	14%

Digital Equity in Dighton

Map 3. Community Anchor Institutions in Dighton

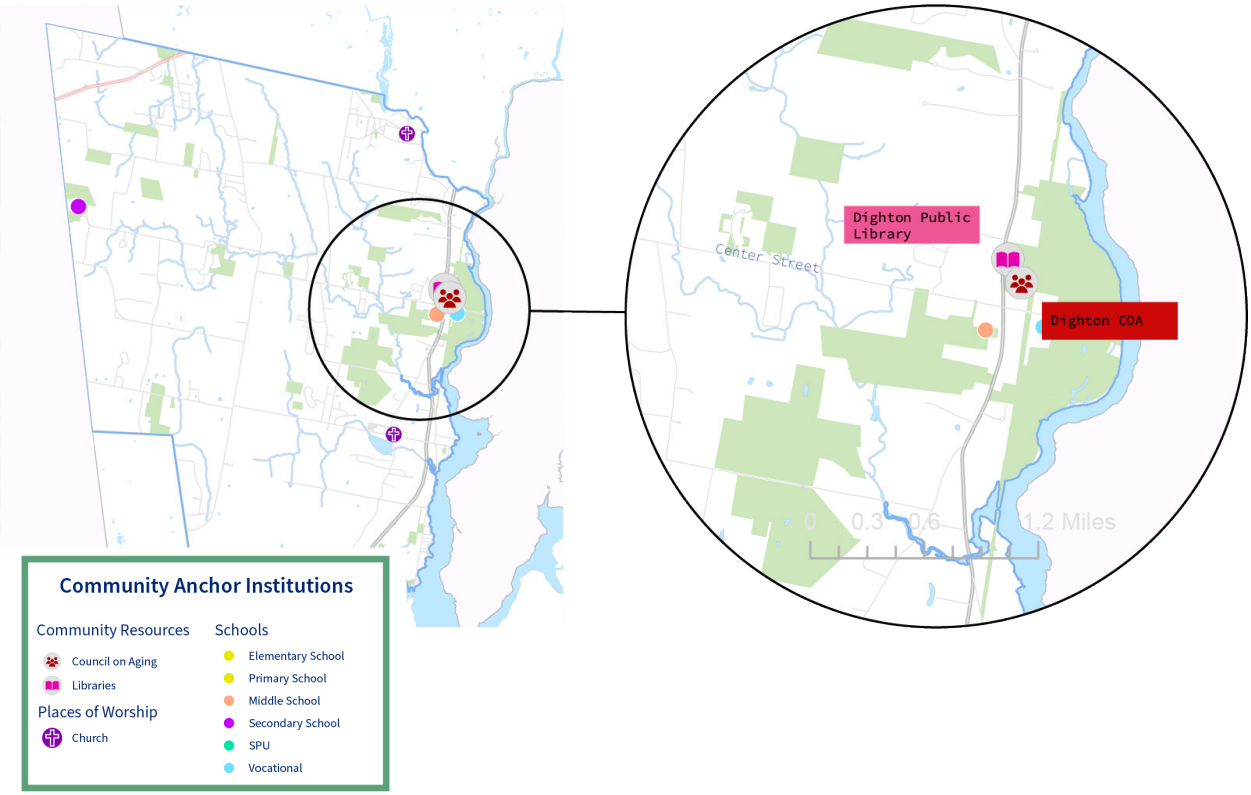


Table 14. Personal Device Access in Dighton

Personal Device Access	
% of households with no computer	3.1%
% households that have a smartphone with no other type of computer	6.4%

Table 13. Covered Populations in Dighton

Covered Populations Data	
% Older Adults (65 and over)	16.50%
% Non-White Population	8%
% Disabilities	10.30%
% Limited English-speaking households	6%
% of Veterans	6.60%

Connectivity in Dighton

Table 15. Ookla Speed Test Data in Dighton

Speed Test Data	
Total Tests	983
Unique ID Tests	173
Jitter > 50	40
Latency > 100 ms	1
Speeds > 500 ms	0
Speeds < 25 x 3 Mbps	7
Speeds < 50 x 10 Mbps	57
Speeds < 100 x 20 Mbps	189
Speeds at least 25 x 3 Mbps	930
Speeds at least 50 x 10 Mbps	767
Speeds at least 100 x 20 Mbps	406
Speeds at least 100 x 100 Mbps	29

Table 17. Connectivity Overview for Dighton

Connectivity Overview	
Total BSLs	2904
% of Households without a Broadband Internet Subscription	4%
% Households using only cellular data plan	6%
% of Served BSLs	99.86%
% of Underserved BSLs	0.14%
% of Unserved BSLs	0%

Table 16. Number of Internet Service Providers

Number of ISPs	
0 Providers	0.03%
1 Provider	41.71%
2 Providers	47.64%
3 Providers	10.61%
4 or More Providers	0.00%

Table 19. Internet Service Providers in Dighton

Provider Name	Technology	Max Advertised Download Speed (Mbps)	Max Advertised Upload Speed (Mbps)	# of BSLs Serviced	% of BSLs Serviced
Comcast Cable Communications, LLC	Cable	1200	35	2880	100%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	25	3	727	25%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	100	20	550	19%
Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant	Fiber	1000	1000	7	00.24%
Verizon Communications Inc., dba Veri-zon New England Inc.	Fiber	940	880	705	24%

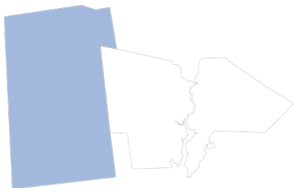
Table 18. Maximum Internet Speeds in Dighton by BSL

Maximum Speeds	
% BSLs that reach 100/20 Mbps Max Speed	99.86%
% BSLs that reach 100/100 Mbps Max Speed	99.86%
% BSLs that reach 1000/1000 Mbps Max Speed	24.58%

Table 20. Internet Subscriptions By Income

Internet Subscriptions By Income	Less than $20,000	$20,000 to $74,999	$75,000 or more
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	0%	0%	0%
With a broadband Internet subscription	84%	87%	99%
Without an Internet subscription	16%	13%	2%

Rehoboth
Community Snapshot



Rehoboth was established in 1643 and is named for a site founded by Isaac in the book of Genesis.

Rehoboth (whose name means “open space”) is one of the oldest towns in Massachusetts and the birthplace of public education in the U.S. The town is a mix of rural and suburban communities with many ties to nearby Providence, RI. The 138-acre Rehoboth State Forest features hunting, a 1-mile loop hiking trail and Bad Luck Pond, used for fishing and canoeing. The Rehoboth Antiquarian Society, a non-profit organization, operates the Carpenter Museum, the Blanding Public Library, and the Arts in the Village music series, which takes place in the Library’s Goff Memorial Hall.

Image 11. Powerlines in Rehoboth



Table 21. Income Breakdown in Rehoboth

Income Breakdown	
Median household income	$126,161
% Households Living Below 200% Poverty Line	29%
% Household income less than $25,000	6%
% Household income less than $50,000	13%

Table 22. Town of Rehoboth Overview

Town Overview	
Total Area	46.9 sq mi
People per sq mi	277.5
Population Total	13,022
Median Age	47.2

Digital Equity in Rehoboth

Map 5. Community Anchor Institutions in Rehoboth

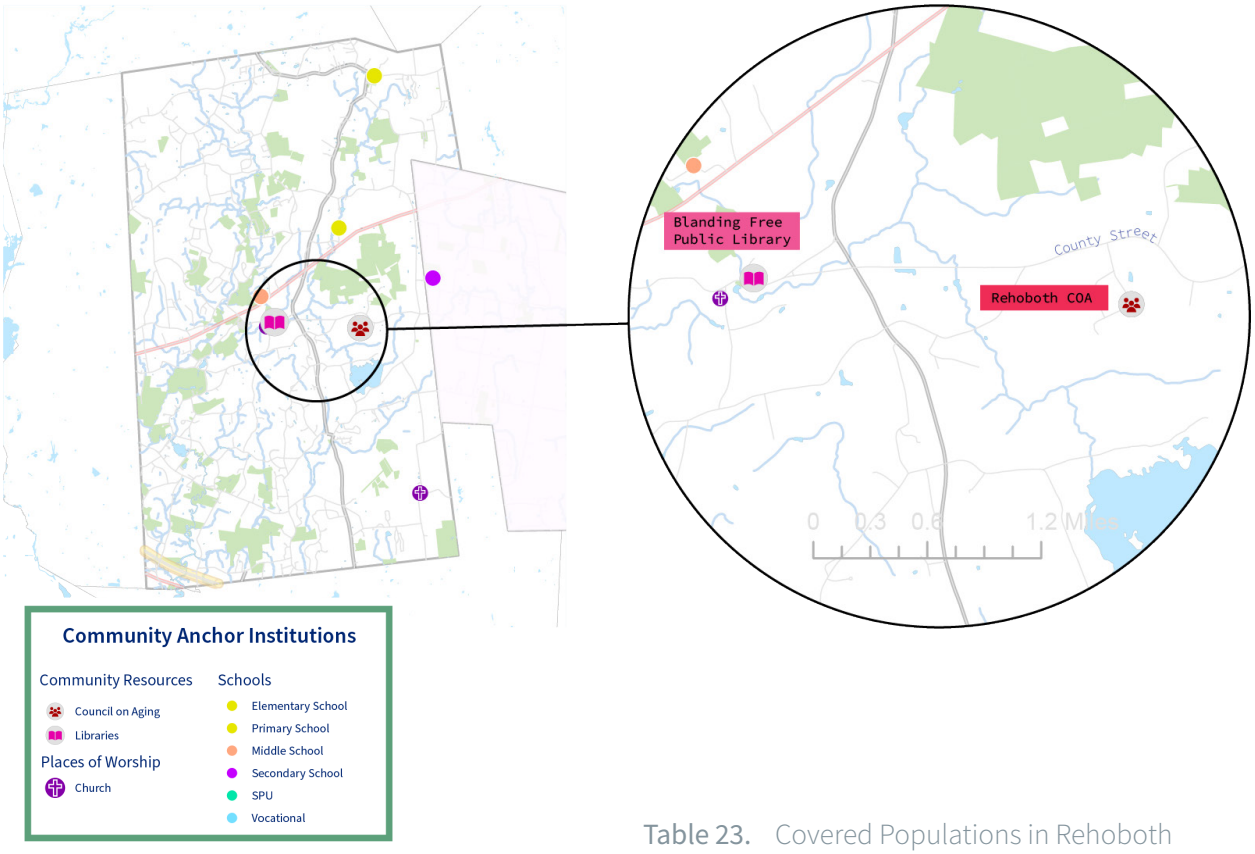


Table 24. Personal Device Access in Rehoboth

Personal Device Access	
% of households with no computer	1.0%
% households that have a smartphone with no other type of computer	1.3%

Table 23. Covered Populations in Rehoboth

Covered Populations Data	
% Older Adults (65 and over)	19.30%
% Non-White Population	7%
% Disabilities	9.50%
% Limited English-speaking households	12%
% of Veterans	6.70%

Connectivity in Rehoboth

Table 25. Ookla Speed Test Data inRehoboth

Speed Test Data	
Total Tests	3352
Unique ID Tests	599
Jitter > 50	193
Latency > 100 ms	26
Speeds > 500 ms	11
Speeds < 25 x 3 Mbps	32
Speeds < 50 x 10 Mbps	213
Speeds < 100 x 20 Mbps	726
Speeds at least 25 x 3 Mbps	2992
Speeds at least 50 x 10 Mbps	2544
Speeds at least 100 x 20 Mbps	1411
Speeds at least 100 x 100 Mbps	35

Table 27. Connectivity Overview for Rehoboth

Connectivity Overview	
Total BSLs	4834
% of Households without a Broadband Internet Subscription	3.7%
% Households using only cellular data plan	1.3%
% of Served BSLs	99.7%
% of Underserved BSLs	0.23%
% of Unserved BSLs	0%

Table 26. Number of Internet Service Providers

Number of ISPs	
0 Providers	0.18%
1 Provider	74.45%
2 Providers	25.36%
3 Providers	0.00%
4 or More Providers	0.00%

Table 29. Internet Service Providers in Rehoboth

Provider Name	Technology	Max Advertised Download Speed (Mbps)	Max Advertised Upload Speed (Mbps)	# of BSLs Serviced	% of BSLs Serviced
Comcast Cable Communications, LLC	Cable	1200	35	4,884	99.82%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wire-less	25	3	944	19.29%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wire-less	100	20	296	6.05%
Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant	Fiber	1000	1000	1	0.02%

Table 28. Maximum Internet Speeds in Rehoboth by BSL

Maximum Speeds	
% BSLs that reach 100/20 Mbps Max Speed	99.80%
% BSLs that reach 100/100 Mbps Max Speed	0.00%
% BSLs that reach 1000/1000 Mbps Max Speed	0.02%

Table 30. Internet Subscriptions By Income

Internet Subscriptions By Income	Less than $20,000	$20,000 to $74,999	$75,000 or more
With dial-up Internet subscription alone	0%	0%	0%
With a broadband Internet subscription	84%	87%	99%
Without an Internet subscription	16%	13%	2%

Regional Existing Conditions

The study area of this regional digital equity plan consists of the Towns of Rehoboth, Dighton, and Berkley - three rural/suburban communities in Bristol County, Massachusetts.

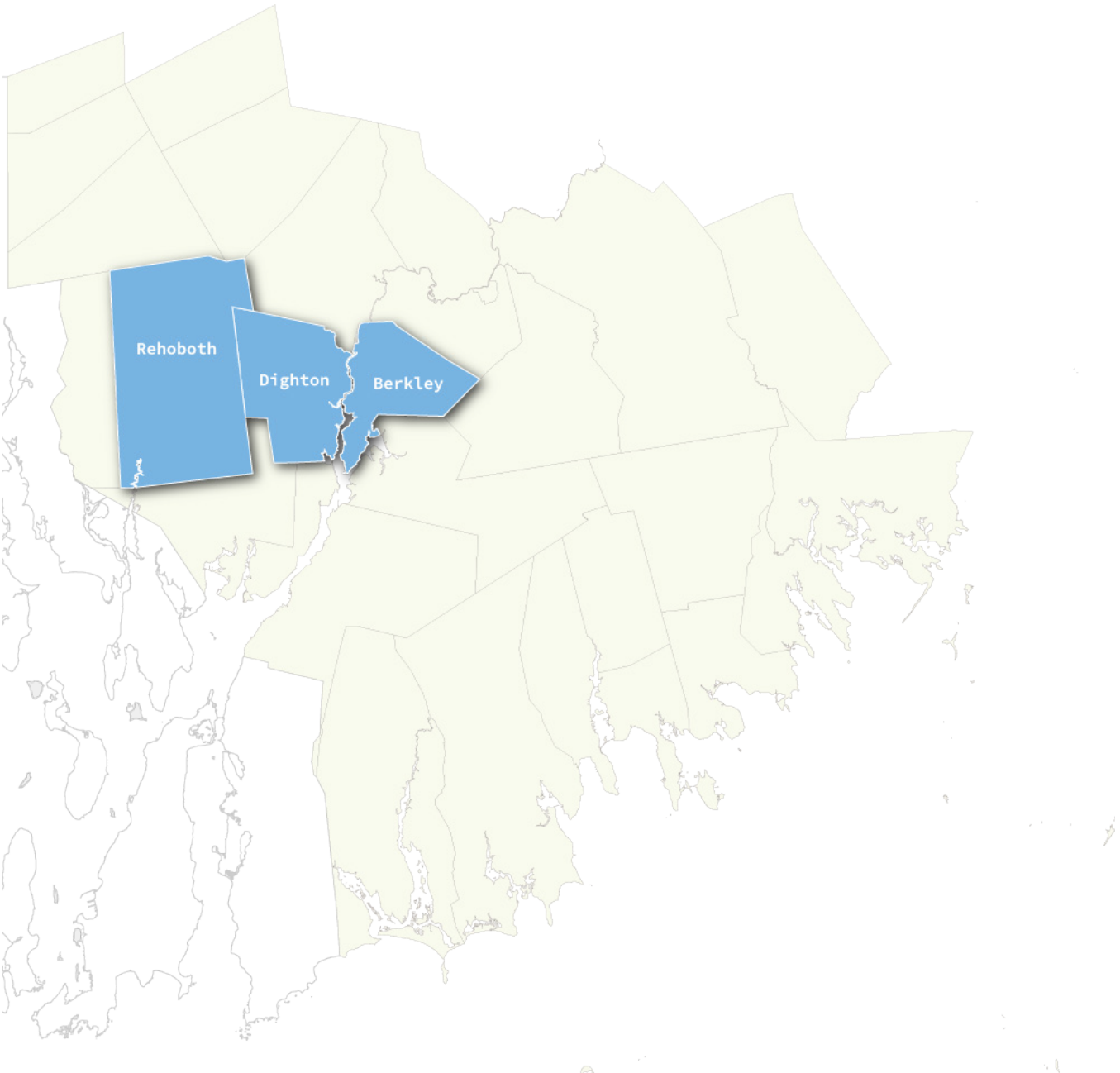
Digital Equity Assets

A “digital equity asset” is any program or initiative that supports or promotes digital equity. These can include things such as public computer labs or laptop lending libraries, hired digital navigators, relevant planning documents, or other programs aimed at bridging the digital divide. Tracking digital equity assets is also useful way to assess the status of digital literacy in a community. As stated previously, SRPEDD has been tracking the region’s digital equity assets since the Fall of 2023 as part of the agency’s partnership with MBI and shared mission to make a public resource of these necessary resources.

Table 31. Digital Equity Assets in Bristol County study area

	Connection + Affordability	Device Access	Digital Literacy
Berkley	Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant Participation	Computer at COA	Digital Literacy Teacher at Berkley Middle School
Dighton	BEAD Deployment	Computers at Library	Tech Help at COA (By appointment only)
Rehoboth	Gap Networks Program Participant IT Advisory Committee	Computers at Library and Town Hall	COA Smartphone Help Every Third Wednesday – Chalk Talk Technology

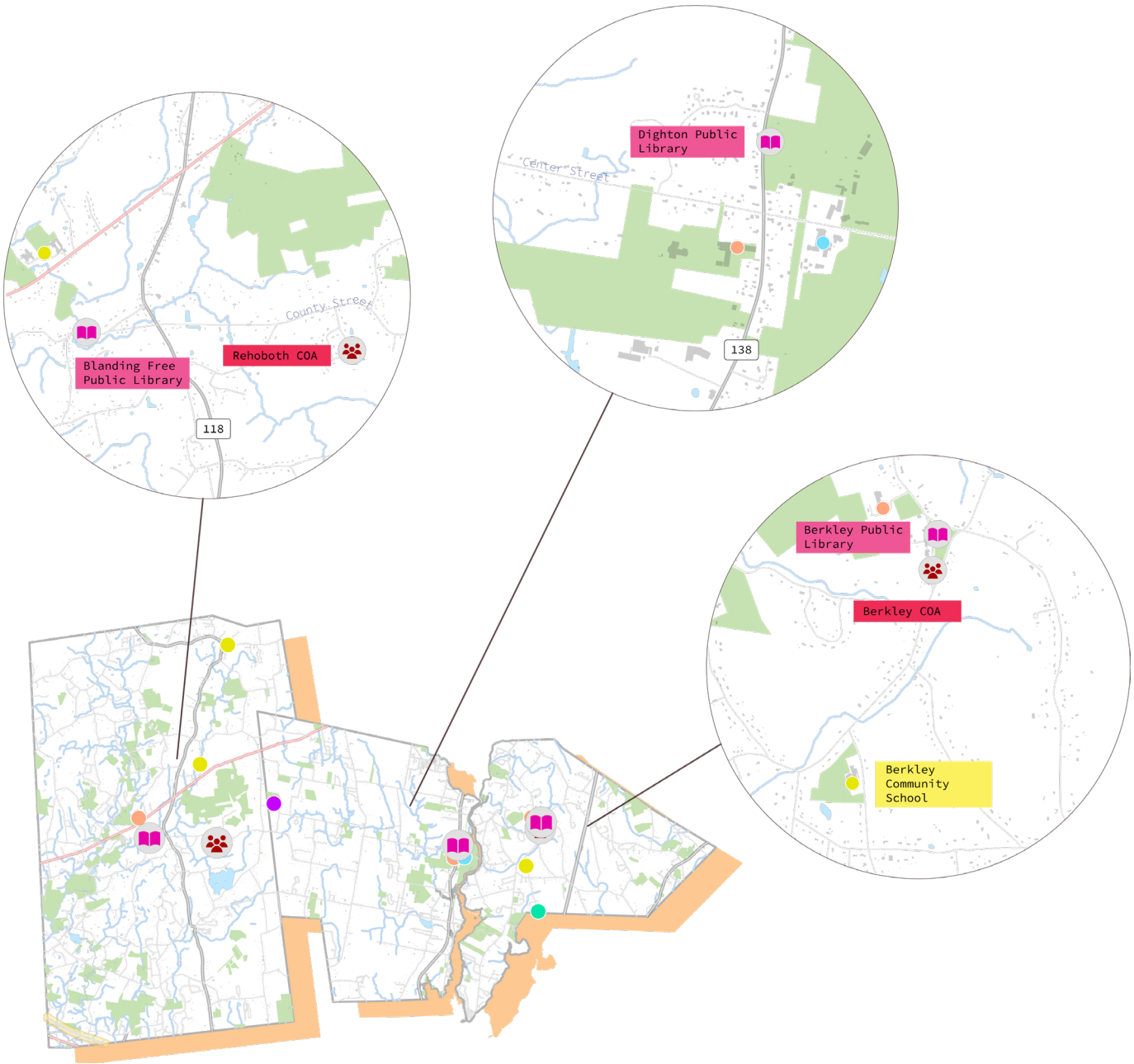
Map 7. Bristol County Digital Equity Plan project area in SRPEDD Region



Community Anchor Institutions

Community Anchor Institutions in a digital equity context typically encompass libraries, senior centers, schools, or other public spaces that provide access to the internet.

Map 8. Community Anchor Institutions in Bristol County study area



Berkley Library

The Berkley Public Library is a historic building from 1918 situated near the Town's municipal center at 2 North Main Street. They offer **mobile hotspots** procured through Tech Soup and mentioned that they intend to purchase more through an AARP grant. Since space is small and non-compliant with ADA standards, most programming is held at the COA. There is an attempt to secure state funding for a larger space, but a municipal match would be required.

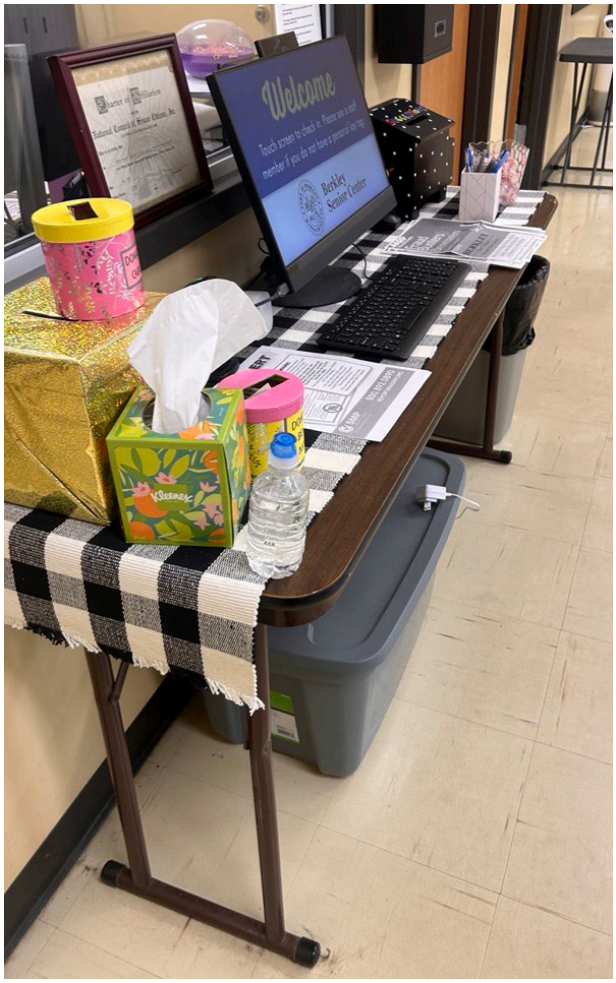
Image 12. Overhead Image of Berkley Library



Berkley COA and Food Distribution Center

The Berkley Council on Aging is down the street at the Town's municipal center on 1 North Main Street. Their space is shared with other municipal offices and is the go-to spot for community events. The size of the space is appropriate for their current needs, but staff mentioned that more space would enable larger scale events. There is a computer available for the public, but it does not see regular use.

Image 13. Computers at Berkley COA



Dighton Library

The Dighton Public Library is located at 207 Main Street. It is about 2 miles away from the Council on Aging. There are laptops available for public use and hotspots that can be checked out.

Dighton COA

The Dighton Council on Aging is located at 1059 Somerset Ave right behind Dighton's Old Town Hall and right down the street from Bristol County Agricultural Highschool. There is a dedicated outreach coordinator that assists with social services.

Image 14. Accessible Entrance to Dighton COA



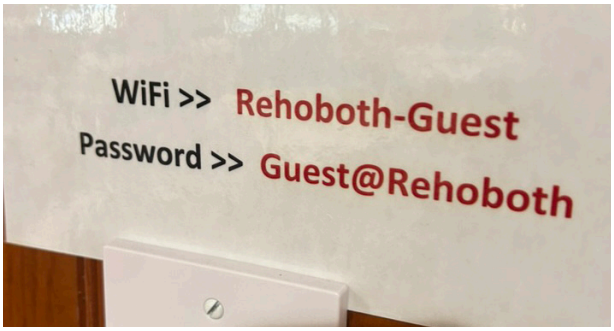
Blanding Public Library (Rehoboth Public Library)

The Blanding Public Library is housed in a historic building at 124 Bay State Road. It is managed by the Rehoboth Antiquarian Society – a historical society founded in 1884 with the goal of preserving artifacts related to Rehoboth's history, maintaining a meeting, and providing a free library. There are currently four computer workstations available to the public and WiFi throughout the building and parking lot.

Rehoboth COA

The Rehoboth COA is housed at Francis Farm – a function venue dating back to the 1890s.[6] The space was acquired in 2021 and has since become, "… the social epicenter for the community. The $2.8 million purchase was approved by town meeting and hosts the COA, Veteran's Service Office, Human and Health Services Officer, and other municipal assets.[7] There is WiFi available in the building and there is ample space for community events.

Image 15. Wifi Info at Rehoboth COA



6 Stephen Peterson, "Rehoboth eyes new senior center at Francis Farm", The Sun Chronicle, 2021 https://www.thesunchronicle.com/news/local_news/rehoboth-eyes-new-senior-center-at-francis-farm/article_c2cf7e87-e281-5842-b86c-6cdb33a7a122.html

7 Joe Siegel, "Recreation at Frances Farm", Reporter Today, 2021 https://www.reportertoday.com/stories/recreation-at-francis-farm,42844

Regional Assets

Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant

The Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant provides internet at low rates for residents in Berkley, Lakeville, Taunton, and Raynham. Its governance structure allows for community participation and control yielding to better service and innovative ways to deliver quality internet to residents.[8] While there are no current plans to expand outside of its current territory, TMLP serves as an example of how to build out a public broadband utility.

Dighton Rehoboth School District

The Dighton Rehoboth School District (DRSD) has made strides in prioritizing Career & Technical Education (CT&E) for students in the regional school district. DSRD's 2025 feature in Business View Magazine highlights the district's approach to technology education, particularly how the Director of Instructional Technology, Lauren Harwood is approaching AI education.

"AI is an incredibly powerful tool, and our philosophy is to use AI responsibly and educate our students on how to use it responsibly. Not just like, oh, this can write an essay for me," Harwood explains. "We teach them, or we help them use it so they're using it responsibly, ethically, and making sure that the information that they're receiving from AI is accurate." [9]

Image 16. Cover of Business Insider Article Highlighting DSRD



8 "About", TMLP, https://www.tmlp.com/31/About

9 Megan Smallidge, "Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District Featured for Innovative, Community-Driven Approach to Education", 2025, https://www.drregional.org/article/2532199/

Connectivity

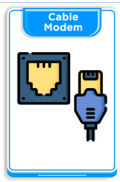
The “internet” is how we refer to the transfer of information from one server to another. Broadband infrastructure can be thought of as the path or “highway” along which this information travels. When the internet was first introduced to American households in the late 80s and early 90s, it was referred to as the “information superhighway” and, since then, public and private investments have enabled the expansion of this utility to connect Americans to one another and the world. The term “information highway” may feel outdated in 2026, but like highways, this infrastructure enables both individuals and communities to fully participate in modern society.

Types of Broadband Connections



Fiber Optic
Speeds: Over 1,000 Mbps

The newest broadband technology and the gold standard for broadband, with tough-to-beat symmetrical upload and download speeds. Though it is the best, laying down fiber cables in the ground or on utility poles has proven to be a logistical challenge causing limited availability.



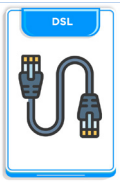
Cable
Speeds: 10 Mbps to 1,000 Mbps

Cable is the most common internet connection across the country. The cables that facilitate this type of internet connection use the same coaxial connections as cable TV. Internet speeds comes second to fiber internet, but it boasts the best availability in the country.



Wireless Internet
Speeds: 100 Mbps to 1,000 Mbps

If you have a fixed wireless internet connection - providers will send internet signals over the air. However, with a fixed wireless connection, you’ll need a mounted receiver with a direct line of sight to the nearest tower.



Direct Service Line (DSL)
Speeds: 1 Mbps to 400 Mbps

A lifeline for many rural communities looking for an affordable and somewhat reliable internet connection. The downside is that speeds will significantly vary by what’s available at your address.



Satellite
Speeds: 25 Mbps to 150 Mbps

Very widely available among all internet connection types, but most expensive option and falls very short on speeds. Typical speeds will vary, though you may find faster speeds with Starlink. The average cost of satellite internet is $100 monthly.



5G Internet
Speeds: up to 300 Mbps

5G Internet is becoming a more popular options as it provides satisfactory speeds at a more affordable price. Usually, 5G frequencies are picked up by cellphones, but for home internet, a router receives those signals and turns them into a home connection. It’s a great way to get broadband without running a line to your home or, in some cases, dealing with the companies that have run those lines.

The following table shows the data for 1,123 speed tests in Berkley, 983 speed tests in Dighton, and 3,352 speed tests in Rehoboth. MBI collected this data from Ookla speed tests that were conducted between December 2021 and November 2022. MBI then took this data and aggregated it into relevant data sets by municipality.

This data indicates that 14% (161) of tests run in Berkley, 19% (189) of tests run in Dighton, and 22% (726) of tests run in Rehoboth experience speeds that are less than 100x20 Mbps, or less than broadband internet speeds.

Table 32. Bristol County Project Area Speed Test Data

Data Point	Berkley	Dighton	Rehoboth
Total Tests	1123	983	3352
Unique ID Tests	148	173	599
Jitter > 50	69	40	193
Latency > 100 ms	2	1	26
Speeds > 500 ms	1	0	11
Speeds < 25 x 3 Mbps	12	7	32
Speeds < 50 x 10 Mbps	52	57	213
Speeds < 100 x 20 Mbps	161	189	726
Speeds at least 25 x 3 Mbps	1018	930	2992
Speeds at least 50 x 10 Mbps	849	767	2544
Speeds at least 100 x 20 Mbps	479	406	1411
Speeds at least 100 x 100 Mbps	168	29	35

Table 33. Bristol County Project Area Maximum Speeds

Municipality	Max Speed 25/3 Mpbs	Max Speed 100/20 Mbps	Max Speed 100/100 Mpbs	Max Speed 1000/1000 Mbps
Berkley	0.00%	10.47%	76.44%	13.09%
Dighton	0.00%	75.28%	24.34%	0.24%
Rehoboth	0.00%	99.80%	0.00%	0.02%

Measuring Broadband Needs: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Data collected through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program can help illuminate gaps that may still exist within these three communities. The BEAD Program is a federal initiative tasked with building high-speed internet connections to unserved and underserved communities nationwide. This program helps to align federal broadband expansion priorities with public and private partners at various scales through tracking existing connections and funding partnerships to build infrastructure.[10]

MBI has overseen the BEAD program for Massachusetts since its announcement in 2023 and continue to facilitate much of the BEAD Challenge process for the Commonwealth.[11] This process allows eligible entities a chance to dispute the status of "served" (a location with an internet speed of 100/20 Mbps), "underserved" (a location with an internet service slower than 100/20 Mbps), or "unserved" (a location receiving internet service slower than 25/3 Mbps) BSLs. This process did not take affordability into consideration, and is only about the speed of service.

The BEAD program is active and as of 2026, MBI is in the contracting phase with ISPs to conduct infrastructure projects in identified unserved and unserved BSLs in the SRPEDD region. These infrastructure contracts expect to be executed over the next few years. Through the BEAD program, MBI expects to reach 100% broadband availability at speeds of at least 100/25 Mbps. That will include the identified unserved and underserved BSLs in SRPEDD's communities.

Image 17. MBI BEAD Logo



Image 18. FCC Broadband Data Collection Graphic



10 NTIA, "Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program", https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program

11 MBI, "BEAD Program", https://broadband.masstech.org/bead-program

Overview of BEAD Classifications



Served

low-latency Fiber, Cable, Copper, or Licensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless offering of speeds greater than or equal to 100/20 Mbps.



Underserved

low-latency Fiber, Cable, Copper, or Terrestrial Licensed Fixed Wireless offering of speeds less than 100/20 Mbps, but greater than or equal to 25/3 Mbps.



Unserved

all service that is not low-latency or less than 25/3 Mbps, and all Geostationary Satellite, Non-geostationary Satellite, Unlicensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless, and Other.

Overview of the types of BEAD Challenges:

Availability:

Service shown isn't available or service is currently available but isn't shown

Speed:

Service speed is slower than advertised that the location can be classified as underserved or unserved

Latency:

The round-trip latency of the broadband service exceeds 100 milliseconds (ms)

Data Caps:

The only service plans marketed to consumers impose an unreasonable capacity allowance

Enforceable Commitment:

Federal, state, or local funding is already paying to connect this location (or this location will be left out)

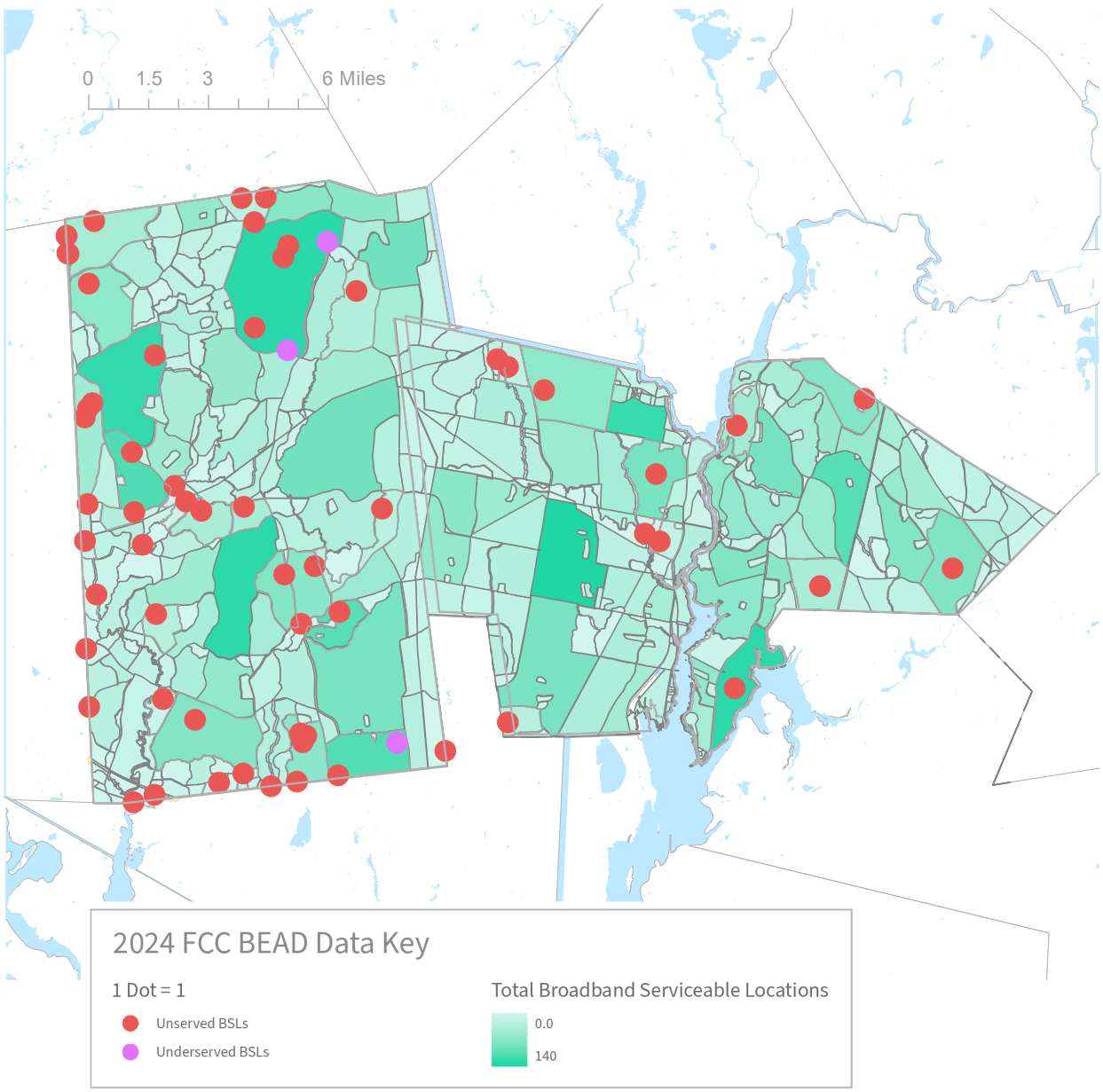
Planned Service:

Privately funded construction is underway to connect this location (this location will be left out)

Community Anchor Institution:

Location is (or is not) in one of the CAI categories defined in the Massachusetts State Challenge Process

Map 11. Initial 2024 BEAD Eligible Locations in Bristol County Region[6]



6 FCC, "FCC Broadband Data Collection June 2024", https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=-22ca3a8bb2ff46c1983fb45414157b08#overview

According to the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Broadband Data Collection Map, as of June 2024, two BSLs in Berkley are underserved and five BSLs are unserved, two BSLs are underserved and seven BSLs are unserved in Dighton, and five BSLs are underserved and forty-seven BSLs are unserved in Rehoboth.

Table 34. BSL Data from 2024 Broadband Data Collection

Town	Unserved BSLs	Underserved BSLs	Total BSLs
Berkley	5	2	2837
Dighton	7	2	3813
Rehoboth	47	5	6769

MBI's post BEAD Challenge list shows how this data collection helped in accurately reflecting BSL data. As of September 4, 2025 (when the final challenges were submitted) four BSLs in Berkley are underserved, seven BSLs are underserved in Dighton, and eleven BSLs are underserved in Rehoboth.

Table 35. BSL Data post BEAD Challenge Process

Town	MBI Post BEAD Unserved BSLs	MBI Post BEAD Underserved BSLs	Total BSLs
Berkley	0	7	2391
Dighton	0	4	2904
Rehoboth	0	11	4834

Source: 2024 MBI Post Challenge BSL List [12]

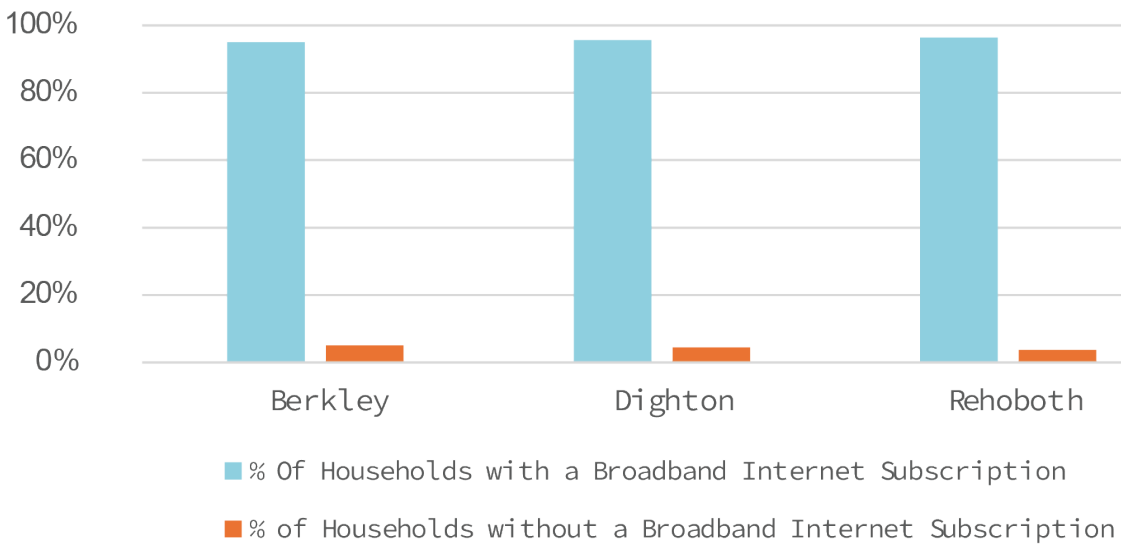
12 MBI, "BEAD Program", https://broadband.masstech.org/bead-program

Internet Service Providers

Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are the entities that manage the provision of internet to households and businesses. In the United States, most internet services and broadband infrastructure are managed by private or publicly owned ISPs, such as Comcast or the Taunton Municipal Lighting Service (TMLP).

Berkley, Dighton, and Rehoboth all report low percentages of households without a broadband subscription. 95% of households in Berkley, 96% of households in Dighton, and 96% of households in Rehoboth have a broadband subscription. These figures are all higher than state rates (92% of Massachusetts households have a broadband subscription) and county rates (90% of households in Bristol County have broadband subscription); this indicates that most households have an at home internet connection.

Figure 1. Percentage of Households without a Broadband Internet Subscription



Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS)

The folling tables show the internet service providers that are active in Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth. The Massachusetts Broadband Institute acknowledges service covered from Comcast, T-Mobile, and TMLP in all three towns. Verizon has coverage in Dighton and Berkley as well. This reflects what was heard during in person feedback and the digital equity survey See **Figure 3** – especially in Dighton and Rehoboth where participants expressed frustration with only having one option.

Table 36. Internet Service Providers in Berkley

Provider Name	Technology	Max Advertised Download Speed (Mbps)	Max Advertised Upload Speed (Mbps)	# of BSLs with Service Available	% of BSLs with Service Available
Comcast Cable Communications, LLC	Cable	1200	35	2,402	99.79%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	25	3	995	41.34%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	100	20	77	3.20%
Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant	Fiber	1000	1000	315	13.09%
Verizon Communications Inc., dba Verizon New England Inc.	Fiber	940	880	2,139	88.87%

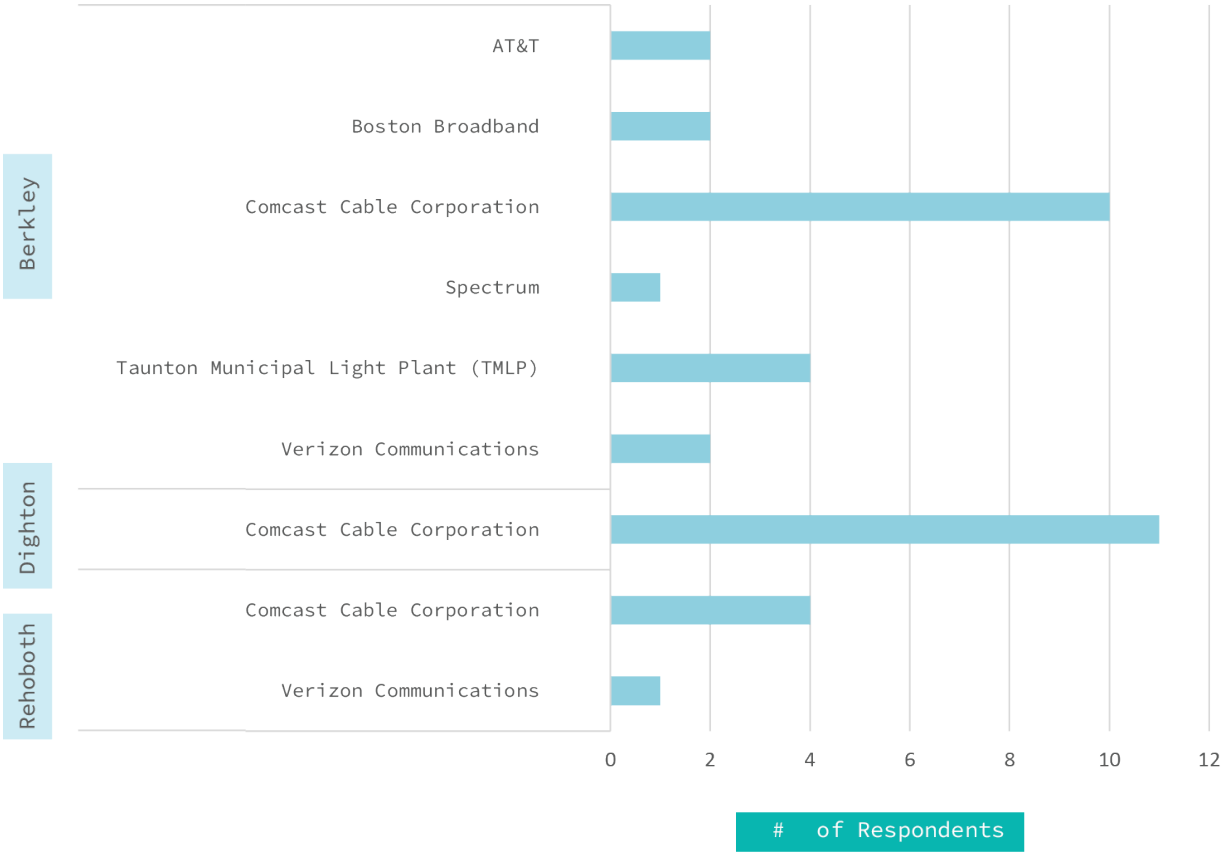
Table 37. Internet Service Providers in Dighton

Provider Name	Technology	Max Advertised Download Speed (Mbps)	Max Advertised Upload Speed (Mbps)	# of BSLs with Service Available	% of BSLs with Service Available
Comcast Cable Communications, LLC	Cable	1200	35	2,880	99.86%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	25	3	727	25.21%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	100	20	550	19.07%
Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant	Fiber	1000	1000	7	0.24%
Verizon Communications Inc., dba Verizon New England Inc.	Fiber	940	880	705	24.45%

Table 38. Internet Service Providers in Rehoboth

Provider Name	Technology	Max Advertised Download Speed (Mbps)	Max Advertised Upload Speed (Mbps)	# of BSLs with Service Available	% of BSLs with Service Available
Comcast Cable Communications, LLC	Cable	1200	35	4,884	99.82%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	25	3	944	19.29%
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Fixed Wireless	100	20	296	6.05%
Taunton Municipal Lighting Plant	Fiber	1000	1000	1	0.02%

Figure 2. Survey Q7 - Who is your internet service provider?



Comparing coverage and competition of internet service providers in the Bristol County study area may help understand how more options may lead to cheaper and faster internet.

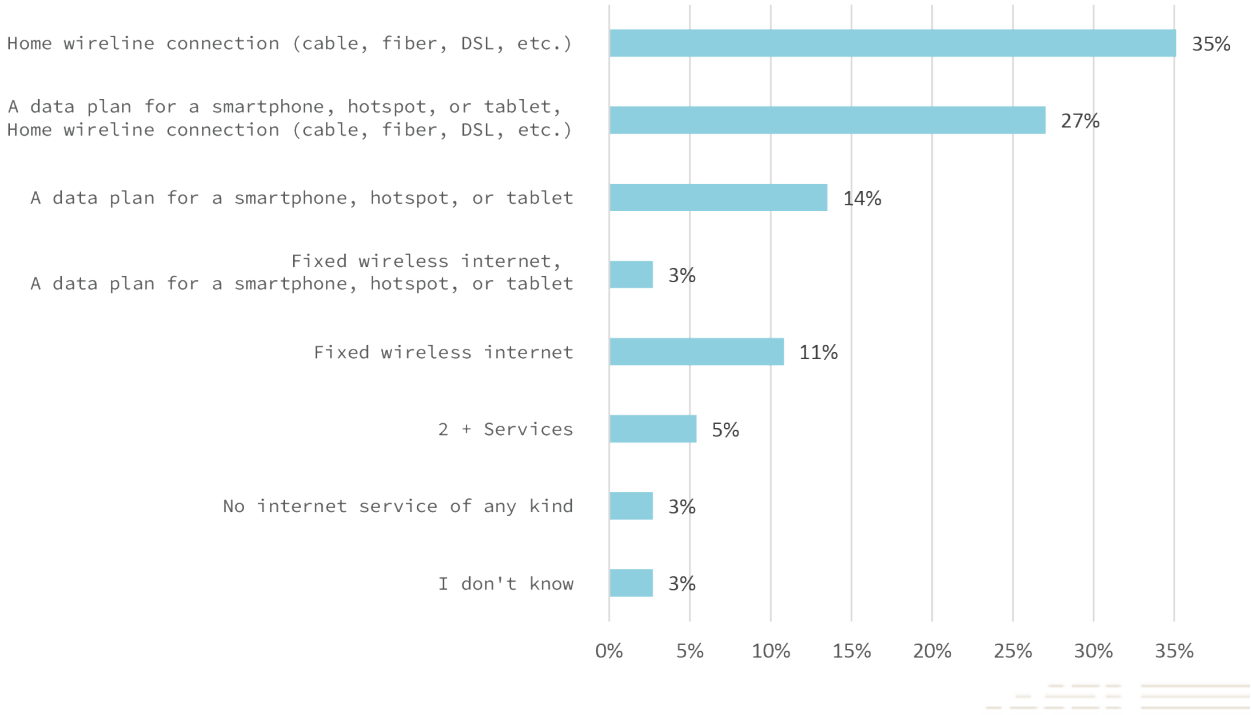
The following table indicates the number of service providers in Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth by percentage of BSLs covered. A majority of BSL's in Berkley (94.93%) are serviced by two or more providers while a majority of BSL's in Rehoboth (74.45%) are serviced by just one. Dighton sits (both figuratively and literally) in the middle where 58.25% of BSLs in town are serviced by 2 or more providers.

The 41% of households in Dighton and 74.5% of households in Rehoboth that only have one internet service provider option at their address, are essentially forced to pay whatever that provider is charging for if they want to have internet access in their home.

Table 39. Number of Internet Service Providers in Berkley, Dighton, and Rehoboth

	0 Providers	1 Provider	2 Providers	3 Providers	4 + Providers
Berkley	0.00%	5.61%	47.11%	42.67%	4.61%
Dighton	0.03%	41.71%	47.64%	10.61%	0.00%
Rehoboth	0.18%	74.45%	25.36%	0.00%	0.00%

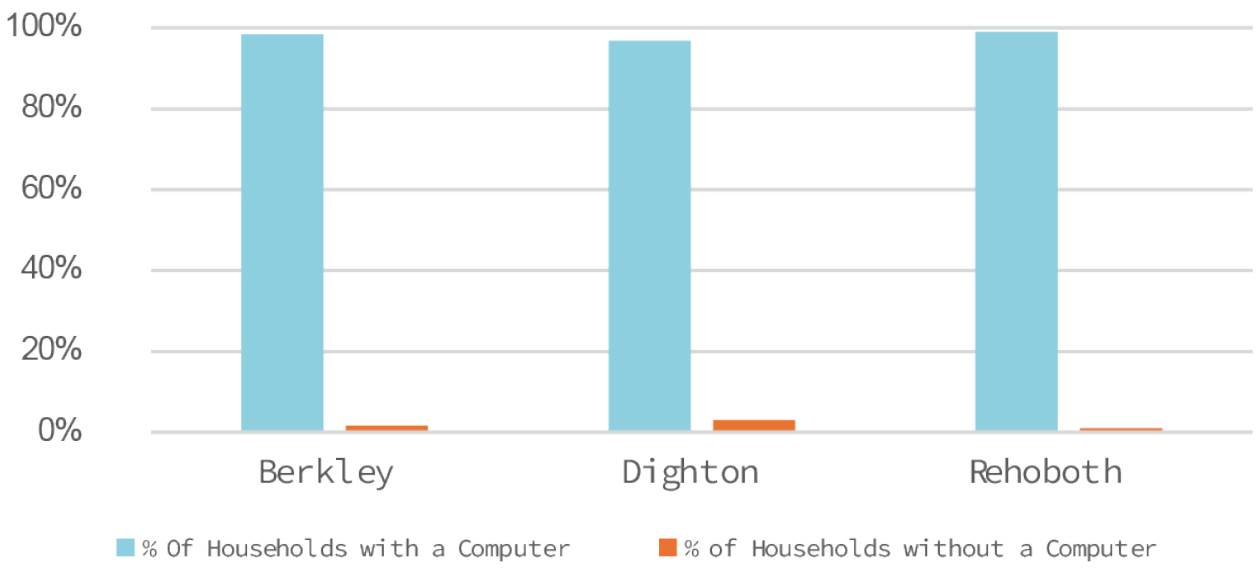
Figure 3. Survey Q8 - What type of internet service do you have at home?



Device Access

Most households in the Bristol County study area have access to a computer in their home. According to US Census data, 1.6 % of Berkley households, 3.1% of Dighton households, and 1% of Rehoboth households do not have a computer in their home. These numbers are lower than those of the county and the state, where 6% of Bristol County and 4.3% of the state do not have a computer in their household. Also, at least one survey respondent from each town indicated that their household didn't have access to computer devices they needed.

Figure 4. Households Without a Computer



Source: 2023 ACS

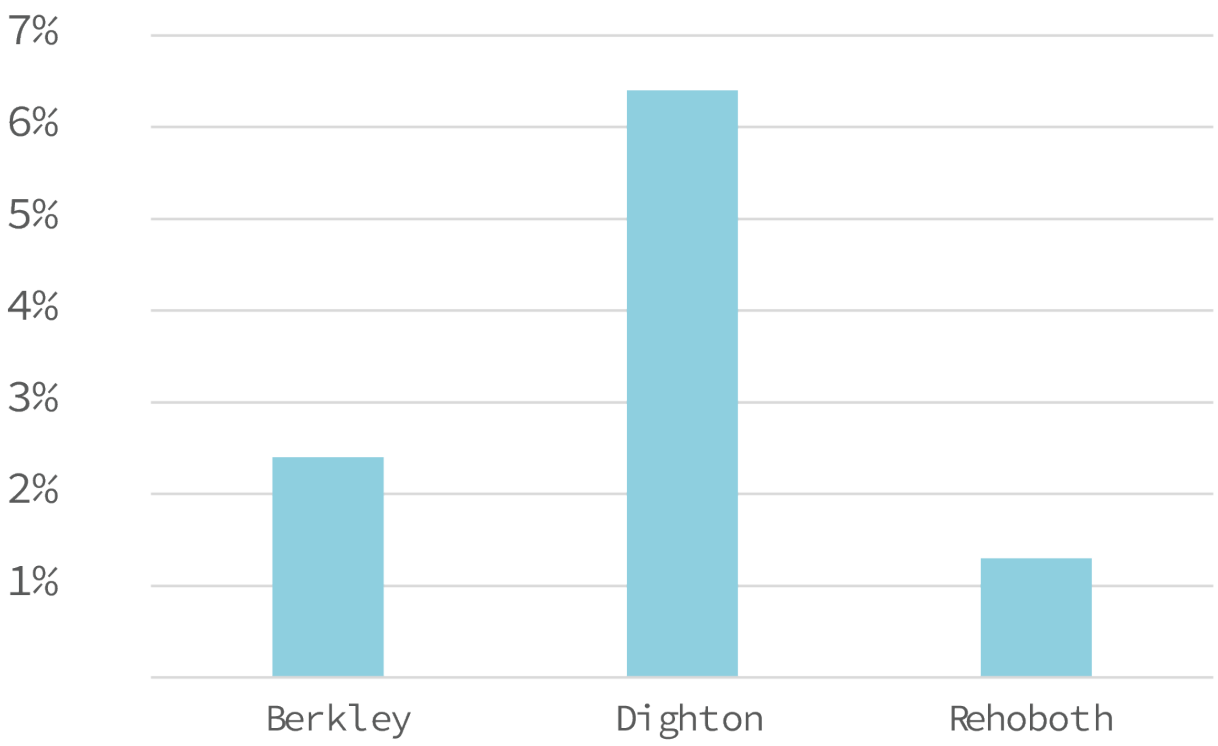
Table 40. Survey Q16 – Does Everyone in your household have access to the computer devices they need?

	Berkley	Dighton	Rehoboth	Total
No	1	1	1	3
Yes	18	10	4	32

Though many Americans are shifting to rely more on smartphones to access the internet (this is notable among the 65+ population), certain websites and software limit what can be done on a smartphone, and in some cases, only work properly on a laptop or tablet.[13] Access to a computer can open opportunities to an adult learner who wants to pursue higher education, or to an elderly person who lacks access to transportation and therefore cannot visit or interact with their healthcare provider in person.

The **Figure 6** shows the percentage of households that have only a smartphone and no other type of computer device. 2.4% and 1.3% of households have a smartphone and no other computer, in Berkley and Rehoboth respectively – figures that are lower than county and state levels. Dighton aligns more closely with 6.3% of households having a smartphone and no other computer.

Figure 5. Households that Have a Smartphone with No Other Type of Computer



Source: 2024 ACS

13 Pew Research Center, "Mobile Fact Sheet", 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/

The digital equity survey asked respondents to select "Which of the following devices do you use most of the time to connect to the internet?" Out of 35 respondents, most (19 or 54%) indicated using a combination of handheld devices (tablets and cellphones) and desktop or laptop computers.

Figure 6. Survey Q17 – Which of the following devices do you use most of the time to connect to the internet? (Check all that apply) [14]

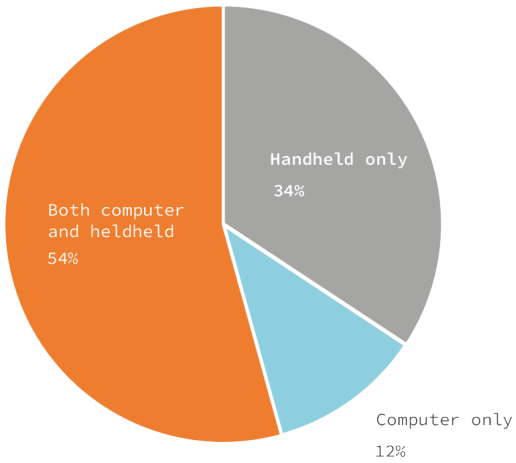
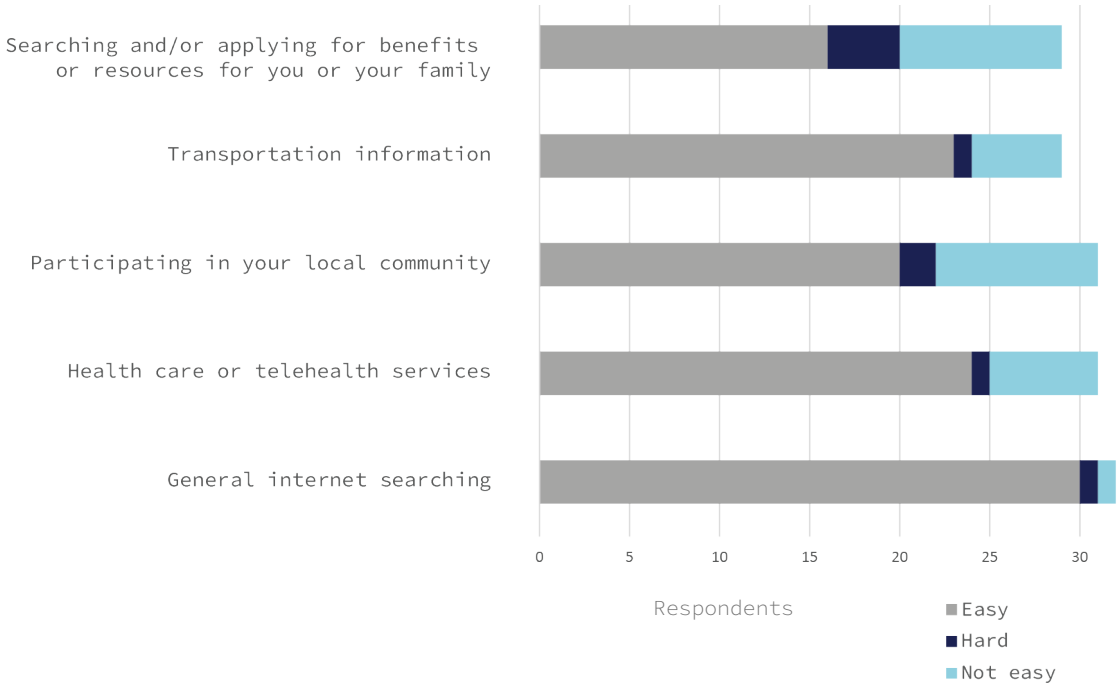


Figure 7. Survey Q19 - Are you able to use the internet for online activites? (Activity Response)



14 *Visual representation represents frequency of total selection*

Affordability

A major concern that appeared throughout the public engagement process was the cost of internet being too high in comparison to the service received.

The below graph shows survey responses to the question “How hard is it for you to pay your internet bill?” The results were evenly split between general sentiments on affordability (50% responded ‘Not too hard’ or ‘Not at all hard’ while the other 50% responded ‘Very Hard’ or ‘Somewhat hard’), but a majority (38%) indicated that their internet bill was ‘Somewhat Hard’ to pay.

Figure 8. Survey Q12 - How hard is it for you to pay your internet bill?

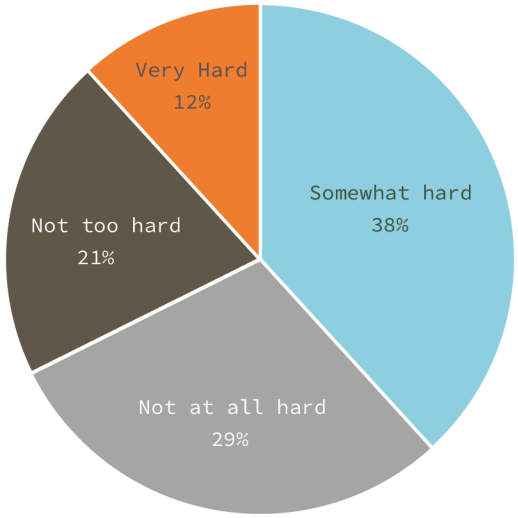


Figure 9. Survey Q18 - How much would you be willing to pay for a device?

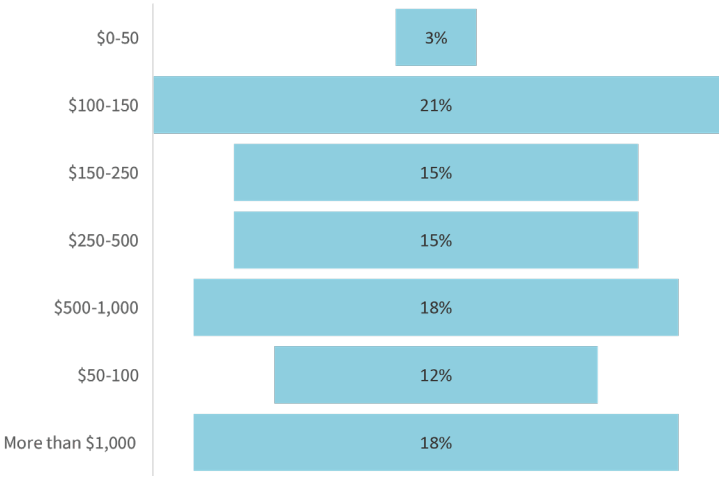


Figure 11 show the cost of each internet service plan available at a sample address in each Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth. The average monthly cost of a plan available at a sample address is $84 in Berkley, $91 in Dighton, and $91 in Rehoboth.

These graphs do not consider any affordable internet programs such as the Comcast Internet Essentials program as not all residents qualify. This sample address also excludes TMLP. However, the better quality of service for price is evident in Berkley versus Rehoboth and Dighton where a package offering speeds at 2000 mbps in Berkley costs the same as a package offering 1200 mbps.

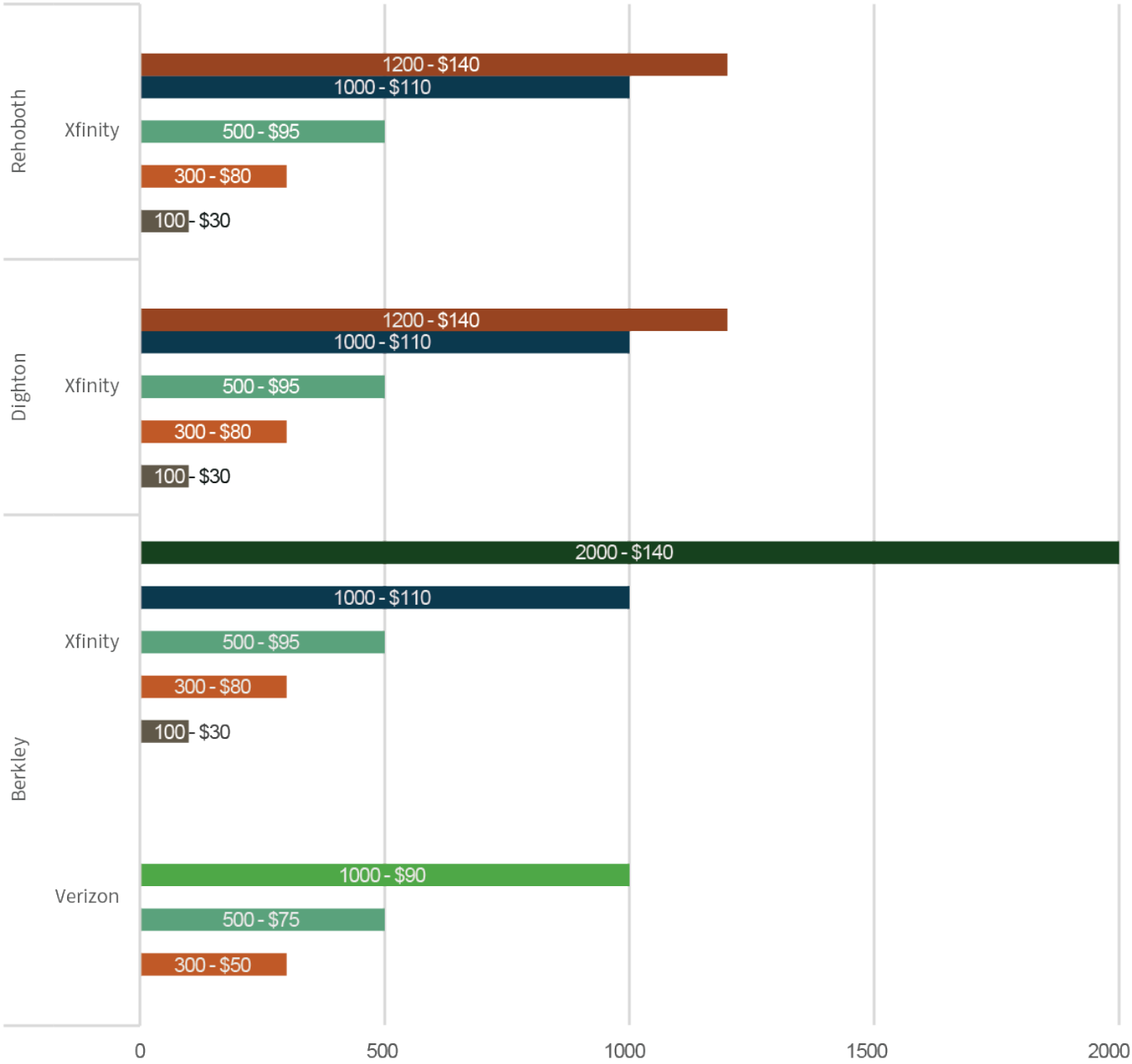
Table 42 indicates how much each town is willing to pay for a device based on 34 responses to the digital equity survey. **Figure 10** shows the regional overview of the same information. The higher price points reflect the lack of need for device access in the Bristol County study area. However, it is important for the 21% of respondents that chose the $100-150 figure to understand rising costs of personal devices. A consumer report published in December of 2025 cites how the ramp of AI Data centers has increased demand for RAM (a computer's storage memory).[15]

Table 41. Survey Q11 – How much would you be able to pay for a laptop or desktop computer? (Response by Town)

	Berkley	Dighton	Rehoboth
$0-50	0	1	0
$50-100	3	0	1
$100-150	4	2	1
$150-250	2	3	0
$250-500	3	2	0
$500-1,000	4	0	2
More than $1,000	3	2	1
Total	19	10	5

15 Nicholas De Leon, "With AI Data Centers Scooping up RAM, Laptop Prices Could Spike in 2026", 'Consumer Report', 2025, https://www.consumerreports.org/electronics-computers/laptops-chromebooks/ai-data-centers-buying-up-ram-and-raising-laptop-prices-a3637558313/

Figure 10. Internet Service Packages Available at a Sample Address in Berkley, Dighton, and Rehoboth



Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) was a federal program created during the Covid-19 Pandemic aimed at alleviating the monthly price of internet for cost burdened households. The program provided households with a $30 credit off their monthly internet bill, and a $100 credit towards a device, or $75 off their monthly internet bill if they were living on tribal lands. Families who were living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line were eligible to participate in the ACP. Other things that constituted eligibility included having at least one member in the household who received a Federal Pell Grant that year, or if they were already enrolled in an assistance program, such as SNAP or Medicaid. The program ended in May 2024 due to a lack of funding at the federal level.

The following graph shows the number of families living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line in Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth. Figure x represents survey responses indicating knowledge of the ACP for the entire region. In Dighton, 72.73% of respondents indicated knowing about the ACP. This response was echoed by the Dighton COA who mentioned that the town no longer has a need to promote affordability programs since those who needed it took advantage already. 80% of Rehoboth respondents, the town with the largest percentage of households living at or below the 200% Federal poverty line (29%), indicated that they did not know about the ACP. Though these conclusions are anecdotal since data for actual ACP enrollment was unavailable for the plan, noting discrepancies between knowledge of financial assistance programs may show where advocacy or communication campaigns may be necessary.

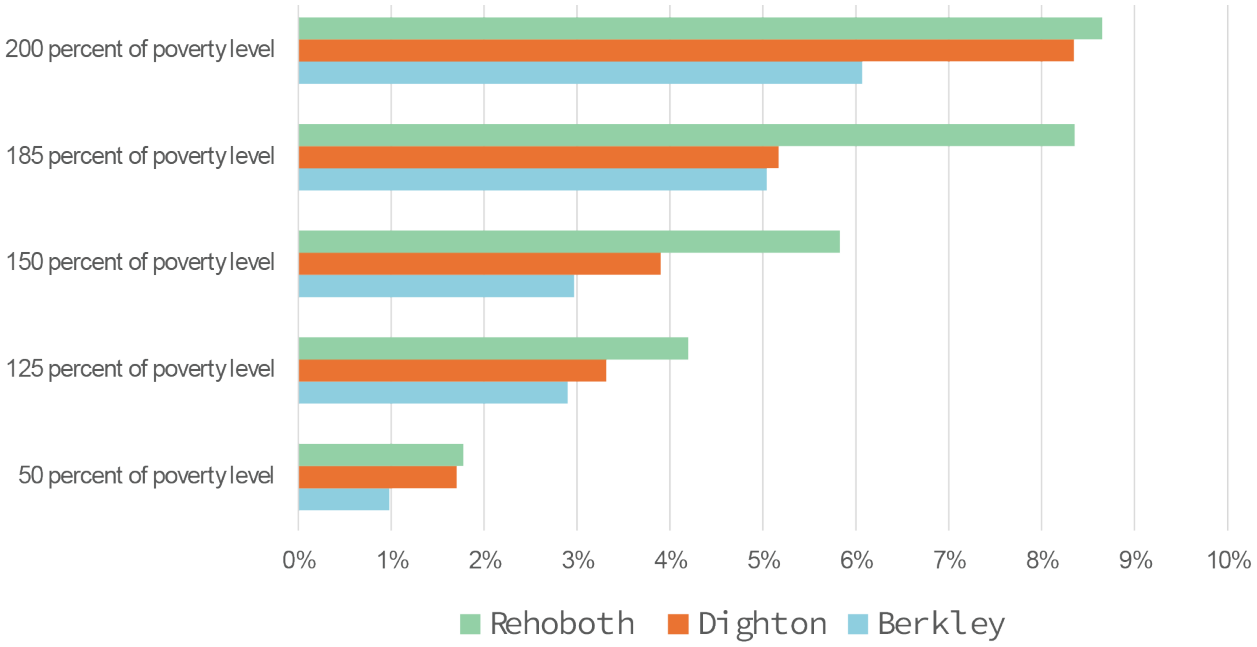
Despite the end of the ACP, there are other lesser-known options that residents can utilize to obtain cheaper internet prices. The Comcast Internet Essentials Program offers 50 Mbps for $9.95 a month or 100 Mbps for $29.95 a month (Internet Essentials Plus). To participate in this program, people must qualify by currently participating in certain assistance programs.[16]

Th Universal Service Administrative Company's (USAC) Lifeline Program also provides a discount of $9.25 a month off of phone, internet, or bundled services for qualified participants. Participants can qualify via income or participating in another government assistance program.[17] While these programs both provide some relief in the price of a monthly internet bill, neither are a true replacement for the ACP.

16 'Xfinity Internet Essentials Home Page', https://www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service/internet-essentials

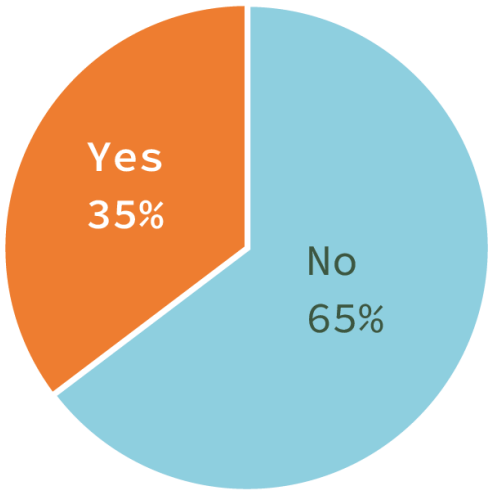
17 'USAC Lifeline Support Home Page', https://www.lifelinesupport.org/

Figure 11. Breakdown of Families Living at or below 200% the Federal Poverty Line



Source: 2023 ACS

Figure 12. Survey Q11 – Have you heard about the Affordable Connectivity Program?



Vulnerable Populations

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) recognize the eight groups listed below as covered populations regarding digital equity:

Low Income Households

Aging Individuals

Veterans

Incarcerated Individuals

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with a Language Barrier

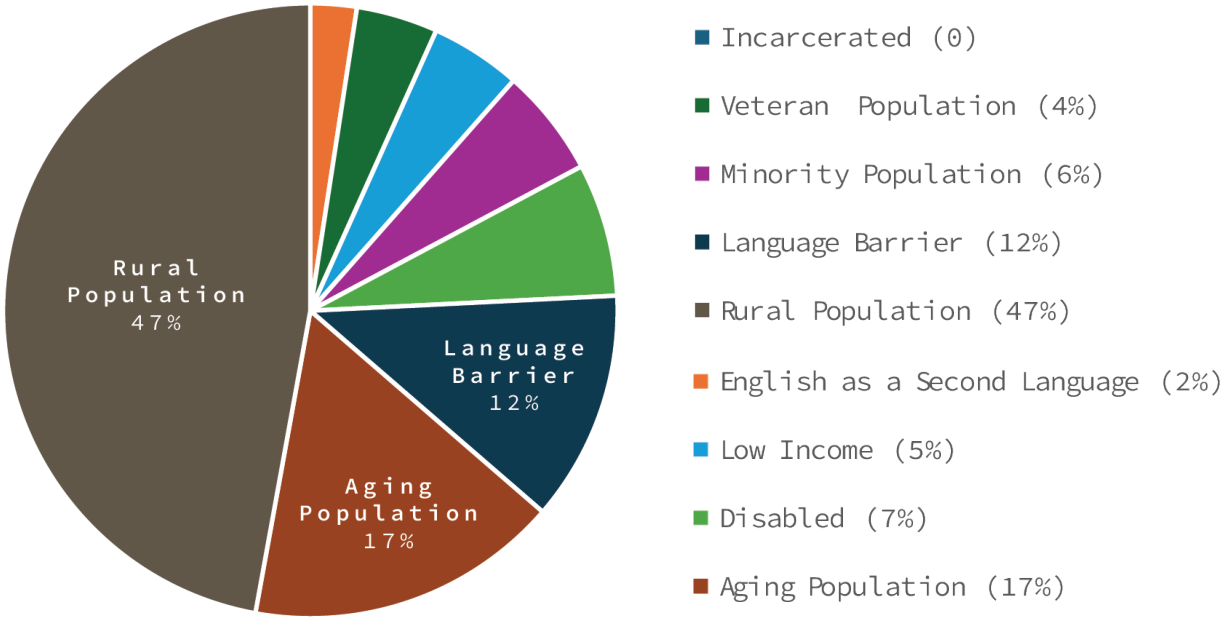
Individuals who are members of racial or an ethnic minority groups

Individuals who live in a rural area

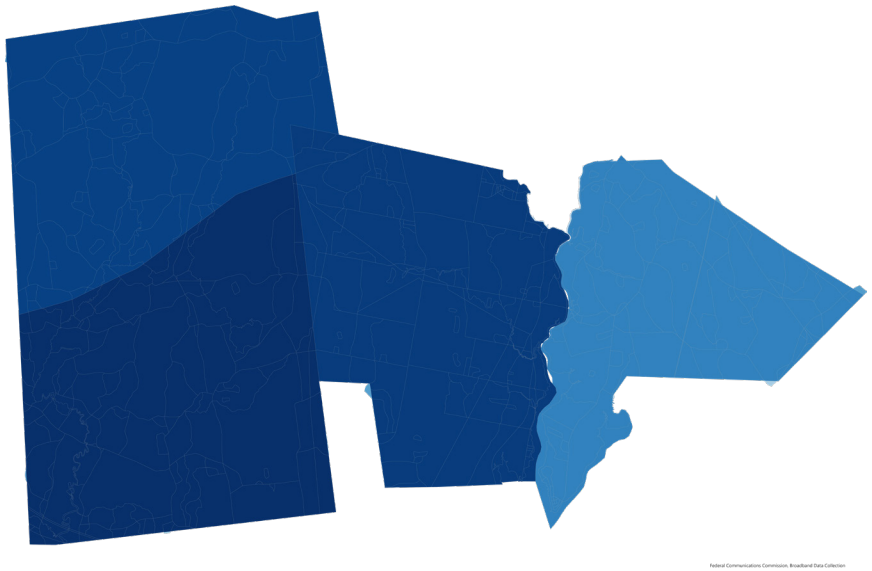
By targeting these populations first, communities can ensure equal and meaningful distribution of digital equity assets to fulfill specific needs. The following section details the covered populations that are present in Berkley, Dighton, and Rehoboth.

Data collected by the NTIA in 2019 indicates that every covered population except incarcerated individuals is represented in the project area. The most represented groups include veterans, aging individuals, and individuals who live in a rural area. While all groups and the region at large will benefit from digital equity initiatives, the following section outlines the prevalence of covered populations in Bristol County and to begin understanding specific digital equity needs.

Figure 13. NTIA Covered Populations Breakdown for Bristol County

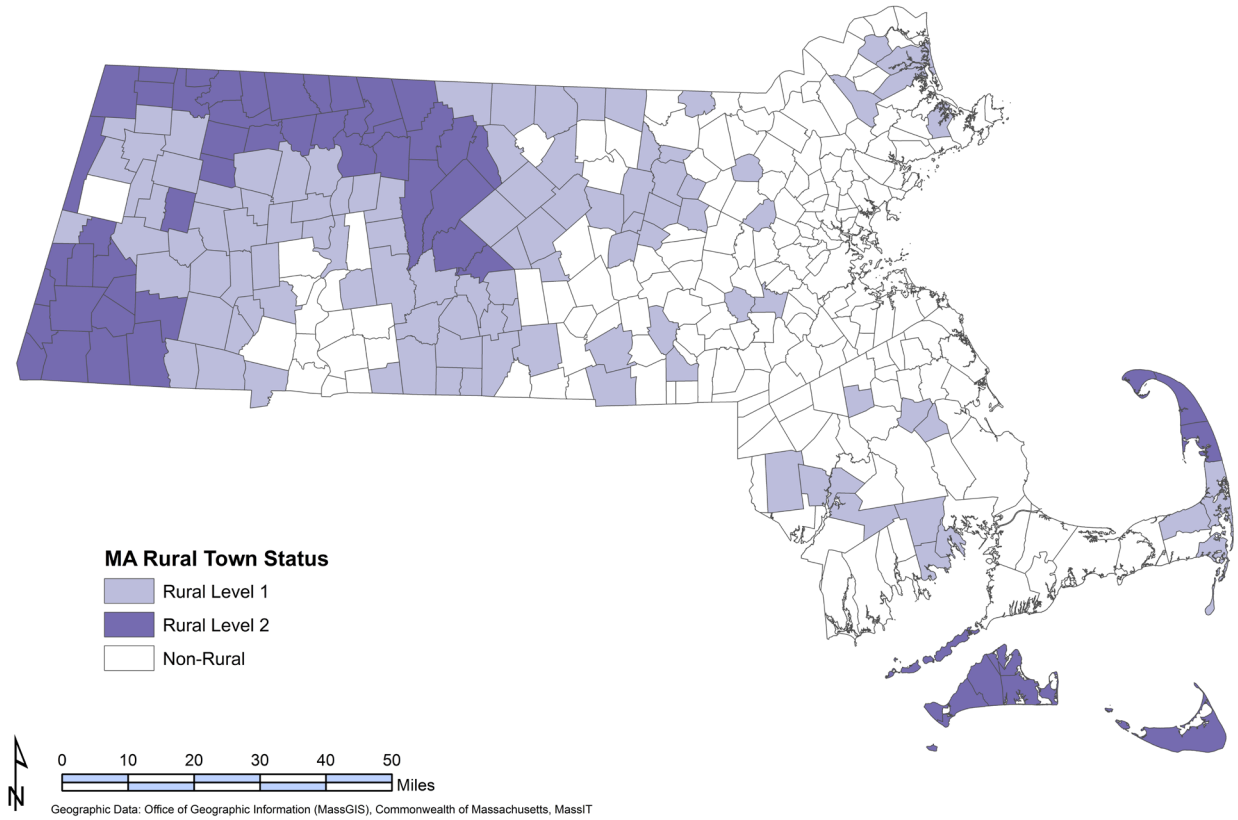


Map 9. 2019 NTIA Data - Density of Total Covered Populations By Census Tract



Rural Residents

Image 19. MA Rural Town Status



Source: State Office of Rural Health, https://www.mass.gov/info-details/state-office-of-rural-health-rural-definition

There is no single definition of 'rural' across government entities. Different classifications are used for different purposes. For the purposes of digital equity planning, rural residents are at risk of experiencing digital inequities due to their low population densities and lack of access to infrastructure and community resources.

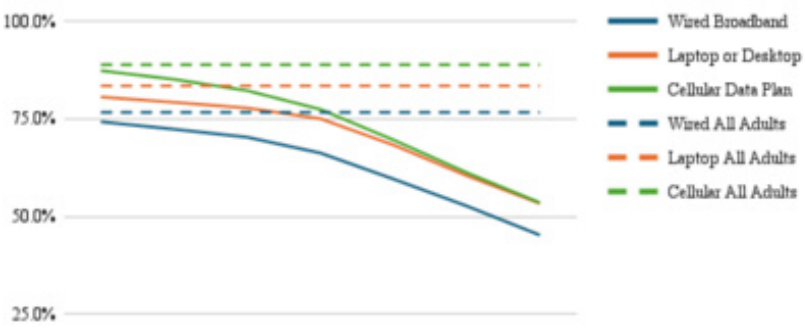
All three communities are also classified as Level 1 Rural by the MA Office of Rural Health in 2024. Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth are all designated as Rural Level 1 Communities[18] and as represent the largest covered population according to the NTIA. Individuals in rural areas face unique challenges concerning internet access and digital equity. Rural areas tend to have fewer options for internet service providers and lower coverage by internet providers and telephone service companies, accompanied by higher prices for these services.

18 According to the MA State Office of Rural Health

Aging Individuals

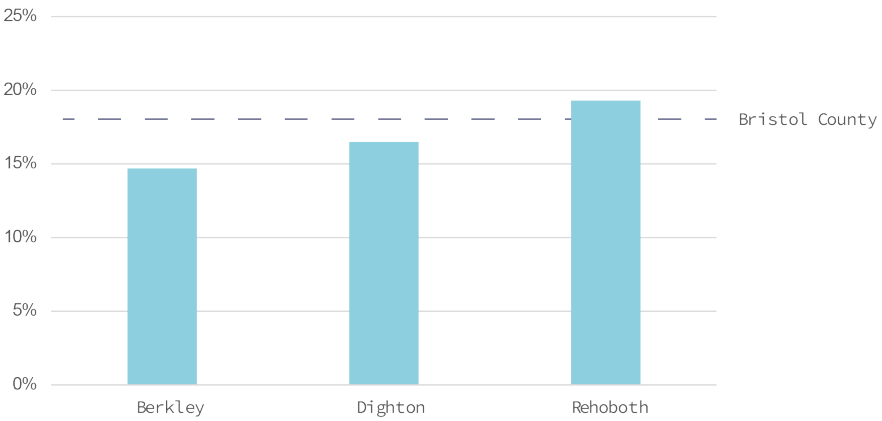
Populations are aging across the region – and Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth, are no exception. The graph below, from the "Older Adults Online: Measuring Internet Access and Use" report published by the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society shows how technology access declines as people continue to age.

Figure 14. Technology Access Declines as we Age



Currently, 16.5% of residents in Dighton, 14.7% of residents in Berkley, and 19.3% of residents in Rehoboth are over the age of 65. Rehoboth and Dighton align with county (18.6% of Bristol County residents are over the age of 65) and state (18.7% of residents in Massachusetts are over the age of 65) trends. While Berkley has fewer aging individuals, the median age (43.2) is slightly higher than Dighton (42.7).

Figure 15. Persons 65 and Older in Bristol County



Source: 2023 ACS

19 Revati Prasad, John Horriga, Grace Tepper, "Older Adults Online: Measuring Internet Access and Use", 2025, https://www.benton.org/publications/older-adults-online

Individuals with a Language Barrier

Understanding who faces language barriers, and what languages to target digital equity initiatives can ensure their effectiveness and accessibility. Rehoboth has the largest population of non-English speakers with 12.4% of the population speaking another language besides English. 10.9% of that percentage is identified as 'other Indo-European languages' – most commonly in this region, Portuguese. While Dighton and Berkley have percentages of non-English speakers below 10%, it's important to consider the presence of non-English speakers when creating equitable regional programming.

Image 20. 2024 Annual Procession for the Holy Ghost Brother of Charity in Rehoboth



Source: @Holyghostbrotherhoodofcharity on Facebook

Statistics on Other Covered Populations

Below is an outline of other underserved communities that are present in Bristol County area. While they are less prevalent than other covered populations that served as a focus for this plan, they will still benefit from digital equity initiatives, alongside all residents.

Low-Income Households

The median household income in Berkley is $123,877, in Dighton it's $137,616, and in Rehoboth it's $126,161.

Compared to the median household income of $85,625 for Bristol County and $103,960 for Massachusetts, the median household income in these towns is relatively high. There is, however, still a number of people living in poverty and several more living with fixed incomes and tight budgets. Below are the income breakdowns for each town.

Figure 16. Berkely Income Breakdown

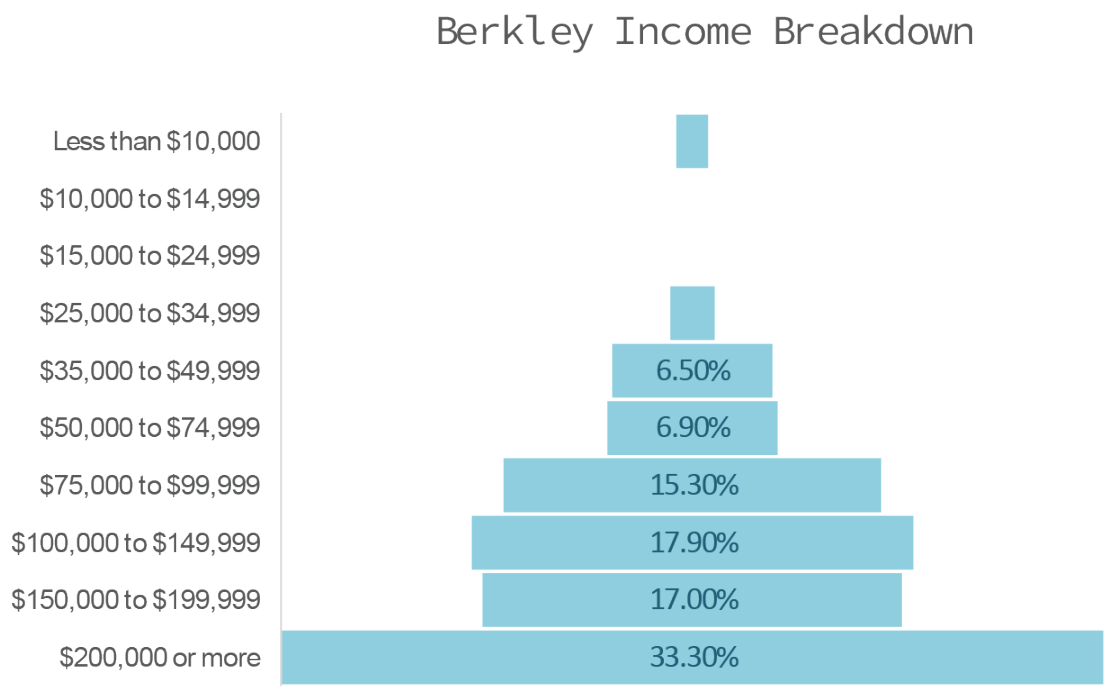


Figure 17. Dighton Income Breakdown

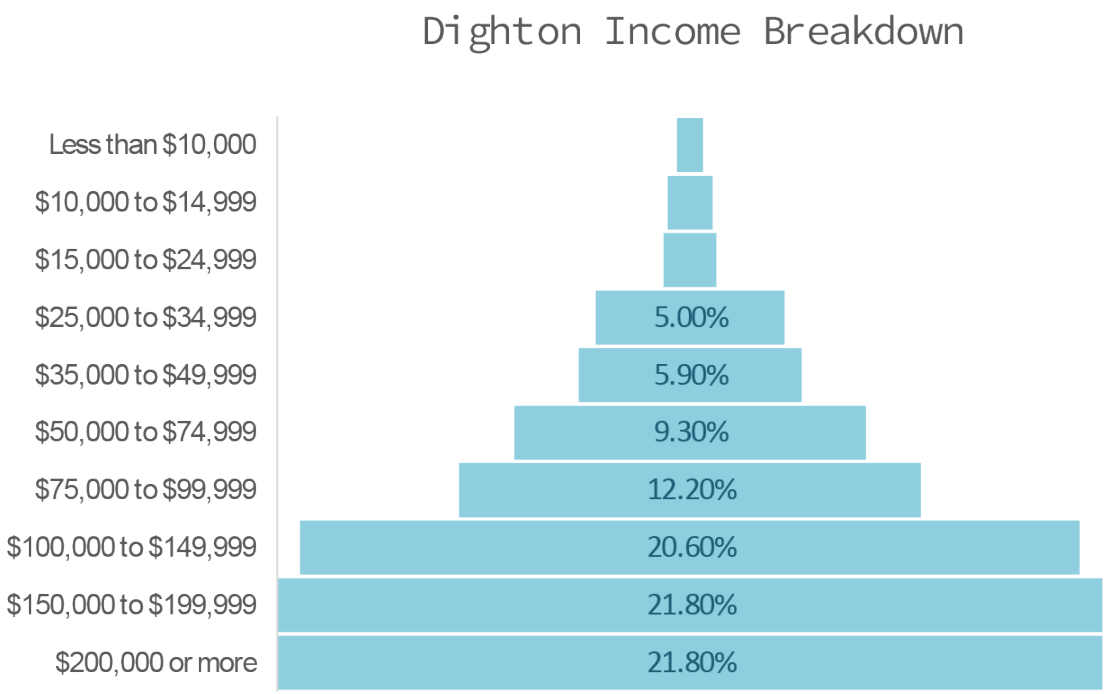
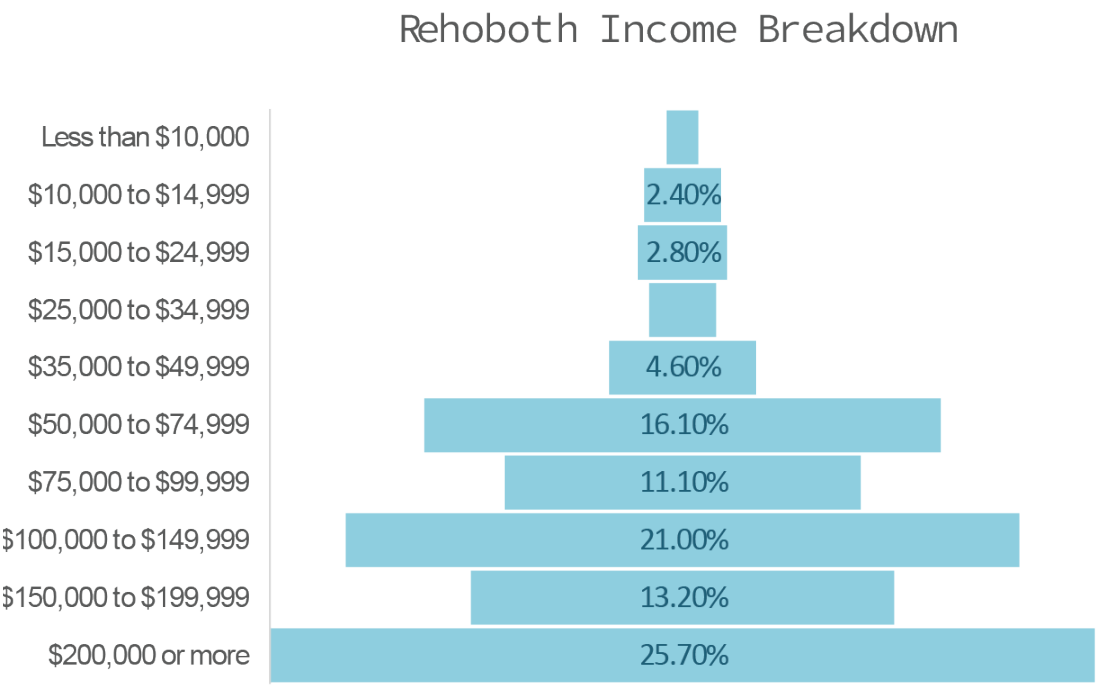


Figure 18. Rehoboth Income Breakdown



Source: 2023 ACS

Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group

The percentage of people who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group is 11% in Berkley, 8% in Dighton, and 7% in Rehoboth. This figure is significantly lower than the Bristol County where 29% of the population are members of a racial or ethic minority group and the Commonwealth where 38% of residents are members of a racial or ethnic minority group.

Individuals with Disabilities

The percentage of people experiencing disabilities is 8.8% in Berkley, 10.3% in Dighton, and 9.5% in Rehoboth. 11.1% of Bristol County's population and 8.6% of Commonwealth residents experience a disability.

Veterans

The percentage of veterans in each town's total population is 6.3% in Berkley, 6.6% in Dighton, and 6.7% in Rehoboth. This is a bit higher than recent trends in Bristol County where veterans make up 4% of the population.

Public Engagement Process

Table 42. Engagement Schedule

	Regionwide	Dighton	Rehoboth	Berkley
Spring	Kick Off Meeting Stakeholder Outreach	Workshop	Tabling at COA Interview Town Admin, Mapping Exercise of potential connections	Librarian Interview Berkley Chamber of Commerce Interview
Summer	Stakeholder Outreach Online Engagement Push	Site Visits to Library, COA, and Church Conversations with COA Director + Outreach Coordinator		Berkley 250th Celebration Town Admin Interview
Fall	Goals and Strategies Circulation		Conversations with Library Staff	

Image 22. Overhead of Berkley Town Hall



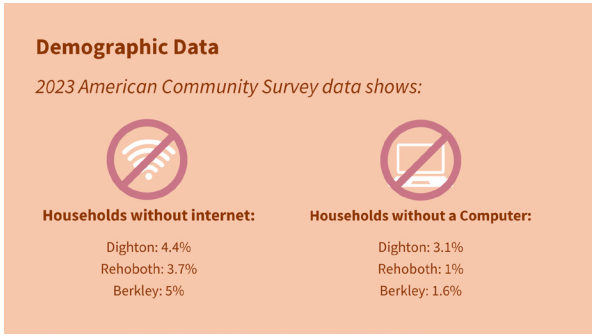
Project Kick Off

In January 2026, SRPEDD staff kicked off the engagement process by meeting with local staff from the three Towns. Members from this prospective steering committee represented Town Admins, Librarians and COA staff as well as representation from TMLP.

Image 21. Project Kick Off Slides Digital Equity Planning Benefits, Existing Conditions, Demographic Data







Community Pop Ups/Events

Tabling at Rehoboth COA

On March 16th, staff tabled and spoke with several residents at the Rehoboth COA. Staff were able to tour the grounds and engage residents. Many spoke about being content with how their internet functions but were happy to see the town working to address these issues.

Image 23. Staff Speaking with Rehoboth COA attendee



Tabling/Charette at Dighton Town Hall

On April 9th, staff promoted and hosted the digital equity charette at Dighton's Old Town Hall since it was in the center of the project region. While no one attended, staff did get the opportunity to leave information at Town Hall.

Image 24. Table Set up at Dighton Town Old Town Hall





Tabling at Berkley 250th Celebration

On June 28th staff tabled at Berkley's 250th celebration of the American Revolution. Staff spoke with residents about ongoing planning efforts, explained digital equity concepts, and distributed surveys and other engagement information.

Other Stakeholder Engagement

Interview with Rehoboth Selectboard

On March 11th, staff met with George Solas from the Rehoboth selectboard. Staff had previously spoken with George during the 2023 promotion of the Digital Equity Planning Program. Using a paper map, staff from SRPEDD were able to better understand the connection and infrastructure needs in Rehoboth.

Conversation with Rehoboth COA Director

When staff tabled at the Rehoboth COA in March, there was an opportunity to briefly sit with the COA Director to discuss the Digital Equity Plan. Several human services staff on the Francis Farm rely on reliable internet connections to assist with program applications for seniors. While there doesn't seem to be a need for increased access for personal computers, there does seem to be an interest in a tablet lending or device distribution program.

Interview with Taunton Area Chamber of Commerce

On March 19th, staff joined a conversation with Kris Silva regarding Berkley's Economic Development Plan. Though there were no identifiable or immediate needs regarding internet access for small business owners.

Interview with Berkley Librarian

In early March, staff met with the Berkley Librarian and discussed digital equity conditions for Berkley residents. The biggest issue at the library is lack of physical accessibility since it is a historic building. This creates a barrier to access since most people in town rely on the library for computer access. Additionally, this inaccessibility (and a lack of total space) limits their programming and most larger events are held at the COA.

Conversation with Berkley COA Director

On March 30th, staff were able to briefly sit down with the Berkley COA Director at their location in Town Hall to promote the Digital Equity Charette and their ongoing initiatives. While there is a device available for use at the COA, not many take advantage since a primary reason for them being there is another event.

Interview with Berkley Town Admin

On June 12th, staff met with Berkley's Town Administrator to discuss the status of the Digital Equity plan and to learn more about the Town's partnership with TMLP. Most residents and the town seem happy with the service received.

Conversations with Dighton Community Service Providers

On August 4th, in a final engagement push, staff conducted site visits to Dighton's community anchor institutions. SRPEDD staff were able to speak with Town Staff at the COA and Library and delivered information about the plan to St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church.

Dighton COA

Staff learned about the lending programs and public devices the COA has available for use. Though these programs exist at the COA, most residents in Dighton see the library as a place for accessing public devices The biggest issue they have heard from seniors are hurdles with high internet costs.

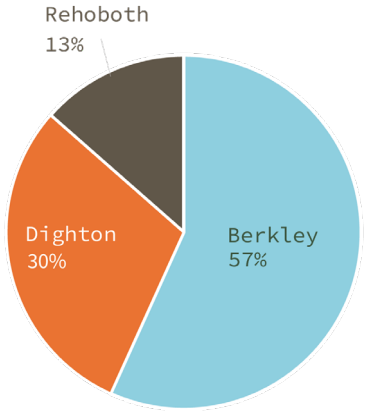
Dighton Library

The librarian staff spoke with mentioned seeing many veterans, seniors, and farmers come through the library. While the town does have a dedicated IT support person, having someone that can offer tech help directly seems needed.

Surveys and Online Engagement

The online survey was promoted via most community anchor institutions' online platforms. A physical engagement guide with a paper survey in the back was also circulated to towns. The survey received a total of 37 responses. Below is the breakdown of responses by town:

Figure 19. Survey Q4 – What Massachusetts municipality do you live in?



Town Staff Questionnaire

In January of 2026, SRPEDD staff circulated a Questionnaire to Town Admin, TLMP, and other related stakeholders to gain specific feedback on relevant digital equity initiatives (see Appendix).

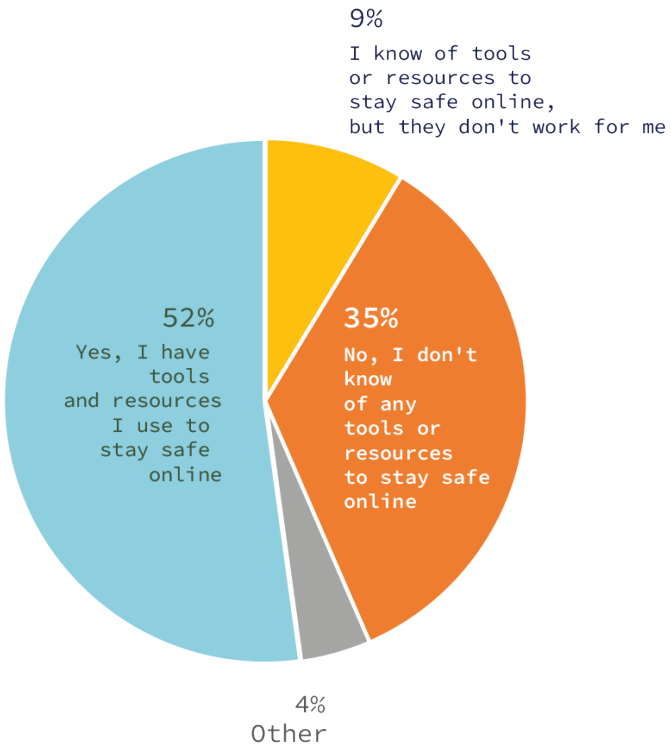
Key Findings

The following section outlines key findings shaped by the engagement process and data review. These findings informed the recommendations outlined in the next section.

Community Anchor Institutions Serve as 'Digital Lifelines'

Community centers in all three towns serve as a 'digital lifeline' for many residents. The Rehoboth COA, for instance, provided remote assistance with scheduling online health appointments during the Covid-19 lockdown. The Community Anchor Institutions in the three towns typically serve as the first stop for resident's tech needs; therefore, addressing their limitations is the first and most efficient step towards addressing digital inequities in the study area. Most residents in Berkley and Dighton consider the town library a main 'tech hub'. Berkley's library is not ADA compliant, and most programming is hosted at the Town's COA (a space that exists within the Town Hall).

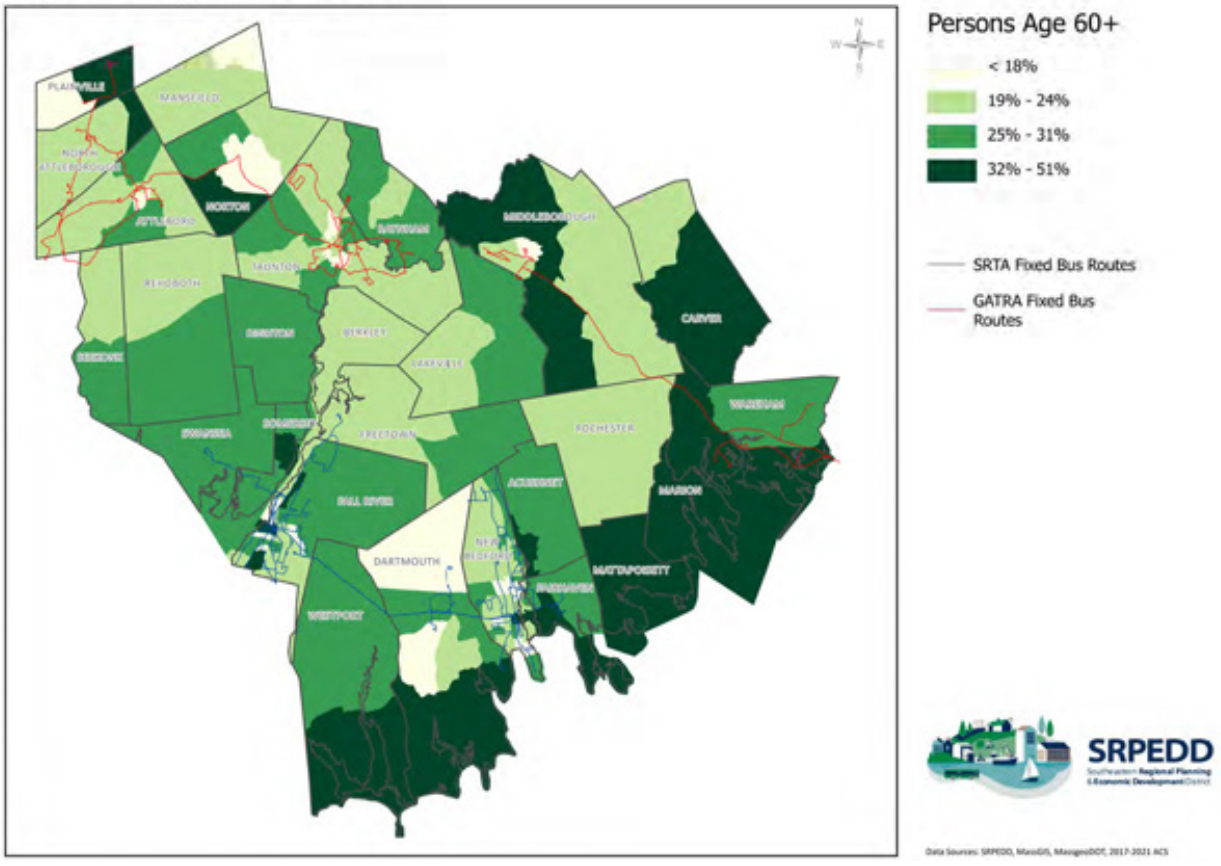
Figure 20. Survey Q26 - Are you aware of tools or resources you can use to stay safe online?



Community Anchor Institutions Serve as 'Digital Lifelines' (cont)

It's important to consider the physical size of these rural communities. For some, regular access to the library may prove difficult due to knowledge of available public transportation options and/or lack of personal vehicle options due to disability, age, or other circumstances.[20]

Map 10. Population 60 and Over in SRPEDD Region – 2023 Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan



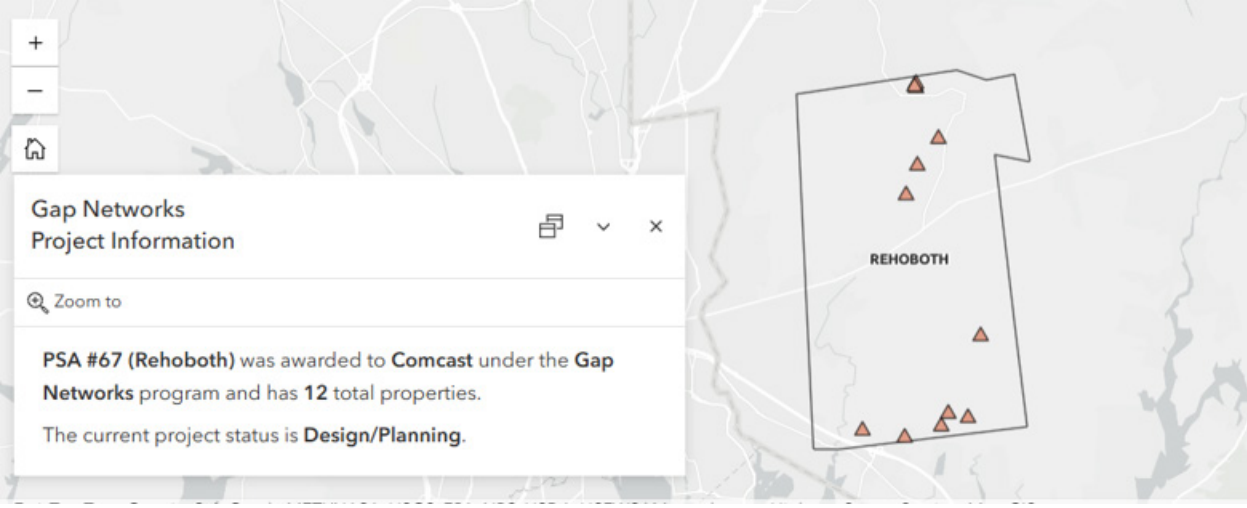
20 Read more in SRPEDD's CHST Plan. https://srpedd.s3.amazonaws.com/wp content/uploads/2024/02/04093156/2023-CHST-Plan_Final-6.20.23r.pdf

Gaps in High-Speed Broadband Infrastructure in Rural Communities

A major problem in rural communities is lack of access to networks that run at higher speeds. This is especially evident in Rehoboth (see Maximum covered speeds in **Community Snapshots**).

While both Dighton and Rehoboth support the expansion of fiber networks in town, other priorities such as improvements to other municipal infrastructure take financial precedent. Most if not all initiatives addressing broadband infrastructure are grant-funded. ISP providers in Dighton and Rehoboth have both received funding for infrastructure projects through BEAD challenges and MBI's Gap Networks Program.[21]

Image 25. 2026 Screenshot from Gap Networks Project Info Dashboard



Berkley's existing coverage from TMLP does mean that fiber expansion isn't their biggest infrastructure concern. Expansion in fiber optic networks from a public utility (such as TMLP) is also unfeasible due to high capital startup costs.

21 MBI Infrastructure Dashboard Progress, https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/fad709b843fc-4cacbe9dd480dc24b58d

Municipalities Need Funding Support

Throughout several digital equity planning processes in the region, staff across the board have mentioned needing support for 1:1 help and awareness of programming. In some cases, funding for these needs has been supplemented by community programming grants from the federal government; in other instances, non-profits have taken the lead in providing semi-regular tech classes at an existing community anchor institution. Through site visits, staff also saw that public spaces, particularly libraries, lack modern layouts to facilitate classes or even silent computer work.

Considering the Future of the E-Rate Program

E-Rate or the Universal Services Fund is a federal program from the FCC that, "makes telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries."[22] This essential program helps lower-income districts overcome funding issues regarding network connectivity and provides a huge step up in equity for these communities when it comes to accessing information on the web.

Funding is determined based on the number of students in the district that are eligible for the national school lunch program. For example, an "E-Rate 70" School means that the school district has 70% of its student body in the national school lunch program, thus, will pay 30% of the cost of internet services. It also covers specific networking hardware such as routers, switches, and wireless access points that are essential to provide internet connectivity to the school buildings at the same rate. In previous years it also made available wireless hotspots that could be loaned out to students in need so they could have internet at their home, though, this portion of the program was dissolved in 2025.

The future of the E-Rate program is unclear. For the better part of three decades, E-Rate has provided essential financial relief for schools and libraries in economically challenged areas. In June of 2026, the FCC proposed a review to limit or sunset the E-Rate program.[23] If this program is allowed to sunset, it will significantly impact the budgets of IT departments across our region, state, and country. Communities are encouraged to keep an eye on the development of these reviews and to make contingency plans for the event of the program collapse, or hopefully, to make a stronger use of it if the program continues.

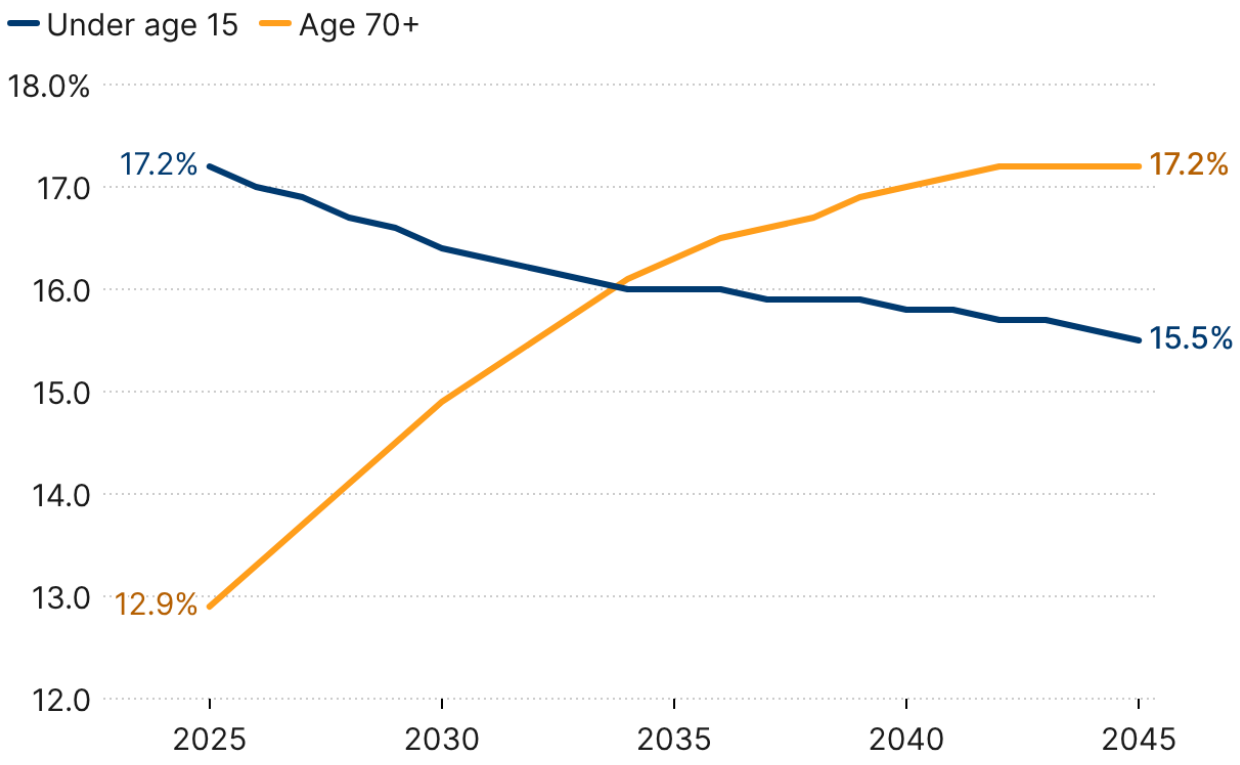
22 FCC, "E-Rate: Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries", https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/universal-service-program-schools-and-libraries-e-rate

23 FCC, "FCC to Review E-Rate Program to Ensure Congress's Vision", 2026, https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-review-e-rate-program-ensure-congresss-vision

Digital Literacy for a new generation of seniors

Over the next decade, Baby Boomers (b.1946-1964) will, “serve as a central focus of the next decade’s senior dependent population.”[24] Many of these seniors may have experienced the advent of modern computing and participated in its early phases; however, the tech classes and trainings that were once sufficient may not meet the needs of seniors in the future. As new technologies, such as generative artificial intelligence, continue to advance, it’s important that digital literacy programming stays up to date as unique technological needs continue to evolve.

Figure 21. Brookings Institute ‘Share of Population ages 70-plus under 15, 2025 to 2045’



Source: William H. Frey analysis of U.S. Census Bureau population projections

Brookings Metro

24 William Frey, «Baby boomers are turning 80», ‘Brookings Institute’, 2026, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/baby-boomers-are-turning-80/

Figure 22. Survey Q23 - What kind of digital skills initiatives would you support?

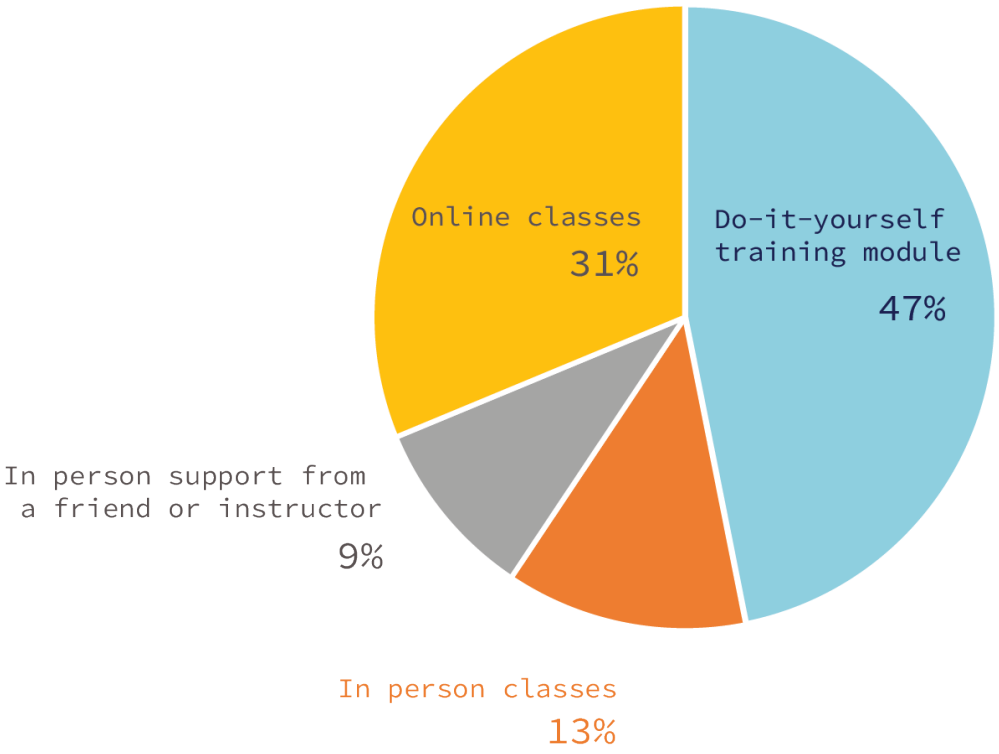


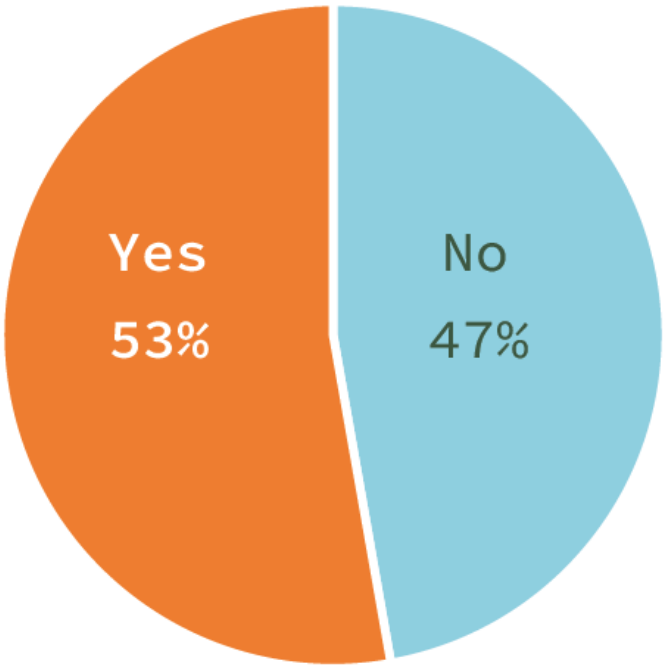
Figure 23. Survey Q19 - Are you able to regularly use the internet for online activities?

	General internet searching	Health care or telehealth services	Participating in your local community	Transportation information	Searching and/ or applying for benefits or resources for you or your family	Searching and applying for a job
Easy	30	24	20	23	16	23
Hard	1	1	2	1	4	1
Not easy	1	6	9	5	9	4

Service Costs Are High Relative to Service Quality

Cost of service – and particularly the service residents received associated with increasing cost – was a consistent concern throughout the process and through discussion with a variety of stakeholders. The difference between cost and value of an internet service package was particularly striking for residents in Rehoboth and Dighton. The rural character of two communities and lack of access to a public utility provider such as TMLP leaves many households with one or two options for an internet service provider that typically offer with lackluster service at a high price point. Expensive bills for packaged cable and internet services was also a consistent theme among seniors. While some may be ok with paying higher prices for bundled services, some may be unaware that they are overpaying for services due to lack of awareness about streaming services or cable access broadcasts online.

Figure 24. Survey Q10 - Is your internet bundled with other services?



Recommendations

Rural Communities in Bristol County can leverage state, federal, and community resources to implement the goals presented in this plan. The following section outlines goals and strategic strategies for the Towns to pursue in order to increase digital equity. These strategies are based on current data and key findings found throughout the engagement and research process, detailed above.

These recommendations are organized by four general goals, the first of which outlines steps the community can take towards closing the digital divide and three of which correspond to a specific digital equity pillar – devices, service, and literacy. Each goal provides strategies that may include action items, tools, success stories, a timeline, and other steps communities in Bristol County can take to lead and fund these digital equity initiatives.

Goal 1: Spread awareness about plan findings and leverage information to continue creating conversations around digital equity.

1. Promote and explain findings of digital equity plan to align goals with existing and ongoing planning.

- **ACTION:** Berkley, Dighton, and Rehoboth should review the digital equity plan findings and convey the goals and strategies to community partners, such as Councils on Aging and Libraries, to gather more community input and ensure plan implementation and prioritization of digital equity.
  LEAD: Town Admins, Boards of Selectmen, Community Anchor Institutions, Other Digital Equity Plan Participants
  TIMELINE: Short-Term

- **ACTION:** Include digital equity findings in future Master Plans' Services and Facilities Chapter and institutional strategic and financial planning.
  LEAD: Boards of Selectmen, Town Planners or Planning Boards, Planning Consultants
  TIMELINE: Last Master Plan Updates – Berkley (2020), Dighton (2015), Rehoboth (N/A)

2. Seek opportunities in existing community groups to oversee Bristol County Digital Equity Plan Implementation.

- **ACTION:** To decrease staff and community burnout, plan implementation should be overseen by an existing group, such as the Council on Aging staff, the Library Trustees, or an IT Advisory Committee. Town staff who participated in the Digital Equity Plan Steering Committee may also serve as advocates for the plan in their respective departments.
  LEAD: Council on Aging Directors, Library Directors, Outreach Coordinators, Veteran's Agents
  TIMELINE: Medium-Term
  POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES: Municipal Technical Assistance

- **ACTION:** Prioritize annual or bi-annual implementation review at standing meetings or in annual reports.
  LEAD: Town Admins, IT Directors, Boards of Selectmen, Planning Boards
  TIMELINE: Long-Term

3. **Continue to leverage or seek relationships with other municipalities in Bristol County to share information, understand one another's priorities, and pursue regional collaboration.**

   - **ACTION:** Consider regional review of zoning ordinances (such as dig-once policies) or infrastructure assessments related to utility expansions.
     LEAD: Town Planners, Town Engineers, Planning Boards, Public Works Departments
     POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Surrounding Bristol County Towns
     TIMELINE: Medium-Term

4. **Leverage or seek relationships with larger entities or regional partners to develop implementation projects.**

   - **ACTION:** Maintain active relationships with statewide partners at MBI and regional partners at SRPEDD to explore ways to finance digital equity implementations projects.
     LEAD: SRPEDD, Towns
     POTENTIAL PARTNERS: Bristol County Sherrif's Office, Bristol County Government, TMLP
     TIMELINE: Medium/Long-Term

Goal 2: Develop and maintain programming that meets the needs of various residents and evolving demographics.

1. Expand device lending programs to include tablets.

- **ACTION:** COAs can consider developing or expanding existing device lending programs to include tablets as an entry level alternative for inexperienced users. Tablets may also include software aimed at improving digital literacy.

  LEADS: Councils on Aging,

  POTENTIAL PARTNERS: MA Office of Elder Services, Non-Profits, PCs for People, AARP

  TIMELINE: Medium-Term

  CASE STUDY:

  Swansea's COA has tablets available for patrons to check out. Many benefit from this program since it allows them to test out a piece of approachable technology without making financial commitment. Though the funding source to purchase these tablets is no longer available, the success of the program in other Bristol County communities indicate a need.

2. Add more digital literacy classes to community anchor institution programming and offer opportunities for advanced learners.

- **ACTION:** As seniors become more tech savvy, community anchor institutions may consider purchasing or creating training modules as a cost-efficient option for the dissemination of digital literacy education.

  LEADS: Community Anchor Institutions, Community Groups, Outreach Coordinators

  POTENTIAL PARTNERS HIGHLIGHT:

  Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) of Southeastern MA

  The ADRC of Southeastern MA is comprised of Bristol Aging & Wellness, Coastline Elderly Services, Old Colony Elder Services, and Southeast Center for Independent Living. "With a single contact to one of the member agencies, the staff work together to connect individuals with the appropriate services and supports to help people live independently in the community. To the consumer, this is a seamless process where No Wrong Door is really All the Right Doors!" Towns can work with ADRC members to develop and distribute programming for seniors.

- **ACTION:** Work with community resource providers to promote safe internet navigation through targeted outreach or programming for the general public.

  POTENTIAL FUNDING: MA Cyber Security Awareness Program,

  TIMELINE: Medium-Term

3. Explore hiring or contracting a regional digital navigator.

- **ACTION:** The three towns can coordinate with one another or with other towns within Bristol County to finance a shared Digital Navigator.

  LEADS: Town Admins, Boards of Selectmen, SRPEDD, Outreach Coordinators

  TIMELINE: Short-Term

4. Advertise and increase awareness of individual internet plans.

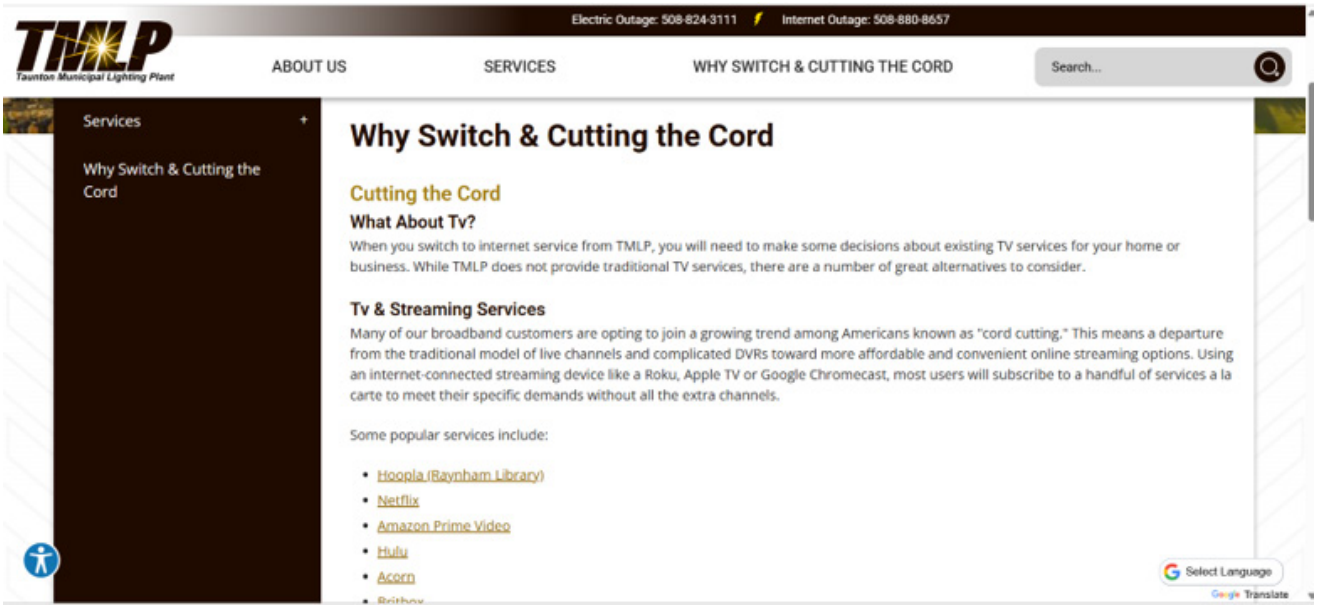
- **ACTION:** The Towns should lead efforts to increase residents' knowledge of individual internet plans, rather than paying for a bundle of internet, cable television, and telephone. The Towns could utilize a joint public communications campaign via social media and other methods to increase knowledge of purchasing a non-bundled internet plan.

  LEADS: Community Anchor Institutions, Boards of Selectmen, Town-owned communication channels

  TIMELINE: Short-Term

  RESOURCES: TMLP 'Why Cut the Cord' – TMLP hosts a 'Why Cut the Cord' resource page explain how consumers can cut costs through switching to internet plans.

Image 26. Screenshot from TMLP 'Why Cut the Cord" Information



Goal 3: Support community anchor institutions and increase access to existing community resources for vulnerable and underserved populations.

1. Maintain or upgrade facilities to prioritize physical accessibility and reliable internet connections.

- **ACTION:** All three community libraries need upgrades to support physical and digital access. Towns should continue to implement existing ADA plans or prioritize funding improvements at community anchor institutions.

  LEADS: Municipal ADA Coordinators, Boards of Selectmen, SRPEDD, Town Planners

  UPCOMING PROJECTS: Berkley ADA Plan, Dighton Community Needs Assessment

  TIMELINE: Short/Medium/Long-Term

2. Acquire help from existing non-profits or other town-owned institutions, such as public schools.

- **ACTION:** In 2021, the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District through the Digital Literacy Now Grant. This funding provided, "materials and equipment to Dighton-Rehoboth Regional elementary schools to support the instruction of digital literacy standards in elementary STEAM courses. Devices purchased (gave) students' access to hands on, engaging digital literacy/computer science instruction".[25] Towns can connect with educators who facilitate or distribute digital literacy course materials to those outside the 'school' eco-system.

  SUB ACTION: Seek curriculum from specific Digital Literacy educators such as Gail Darmody, BerkleyMiddle School's Digital Literacy.

  LEADS: Town Admin, School Boards

  TIMELINE: Short-Term

- **ACTION:** Coordinate with regional school districts to create service opportunities for high schoolers to facilitate digital literacy education for seniors.

  LEADS: Towns, Bristol Aggie School District, Dighton-Rehoboth School District, Berkley Public Schools District

  TIMELINE: Medium-Term

  CASE STUDY: Carson Nevada - The Interact Club, which is affiliated with the Rotary Club of Carson City and focused on community service, launched in January 2024 and has hosted events to offer seniors 1:1 tech help.[26]

25 https://www.reportertoday.com/stories/d-r-awarded-a-digital-literacy-grant,34429

26 https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/indy-education-carson-city-high-schoolers-help-seniors-navigate-technology

Image 27. Carson Nevada Students 1:1 Senior Tech Help



Image 28. Gail Darmondy Digital Literacy Online Classroom



3. Develop local or regional digital equity education kits for outreach coordinators that conduct in-person visits.

- **ACTION:** Community resource providers such as the Council on Aging and Library should work with Human Services Outreach Coordinators and/or Veteran's Agents to develop and distribute information about affordable and accessible internet practices.
  LEADS: Councils on Aging staff, Library staff, Human Services coordinators
  POTENTIAL PARTNERS: SRPEDD (Design Support)
  TIMELINE: Short-Term

4. Find unique ways to deliver messages to non-responsive or unengaged audiences.

- **ACTION:** Feature Town facilities in cable access programming, radio promotion, newsletter information; multi-generational information; and social media (if permitted by local procedures and regulations).
  LEADS: Community TV, Digital Equity Plan Implementation stakeholders
  TIMELINE: Medium-Term

Goal 4: Continue prioritizing and assessing larger scale projects that address broadband limitations in rural communities.

1. Set realistic goals based on community needs and financing options.

- **ACTION:** Expensive fiber optic expansions coupled with limited municipal budgets and a current lack of federal grants make it difficult to provide high-speed service to all residents. Towns should continue to assess areas with largest community needs and focus on smaller local expansions. This may be done via a local or regional broadband needs assessment. Communities should also monitor new funding opportunities if/when they arise.

  LEADS: Town Admin, Boards of Selectmen, Department of Public Works, Utility Providers

  TIMELINE: Medium-Term

  CASE STUDY: CCC Broadband Needs Assessment

2. Continue advocating for the expansion of municipal fiber connection to support community services.

- **ACTION:** Towns should continue to seek grants that connect town services via the Community Compact's Municipal Fiber Grant Program.

  LEADS: Town Admin, Town Planners, Boards of Selectmen, Planning Boards

  FUNDING SOURCES: Municipal Fiber Grant Program

  TIMELINE: Medium-Term

  CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHT:

  Rehoboth Municipal Fiber Network

  The Town of Rehoboth has received almost half a million dollars in state grant funding through the Municipal Fiber Grant program. According to Selectmen Solas, Rehoboth existing municipal fiber connections move north and south with smaller branches to the COA and the fire station. Their most recent award ($219,635) will fund a redundancy loop giving the network to bounce back if a break ever occurs.[27]

27 Town of Rehoboth, https://www.rehobothma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif4911/f/minutes/bos_meeting_minutes_5-27-2025.pdf.

Image 29. Notes from Digital Equity Plan Working Session with Town of Rehoboth



In Dighton and Rehoboth...

1. Seek partnerships with other towns in Bristol County.

- **ACTION:** Dighton and Rehoboth may consider ways to establish a municipal lighting plant with other bordering communities.

  LEADS: Dighton and Rehoboth

  POTENTIAL PARTNERS: SRPEDD, Bristol County Sheriff's Office, Town of Westport, Town of Dartmouth, Town of Seekonk

  POTENTIAL PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

  In 2021, The Town of Westport developed a Digital Access Master Plan. The resulting implementation actions from that work included the establishment of a fiber optic network that connected all Town offices, schools and radio towers and a town meeting vote authorizing the creation of a Municipal Lighting Plant.[28] Minutes form a 2024 Board of Selectmen meeting indicate where the project stands now: [29]

  > *b. Update on the Town's Broadband system.*
  >
  > *Ms. Teas mentioned this discussion was requested by Mr. Soares, and asked if he had any specific questions in regard to this project. Mr. Soares asked when the next phase was going to be constructed, Ms. Teas answered it has not gone out to bid yet. Mr. Soares then questioned the loop that went down Sanford Road to Highland Avenue, and if it went out to bid. Ms. Teas answered it's done and was paid for. Mr. Soares again asked if it -went out for bid, Ms. Teas added she assumed so but that she would look into it. Mr. questioned how much has been spent on fiber,*
  >
  > *Ms. Teas answered about $900,000, $700,000 was for municipal.Ms. Teas added that the project has not gone out to bid and maybe it won't. There is a proposed map in the files. Mr. Soares questioned the cable being installed on poles. and questions if residents have tied in at all? Ms. Teas answered there are no plans for residents to tie into it, without additional private partnership, and the project has been scaled back.*
  >
  > *Mr. Soares added that this project is not the highest priority infrastructure project we have in town. Ms. Teas agreed and added that the committee is still trying to find the right kind of partnership to be able to proceed without going to the taxpayers.*

28 'Westport Fiber'. https://www.westportfiber.com/

29 Town of Westport, https://cms2.revize.com/revize/westportma/Documents/Government/Select Board/Agendas And Minutes/2024/Minutes/10072024_minutes.pdf?t=202508080914260

2. Assess rural areas with low cell coverage.

- **ACTION:** The town can explore funding a study or Wireless Telecommunications Plan to better understand community needs and actual broadband/cellular speeds. This study can later be presented to local cellular provider or relevant town staff to address issue directly.
  LEADS: Town Admin, Town Planners, Boards of Selectmen, Planning Boards
  TIMELINE: Medium-Term

In Berkley...

1. Continue to foster relationship with TMLP partner communities and promote internet services for community members.

- **ACTION:** Encourage residents to sign up for TMLP and promote the Champion Tool Kit.
  LEADS: Town Staff
  TIMELINE: Ongoing

Conclusion

Thanks to the collaboration and willingness of Town staff and residents, the project team was able to develop meaningful goals and strategies for this regional Municipal Digital Equity Plan. These goals can bring Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth closer to providing affordable, fast internet and devices, and the digital literacy skills necessary to utilize the internet properly, for all residents, especially those who are members of a covered population. Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth should continue to work together to share and combine digital equity related efforts.

Readers are encouraged to look through the glossary and appendix for additional definitions and details.



Image 30. Signs to Berkley and Rehoboth taken in Dighton

Glossary

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)- A program created during the pandemic to ensure that everyone had access to broadband in their households. The program provided households with a $30 credit off their monthly internet bill, and a $100 credit towards a device, or $75 off their monthly internet bill if they were living on tribal lands. This program ended in May 2024.

Broadband- Internet that has speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps.

Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL)- A residential location or business where internet can be installed.

Covered Populations- The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) recognizes the eight groups below as covered populations regarding digital equity: Low Income Households, Aging Individuals, Incarcerated Individuals, Veterans, Individuals with Disabilities, Individuals with a Language Barrier, Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, Individuals who live in a rural area

Digital Equity- The condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy

Digital Equity Asset: Any services, programs, documents, organizations, etc. that support or promote digital equity. For example, device distribution programs, digital navigators, and relevant planning documents are digital equity assets.

Digital Literacy: The skills necessary to use technology and navigate the internet, such as the ability to maintain devices, communicate effectively online and evaluate online information and security risks.

Glossary

Digital Redlining: According to the Boston University School of Public Health, digital redlining is "discriminatory disinvestment in broadband infrastructure that disproportionately affects people of color, low-income communities, and rural populations, worsening disparities in access to healthcare, social services, education, and employment for these populations."[30]

Hotspot: Intel defines a hotspot as "a physical location where people can access the Internet, typically using Wi-Fi, via a wireless local area network (WLAN) with a router connected to an Internet service provider."[31]

Jitter: A measure of network performance that refers to the irregularity in the time it takes for a data packet to travel from its source to its destination, potentially leading to disruptions and inconsistencies in the flow of data.[32]

Latency: A measure of network performance referring to the time it takes for a data packet to travel from its source it its destination.

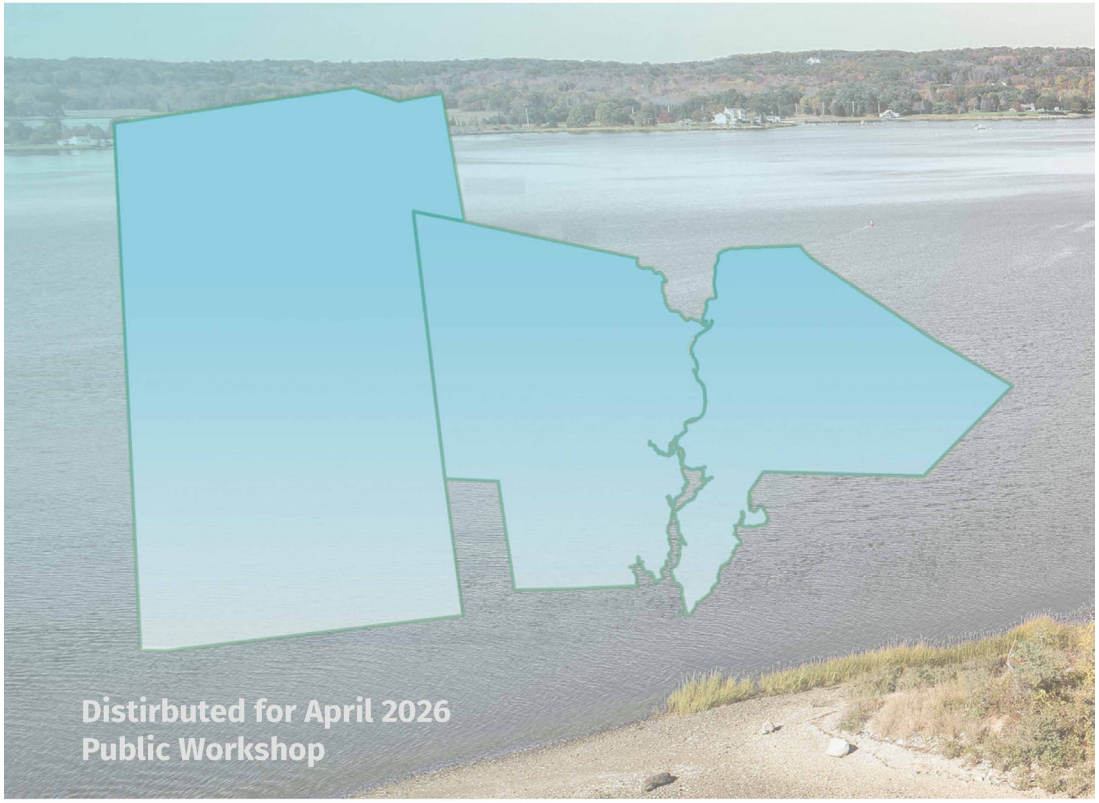
Speed Test: measures the speed at which data transfers back and forth from a web server to a device via a router in megabits per second (Mbps). On March 14th, 2024 the Federal Communications Commission raised "the Commission's benchmark for high-speed fixed broadband to download speeds of 100 megabits per second and upload speeds of 20 megabits per second."[33]

30 Jillian Mckoy, "Combating Digital Redlining 'Is Imperative for Advancing Health Equity'", 2024
31 Intel, "What is a Hotspot- Wi-Fi Hotspot Definitions and Details"
32 LiveAction, "Jitter vs Latency: Unraveling the Nuances in Network Performance"
33 Federal Communications Commission, "FCC Increases Broadband Speed Benchmark", 2024

Appendix

Public Engagement Guide

Bristol County Digital Equity Plan
Public Engagement Guide



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.

Thank you for engaging with the Bristol County Digital Equity Plan!

Staff from the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) are helping Rehoboth, Dighton, and Lakeville develop a vision for expanded internet access. We want to learn what residents in these communities need to fully and safely participate in the digital landscape!

This guide contains:

- Instructions for in-person public workshops
- A copy of informational boards
    - Information on Digital Equity Demographics in the project region
    - Brief overview of broadband infrastrucuture
    - Background on Internet Access - Speed, Affordability, Literacy
- Link to online Survey and other ways to get inolved
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why Your Feedback Matters

- Data Can only Tell So Much of The Story
- Allocating Resources to meet Community Needs
- Understand needs of the Underserved

Bristol County

Digital Equity Plan

Rehoboth • Dighton • Berkley

Plan Timeline

Jan 2026:
Stakeholder kickoff, project branding, steering committee formation, and charrette planning

Spring 2026:
Existing conditions analysis, survey and event promotion (tabling/flyers), and stakeholder interviews

Summer 2026:
Plan writing and engagement follow Ups with community stakeholders

Fall 2026:
Finalize Plan

SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District

SRPEDD Project Team

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To view prevous planning or learn more about regional broadband visit:

srpedd.org/digital-equity

MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

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 Fund.

3

In-Person Engagement

Use this handout as a guide and reference for...
04.09.2026 Public Charette, Tabling, Stakeholder Interviews

Goal of Engagement

Residents are encouraged to help develop goals aimed at expanding internet access through speaking with SRPEDD staff and leaving comments on physical poster boards.

Your feedback can help us make internet affordable and accessible for all!

What are these boards?

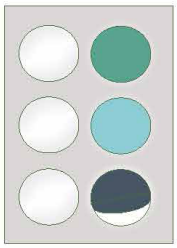
These poster boards help deliver visual information that is meant to get you thinking about internet access. Please feel free to roam around, ask questions, and participate in our sticker activities!

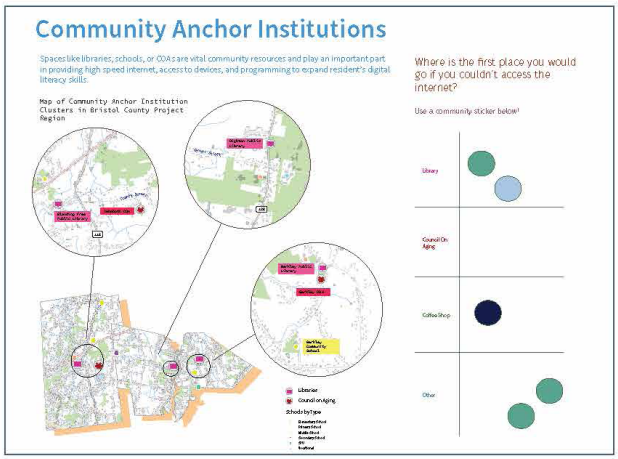
🖍️ *Space for notes!*

Engaging with Boards

Different boards ask different questions based on existing conditions.

Use a community stickers to indicate where you're from!





Use a sticky note for specific feedback!





What is a Digital Equity Plan?

Dighton, Berkley, and Rehoboth are creating a Municipal Digital Equity Plan to study the state of internet access, connection, affordability, and programming in the region.

Together, the towns will work to understand if everyone has a functioning computer/ device, a steady connection and an affordable internet bill, and the tech skills to navigate day-to-day tasks online.

Why Plan For Digital Equity?

The internet is no longer a luxury!

Communities are working to address a modern problem some may take for granted.

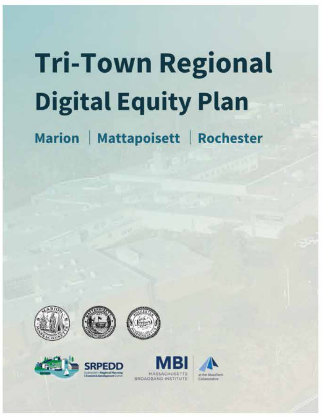
A chance to reflect.

On overlooked inequities in your community and help those affected by the digital divide.

May help increase eligibility...

For future infrastructure improvements and community programming

Example: Tri-Town Digital Equity Plan



Here's how digital equity planing helped towns allocate implementation funding from 2025 MBI Funding Cycle:

Marion received $20,000 and will...

- Purchase hot spots to lend through the COA
- Engage a contractor to deliver digital skills classes at the COA and library

Mattapoisett received $17,600 and will...

- Establish a device lending program at the library and Council on Aging, which will make laptops, hot spots and adaptive equipment available to residents.
- Purchase a digital literacy curriculum to distribute through the library and Council on Aging

Rochester received $17,010 and will...

- Expand the library's hot spot lending supply
- Purchase and train library staff to provide a digital literacy curriculum,
- Provide one-on-one device support and technical assistance to residents.

In-Person Engagement: Copy of Boards
*some information has been reconfigured for space

"The Information Super Highway"



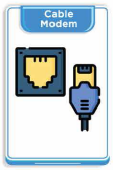
Types of Broadband Connections

How internet gets to your home



Fiber Optic
Speeds: 250 Mbps to over 1,000 Mbps

The newest broadband technology and the gold standard for broadband, with tough-to-beat symmetrical upload and download speeds. Though it is the best, laying down fiber cables in the ground or on utility poles has proven to be a logistical challenge causing limited availability.



Cable
Speeds: 940 Mbps to 1,000 Mbps

Cable is the most common internet connection across the country. The cables that facilitate this type of internet connection use the same coaxial connections as cable TV. Internet speeds comes second to fiber internet, but it boasts the best availability in the country. Most cable ISPs offer maximum download speeds around 940Mbps or 1,000Mbps.



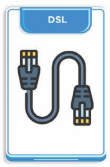
5G Internet
Speeds: 75 Mbps to 400 Mbps

5G Internet is becoming a more popular options as it provides satisfactory speeds at a more affordable price. Usually, 5G frequencies are picked up by cellphones, but for home internet, a router receives those signals and turns them into a home connection. It's a great way to get broadband without running a line to your home or, in some cases, dealing with the companies that have run those lines.



Wireless Internet
Speeds: 100 Mbps to 1,000 Mbps

If you have a fixed wireless internet connection - providers will send internet signals over the air. However, with a fixed wireless connection, you'll need a mounted receiver with a direct line of sight to the nearest tower.



Direct Service Line (DSL)
Speeds: 5 Mbps to 120 Mbps

A lifeline for many rural communities looking for an affordable and somewhat reliable internet connection. The downside is that speeds will significantly vary by what's available at your address. The typical range with DSL service is anywhere between 5 to 120Mbps.



Satellite
Speeds: 12 Mbps to 120 Mbps

Very widely available among all internet connection types, but most expensive option and falls very short on speeds. Typical speeds will vary from 12 to 120Mbps, though you may find faster speeds with Starlink. The average cost of satellite internet is $100 monthly.

In-Person Engagement: Copy of Boards
*some information has been reconfigured for space

7

Defining Digital Equity

Getting online requires all access to all three.



Connection:

A fast, affordable, and stable connection to the internet.

Examples
Affordable Wi Fi or Data Plans, Efficient and reliable Broadband Infrastructure.



Devices:

The portal or hardware that lets you navigate the internet.

Examples
Desktops or Laptops, Routers, Tablets, and Smart Phones.



Literacy:

The capability to maintain devices and evaluate online information.

Examples
Internet Skills, Cyber Security Awareness, Trouble Shooting.

Imagine losing access to one or more of these digital equity pillars, what part of your life would be most impacted?

Work Or School

Social Life or Community Participation

Personal Administration
(Finances, Healthcare)

The Digital Divide

Most of us can't imagine a life with out an internet connection. Some on the other side of a divide still struggle accessing digital tools.

Populations that have historically struggled getting online include:


Persons who are 60 years of age or older


Veterans


Persons with disabilities


Rural residents


Members of a racial or ethnic minority group



Individuals with a language barrier


Low Income Households


Incarcerated individuals

Why do digital equity plans focus on these populations?

In the Digital Equity Act of 2021, The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) identified 8 covered populations that have historically experienced lower rates of computer and internet use.

An average of 80% of residents in the study are considered members of a covered population. See the 'Digital Equity Demographics' board to learn more!

Barriers to Internet Access

Use a sticker to indicate if you experience any of the following:



- Connectivity interruptions
- Digital redlining
- Inability to afford or access services

Internet bill is too high

Nowhere near me has public WiFi



- Outdated Software
- Device not matching a users needs
- Lack of affordability

Computers are too expensive and confusing

My device has limited features



- Limited skills
- Fear or shame
- Inaccessible trainings

My kids usually help me with everything online

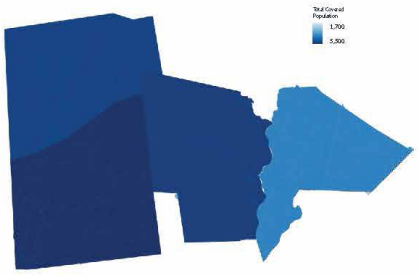
I'm nervous about giving out my information

Source: NTIA, ACS

Digital Equity Demographics

In 2019, when the NTIA began collecting data for Broadband Deployment, almost 80% of the in the study area belonged to a covered population.

2019 NTIA Bristol County
Covered Population Census Tracts



Rural residents

(As defined by the Digital Equity Act of 2021) represent the largest covered population in all three communities.

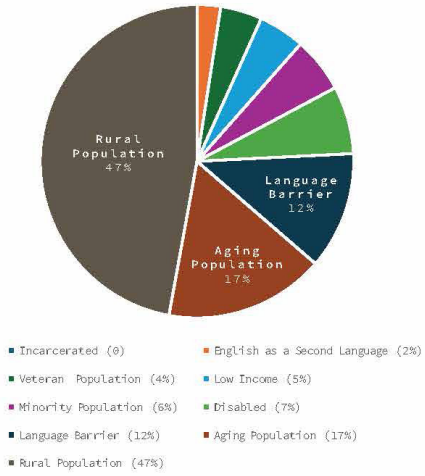
Defining Rural

There is no single definition of 'rural' across government entities. Different classifications are used for different purposes.

For the purposes of digital equity planning, rural residents are at risk of experiencing digital inequities due to their low population densities and lack or access to infrastructure and community resources .

All three communities are also classified as Level 1 Rural by the MA Office of Rural Health in 2024.

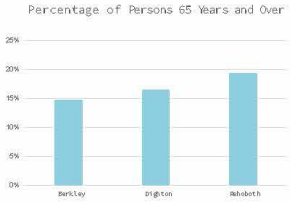
2019 NTIA Bristol County
Covered Populations Distribution



Other Covered Populations

Aging Individuals

Almost 1/5th of residents in the project region are 65 years or older.

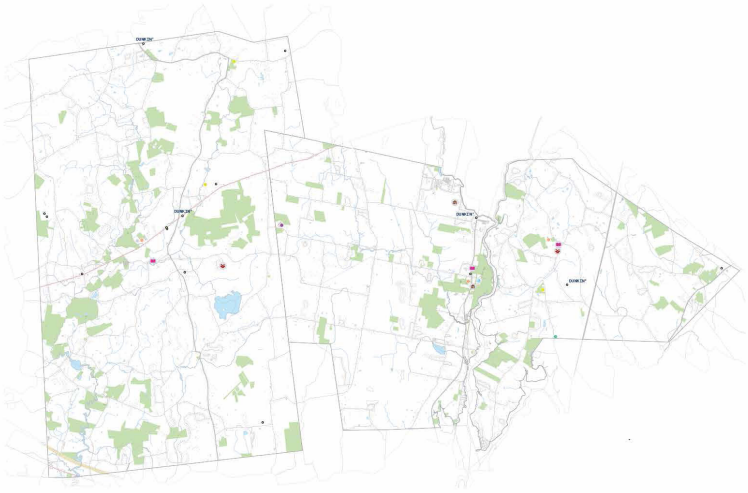


Language Barrier

Rehoboth has the largest population of non-English speakers with 12.4% of the population speaking another language besides English. Dighton and Berkley have percentages below 10%.

Bristol County Digital Equity Plan

Project Region



Rehoboth, MA
Population: 13,313

Dighton, MA
Population: 8,182

Berkley, MA
Population: 6,822

Plan Timeline

Jan 2026:
Stakeholder kickoff, Project branding, steering committee formation, and charrette planning

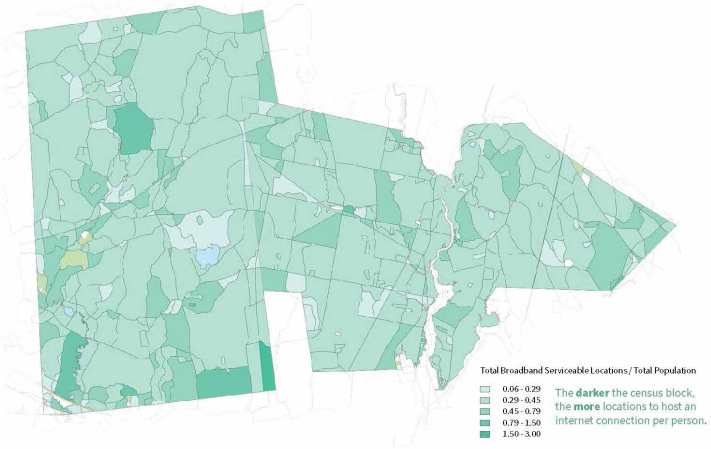
Spring 2026:
Existing Conditions Analysis, Survey and Event Promotion (Tabling/Fliers), and Stakeholder Interviews

Summer 2026:
Plan Writing and Engagement Follow Ups with Community Stakeholders

Fall 2026:
Finalize Plan

Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)

Available Places to 'Host' an Internet Connection



What does this map tell us?

Every census block in the study area has at least one location that can host internet.

Why is this important?

Provides overview of available resources based on the number of people in a given area and shows the rural character of the region.

Where is this information from?

All maps in this series are from The Federal Broadband Commission (FCC) 20240 National Broadband Map.

Remember!

- 1 BSL can serve multiple addresses.
- Rural Character of region means smaller census block population = BSLs will be more spread out

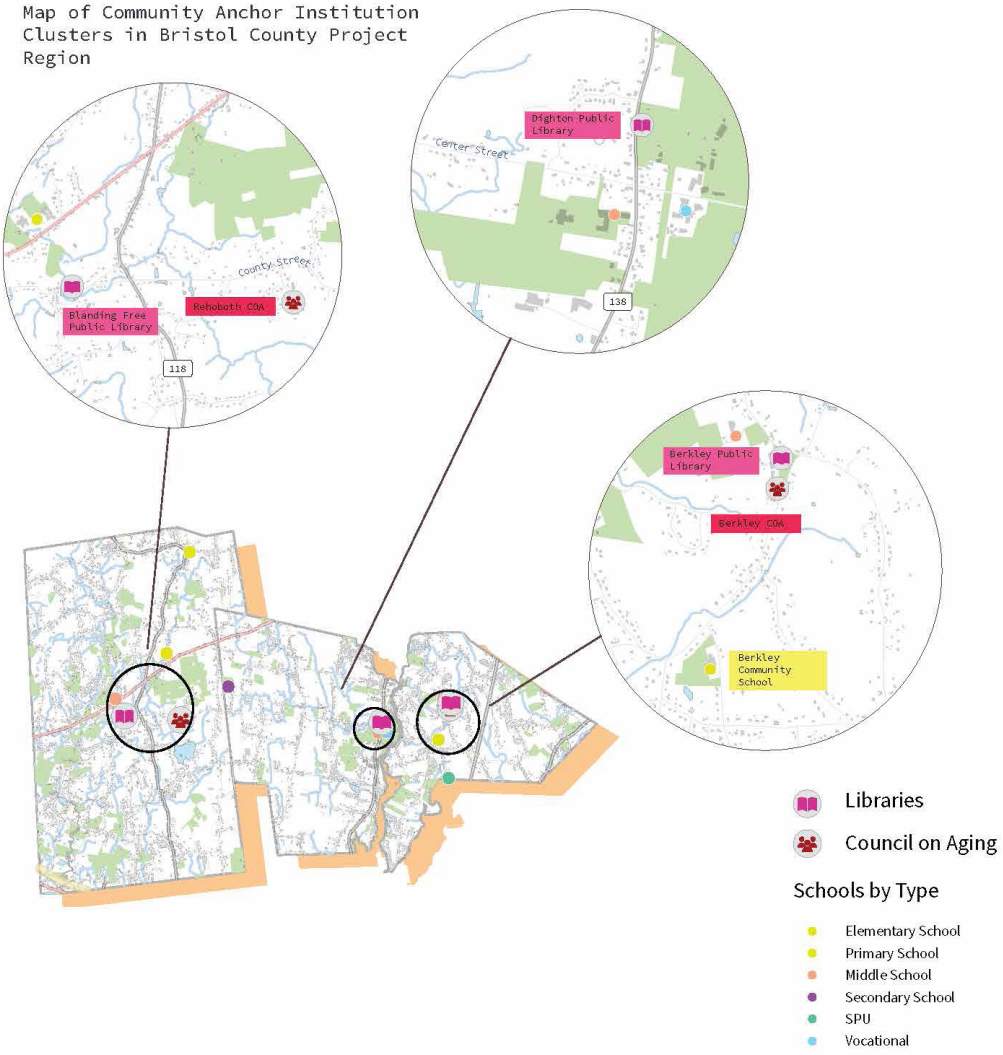
In-Person Engagement: Copy of Boards
*some information has been reconfigured for space

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Community Anchor Institutions

Spaces like libraries, schools, or COAs are vital community resources and play an important part in providing high speed internet, access to devices, and programming to expand resident's digital literacy skills.

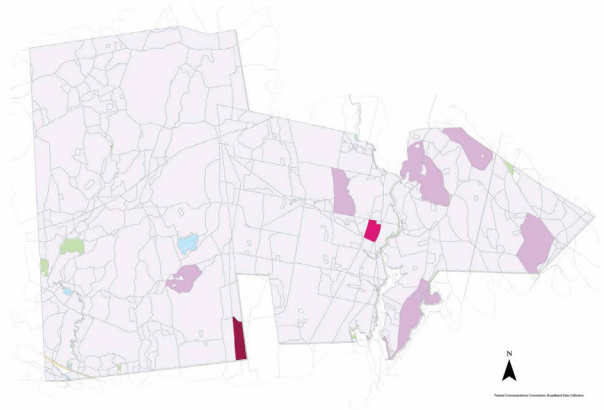
Map of Community Anchor Institution Clusters in Bristol County Project Region



In-Person Engagement: Copy of Boards
*some information has been reconfigured for space

Unserved Broadband Serviceable Locations

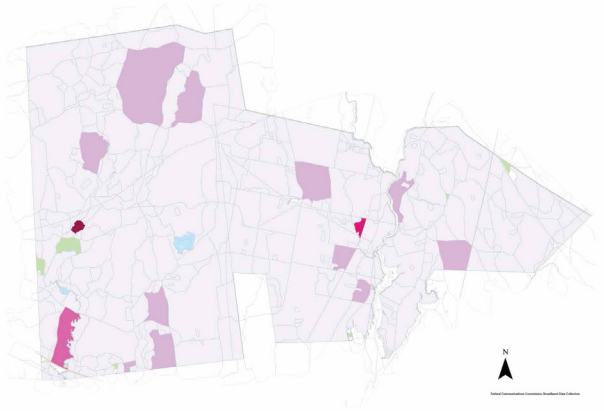
Densisty of BSLs in a Census Block that recieve slow or unserviced internet.



The **darker** the census block show higher number of **Unserviced BSLs (Locations with very slow Internet Service)** based on the Total Number of BSLs.

Underserved Broadband Serviceable Locations

Densisty of BSLs that are served but have slow connections.

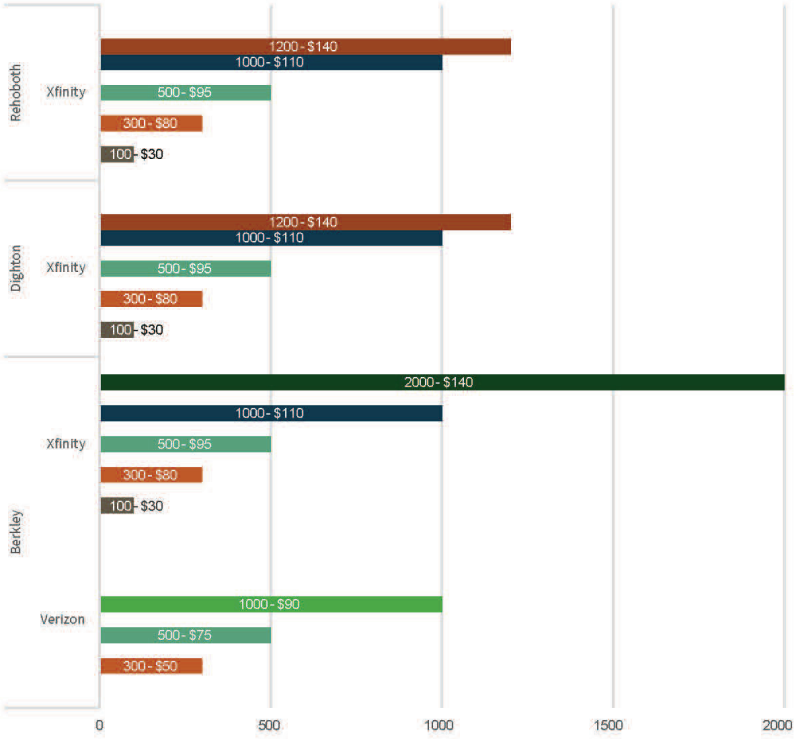


The **darker** the census block show higher number of **Underserved BSLs (Locations with significantly slow Internet Service)** based on the Total Number of BSLs.

Affordability

A monthly Internet bill is a cost most Americans have to factor into their monthly utility bills. Is the average cost of internet burdensome to some households?

Price and Speed of Internet Service Packages Available at Sample Address in Region

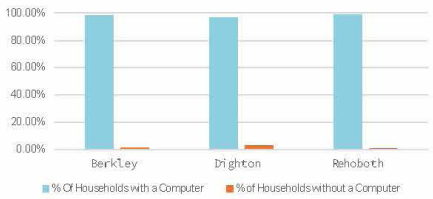


Device Preferences

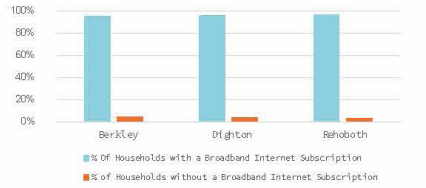
Most households in the region have a computer at home as well as an active broadband subscription.

However, a significant minority of households may rely on smartphones or tablets with a data plan to access the internet.

Percentage of Households
with and without a Computer

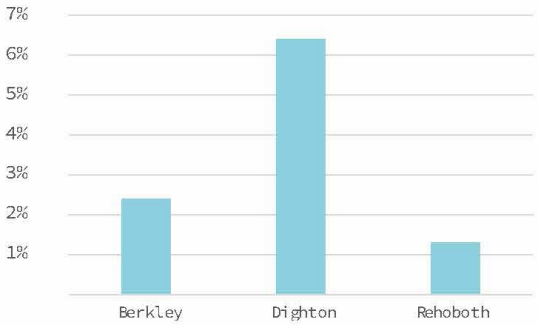


Percentage of Households
With or Without Broadband Subscription



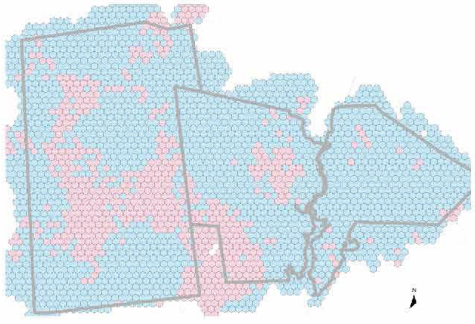
How can the towns can cater to residents that may use devices beyond a traditional computer?

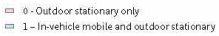
Percentage of Households
With Smartphone and No Computer



4G Data Availability

Types of Mobile Data Plan Coverage





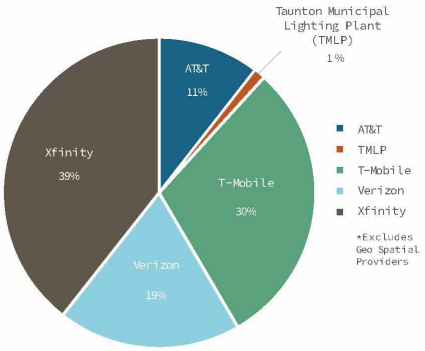
The Blue Hexagons show where cell phone data in a car or other mobile situations.

The Red Hexagons Show where cell phone data is available in stationary environments

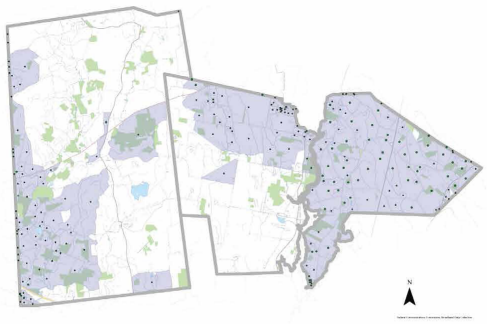
In-Person Engagement: Copy of Boards
*some information has been reconfigured for space

Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

Distribution of Internet Services Providers (ISPs)



Map of Census Blocks with Unique Fiber Providers



Digital Skills - What are your needs?

Below are digital skill programming offered at COAs. Is there programming we're missing? Are there any community groups outside the region that assist with tech skills? Are there ways to collaborate to expand programming reach?

Rehoboth

27 Francis Farm Rd - Francis Hall
Rehoboth, MA 02769
508-252-3372

Smart Phone Help every third Wednesday

Dighton

1059 Somerset Avenue
Dighton, MA 02715
508-823-0095

1:1 Tech Help Offered By Appointment

Berkley

1 North Main Street
Berkley, MA 02779

1:1 Tech Help Offered By Appointment

Beyond the Basics



ClassicStock/Corbis

A new generation of aging adults is emerging. Born in the late 1960s, adults currently in their late 50s came of age during the advent of personal computing. As technology continues to advance its important that digital literacy programming stays up to date as unique technological needs continue to evolve.

Key Terms Cheat Sheet

- **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**
  - A program created during the pandemic to ensure that everyone had access to broadband in their households. The program provided households with a $30 credit off their monthly internet bill, and a $100 credit towards a device, or $75 off their monthly internet bill if they were living on tribal lands. This program ended in May 2024.
- **Broadband**
  - Internet that has speeds of at least 100/20 Mega bits per second (Mbps).
- **Download and Upload Speeds**
  - Download Speed - How fast information travels to you. It may affect how fast it takes to download large files or show pages with many pictures.
  - Upload Speed - How fast information can transfer from you. It affects things like your ability to participate in a virtual doctor's appointment.
- **Digital Equity Asset**
  - Any services, programs, documents, organizations, etc. that support or promote digital equity. For example, device distribution programs, digital navigators, and relevant planning documents are digital equity assets.
- **Digital Literacy**
  - The skills necessary to use technology and navigate the internet, such as the ability to maintain devices, communicate effectively online and evaluate online information and security risks.
- **Hotspot**
  - Intel defines a hotspot as "a physical location where people can access the Internet, typically using Wi-Fi, via a wireless local area network (WLAN) with a router connected to an Internet service provider."

Written Feedback

If you have internet access we still want to hear from you! Help us by completing the questions below.

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
   - ☐ Dial-up internet
   - ☐ Home wireline connection (cable, fiber, DSL, etc.)
   - ☐ Satellite internet

5. How well does your home internet service work?
   - ☐ Good enough to meet my household's needs
   - ☐ I don't know
   - ☐ Not good enough to meet my household's needs

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
   - ☐ Not too hard
   - ☐ Somewhat hard
   - ☐ Not at all hard

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)
   - ☐ Cellphone
   - ☐ Tablet (or similar device)
   - ☐ Desktop computer
   - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
   - ☐ Laptop computer

14. How much would you be able to pay for a laptop or desktop computer?
   - ☐ $0-50
   - ☐ $150-250
   - ☐ $50-100
   - ☐ $250-500
   - ☐ $100-150
   - ☐ 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)

	Easy	*Not easy*	*Hard*
Searching and applying for a job	☐	☐	☐
Health care or telehealth services	☐	☐	☐
Participating in your local community	☐	☐	☐
General internet searching	☐	☐	☐
Transportation information	☐	☐	☐
Searching and/or applying for benefits or resources for you or your family	☐	☐	☐

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

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

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

- ☐ In person classes
- ☐ Online classes
- ☐ In person support from a friend or instructor
- ☐ A do-it-yourself training module

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

- ☐ Very concerned
- ☐ Somewhat concerned
- ☐ Not very concerned
- ☐ Not at all concerned

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

- ☐ That my data could get stolen or used without my consent
- ☐ That I or a loved one could get scammed or tricked
- ☐ That I could be tracked or surveilled
- ☐ That I or a loved one could be harassed or abused online

21. 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
- ☐ No, I don't know of any tools or resources to stay safe online
- ☐ I know of tools or resources to stay safe online, but they don't work for me
- ☐ Other (please specify) : _____

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

- ☐ Very accessible
- ☐ Somewhat accessible
- ☐ Not very accessible
- ☐ 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?

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Not too well
- ☐ Not well at all

*This questions are from MBI's statewide digital equity survey and have been editied down. Flip the next page to access the full survey.

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Thank you for your participation! Please feel free to share the flyer below with friends and family in the study area!

Do you or someone you know struggle accessing or affording internet?

We want to hear from you!



Take the Internet Access Survey

Scan QR Code or Visit srpedd.org/digital-equity for more information.

Contact us directly:
kwhalen@srpedd.org
508.824.1367 ext. 316

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Department Head Questionarre

Questions	Answer
What is your full name and role?	Bruce Alexander, IT Facilitator
What department do you oversee?	Information Technology
"Would you consider your department a Community Anchor Institutuon (CAI)? Community Anchor Institution = Community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment, and supp"	Maybe
Where is your department located?	340 Anawan Street
Please select all the ways your deaprtment accesses the internet.	Wireline connection (cable, fiber, DSL, etc)
How well does your department's internet service work?	Good enought to meet my department's needs
Is there any concern about the privacy or safety of your department’s data?	No
Do residents need to interface with an online portal or other web-based tools to access your department’s services?	Services are internal, residents usually do not need to interface
Do residents need help navigating online portals or other web-based tools when accessing your department's services?	No
Do you or your staff have the capacity to help residents navigate online portals or web-based tools?	Yes
"Which of the following factors needed for digital equity are residents in Dighton, Rehoboth, and Berkley in the greatest need of? Rank the following by greatest need."	Adequate Device - access to a router or personal computer;Connection - fast, reliable, and affordable access to the internet;Digital Literacy - Understanding how to use technological devices for everyday life;
What types of digital equity programs/ initiatives do you think Dighton, Rehoboth, and Berkley residents could benefit from?	Internet Affordability Programs for Low-Income Residents
Is there anyone in the broader community who you think should be included in the discussion of digital equity in Dighton, Rehoboth, or Berkley?	Comcast


STOP