Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency
Regional Digital Opportunity Plan

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August 15, 2023

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Executive Summary

The Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency (CAA) that receives funding from the Office of Broadband at the VA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to research what the digital broadband services and gaps looks like in our region in efforts to developing a digital opportunity plan that outline means for structure, compliance and guideline to broadband and technology services in our regions.

Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency (WJCC-CAA) understands that building the broadband infrastructure will explode the movement of artificial intelligence (AI) faster in the AI generation or the next step of onboarding technology. Infrastructure broadband across the region is a great challenge, but it is necessary for economic opportunities, enhancing living standards, and gaining competitive advantages. Broadband infrastructure improvements will change how we do business, educate children (especially in times of crisis), and provide health care and emergency services. Private sector investment and innovation have driven the rapid evolution of the American broadband system.

This Regional Digital Opportunity Plan for Eastern Virginia was developed after hosting interviews, listening sessions, and collecting 488 survey responses from residents. Residents expressed concerns across the region about broadband accessibility, affordability, digital literacy, and technical support. Five goals have been established for the region. These goals include:
Goal 1: Ensure equitable access to digital resources and opportunities for all populations.
Goal 2: Enhance digital literacy and skills across communities.
Goal 3: Provide affordable access to devices and connectivity.
Goal 4: Establish robust technical support for users.
Goal 5: Foster effective digital navigation and online safety awareness.

Key findings from the survey are noted below:

- Most respondents (82%) have both a home internet subscription and a wireless cellular plan.
- Of the people who do not have internet access at home, 83% do not because it is not available in their area.
- The devices respondents most often use to access the internet are a smart phone (93%) or laptop (88%).
- Respondents are comfortable doing most tasks on the internet, except attending doctor's appointments. • Most respondents (83%) have not applied to a program for internet accessibility, and less than one-third (30%) are aware of these programs.

In an increasingly interconnected world, access to digital resources and skills has become synonymous with access to opportunity. The Regional Digital Opportunity Plan is a comprehensive and collaborative effort to address the digital divide that has hindered equitable access and participation in the digital realm for too many within our region. Our plan's purpose is clear: to provide every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances, with the tools, skills, and opportunities needed to thrive in the digital age.

Introduction and Vision for Digital Opportunity

The Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC-CAA) region's vision for digital opportunity encompasses a comprehensive and forward-looking approach to digital technology improvement of its citizens, economy, and overall development. Our vision of digital equity is to bridge the digital divide, foster innovation, and create an environment where technology benefits all segments of society. The key components of our region's vision for digital opportunity:

1. **Universal Connectivity**: Ensuring citizens access affordable and reliable high-speed internet connectivity that involves continuous development of infrastructure development.
2. **Digital Literacy and Education**: Promoting digital literacy programs for all age groups. Digital literacy and education include equipping citizens with the skills necessary to effectively use and navigate digital tools, applications, and platforms.
3. **Innovation Inclusion**: We promote and facilitate the development of innovative technology by providing access to a computer lab and partnering with the community to assist staff and citizens in creating programs. We believe in giving sufficient time and resources for this process.
4. **Cybersecurity and Data Privacy**: Promoting digital data protection and cybersecurity measures to protect citizens' data by building trust in digital services.
5. **Healthcare and Education Technology**: Leveraging technology to improve healthcare and education can profoundly impact our region's quality of life.
6. **Sustainable Development**: To improve resource management and disaster response, sustainability efforts can incorporate digital solutions.
7. **Collaboration and Partnerships**: Collaborating with other community partners to educate our seniors and other individuals to become knowledgeable with computers and other forms of technology.
8. **Ethical Responsibility**: Ethical responsibility aligns with our vision and mission statement to follow ethical principles and address any biases that negatively impact the community.

WJCC-CAA region's vision for digital opportunity aims to bring awareness of why there needs to be digital inclusion and to create an environment where digital technological advances for the betterment of all.

Current State of Digital Opportunity: Barriers and Assets by each County/City

Findings for Each County

WJCC-CAA comprised a coalition of 12 counties, encompassing a population exceeding 325,313,110 residents. These counties and cities in Virginia have undertaken different planning and policy initiatives to promote sustainability. One of the key goals of these efforts is to tackle the digital divide, while also boosting the economy and promoting greater social equity. This section of the report covers the research findings for each county.

Access to technology is crucial for children's learning, but in some areas, many under 18 need access to computers or the Internet. When there is no Internet access, other factors can hinder their potential from an early age. We must address this digital divide to ensure equity and prepare our children for academic success.

1. Digital Divide in the City of Williamsburg

1.1 The City of Williamsburg has a population estimates of 15,909, according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 3.2% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 74.3% of the country population is White. The African American populations is about 15.1% and Hispanic is 8.3%. Some 19.3% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computer and/or internet in the City of Williamsburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 2.8%, while 15.0% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 11.0%.

- **The following information was retrieved from the last updated US Census numbers of 2021(S2802), 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables**

1.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in the City of Williamsburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does have internet subscription is 12.5%, while 1.4% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that does have internet subscription is 7.3%, while 0.7% do not have a computer in the household. African Americans the percentage that does not have internet subscription is 32.7%, while 4.3% do not have a computer in the household. Hispanic or Latino the percentage that does have internet subscription is 5.3%, while 0.0% do not have a computer in the household.

1.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age with no internet subscription in the household is 13.7%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

Williamsburg, VA, and Glo Fiber have agreed to provide fiber-to-the-home broadband services starting in 2022 to about 4,000 homes and businesses. Glo Fiber, known for its superior customer service, offers multi-gigabit internet access, streaming TV, and phone service using Shentel's regional fiber network. Williamsburg sees it as a significant step forward in achieving its vision of One Williamsburg. Glo Fiber's internet pricing is all-inclusive, with no additional fees or surcharges.

In 2020, Governor Ralph Northam granted $192,023 in CARES Act funding to the City of Williamsburg for six months of free internet access and broadband services to the Highland Park neighborhood. This funding goal was to support underserved communities and will benefit children who were learning virtually. City officials contacted Verizon Wireless for wireless service to help with internet access in Williamsburg. The Highland Park neighborhood was selected due to its proximity to necessary cellular equipment, ease of service deployment, and compact nature.

2. Digital Divide in James City County

2.1 James City County has a population estimates of 81,199, according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 3.8% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 79.1% of the country population is White. The African American populations is about 14.3% and Hispanic is 6.9%. Some 7.0% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in James City County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 9.8%, while 4.3% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 19.2%.

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2.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in James City County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet subscription is 5.4%, while 2.4% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that do not have internet subscription is 3.9%, while 2.0% do not have a computer in the household. African

Americans the percentage that does have internet subscription is 17.5%, while 5.3% do not have a computer in the household. Hispanic or Latino the percentage that does have internet subscription is 8.3%, while 1.2% do not have a computer in the household.

2.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age with no Internet subscription in the household is 7.0%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

In James City County, VA, in 2022, Glo Fiber, powered by Shentel, was contracted to expand its fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) broadband services. The goals were to expand and bring high-speed internet to over 20,000 homes and businesses. Glo Fiber offers multi-gigabit internet, streaming TV, and phone services, including optional wall-to-wall Wi-Fi. Shentel's mission is to provide reliable internet to underserved communities. Glo Fiber leverages Shentel's 100% fiber network for high speeds and straightforward pricing. For more information, visit www.glofiber.com or www.shentel.com.

Glo Fiber, a 100% fiber network, will soon offer internet, television, and phone service to residents and businesses in Williamsburg, James City County, and Upper York County. Construction began in March, and service for some areas is expected to start this summer. The project aims to provide broadband services to everyone in the county by 2024, with benefits including expanded access to remote education and telehealth. The county also plans to work with all communication companies to provide internet access to those who still need to be connected, with grant opportunities available for partnerships toward this goal.

3. Digital Divide in New Kent County

3.1 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in the City of Williamsburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does have internet subscription is 12.5%, while 1.4% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that do not have internet subscription is 7.3%, while 0.7% do not have a computer in the household. There is no number or percentages of data listed for African and Hispanic/Latinos, regarding an internet subscription or computer in the household.

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3.2 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 13.7%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of

COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

3.3 Access to technology is crucial for children's learning, but in some areas, many under 18 lack access to computers or the Internet. This, along with other factors, can hinder their potential from an early age. We must address this digital divide to ensure equity and set our children up for success in academics.

New Kent County and Cox Communications will invest $34 million to expand broadband access to every home and business in the county. The 100% fiber-optic network will provide ultrafast, reliable internet service. The first phase will serve 3,000 residents without broadband access, with completion expected in 2024. Cox will cover 566.7 fiber miles and work with property owners for access approvals.

4. Digital Divide in King & Queen County

4.1 The City of Williamsburg has a population estimate of 15,909, according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 3.2% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 74.3% of the county population is White. The African American population is about 15.1%, and the Hispanic population is 8.3%. Some 19.3% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in the City of Williamsburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 2.8%, while 15.0% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 11.0%.

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4.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in the City of Williamsburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does have internet subscription is 12.5%, while 1.4% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that does have internet subscription is 7.3%, while 0.7% do not have a computer in the household. African Americans the percentage that do not have internet subscription is 32.7%, while 4.3% do not have a computer in the household. Hispanic or Latino the percentage that does have internet subscription is 5.3%, while 0.0% do not have a computer in the household.

4.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 13.7%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

King and Queen County, Va, has partnered with RiverStreet Networks to bring advanced fiber optic internet to over 3,800 locations. The $18 million project is funded by federal, state, and local sources, including a $5 million grant from the FCC. The Rappahannock Indian Tribe and RiverStreet Networks also contribute funds. The Broadband project is a multi-phased opportunity covering 14 counties in South Central Virginia, and this is the beginning phase of a larger plan to provide fiber optic broadband to over 13,400 homes and businesses.

5. Digital Divide in York County

5.1 York County has a population estimate of 64,464 according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 1.8% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 73.6% of the county population is White. The African American population is about 14.7%, and the Hispanic population is 7.7%. Some 5.1% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in the City of Williamsburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 4.5%, while 6.1% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 22.8%.

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5.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in York County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet subscription is 3.6%, while 2.7% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that does have internet subscription is 2.3%, while 1.2% do not have a computer in the household. There is no number or percentages of data listed for African and Hispanic/Latinos, regarding an internet subscription or computer in the household.

5.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age with no Internet subscriptions in the household is 0.6% and 4.5% of households without a computer in the home. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

York County, VA, has partnered with Glo Fiber to bring the fiber-optic network to nearly 5,000 homes and businesses. The construction started in early 2023, providing wall-to-wall Wi-Fi services, next-gen fiber-to-the-home internet access (FTTH), streaming TV, and phone services with no additional fees or surcharges. The company will offer three symmetrical, high-speed internet access tiers, making it an affordable option for individuals working, studying, and playing online.

In **York County,** on February 3, 2021, the YoCo Fiber Broadband Task Force was established by the York County Commissioners to guide on creating and implementing a broadband strategy throughout the county. This decision was made in response to the YoCo Strong Recovery Task Force's recommendation in April 2020, highlighting the importance of investing in broadband infrastructure for all residents. The COVID-19 pandemic further underlined the need for equitable access to broadband internet, especially as students and employees relied on it for remote learning and work. With funding from the federal CARES Act, York County commissioned Lit Communities and Katapult Engineering to conduct a countywide broadband assessment, including a network design and financial models. The county has allocated $1.5 million for a fiber backbone project and wireless antenna.

6. Digital Divide in Caroline County

6.1 Caroline County has a population estimate of 31,957, according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022, the county's population grew by 3.5%. White people account for 67.7% of the population, followed by African Americans at 26.4% and Hispanics at 7.0%. Those living below the poverty line make up 10.9% of the population. In Caroline County, data reveals that some households do not have computers or access to the Internet. The raw numbers may differ depending on the population size in various county areas, indicating population density. The percentages represent the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. Currently, 17.5% of the population lacks Internet access, while 6.6% still need a computer in their homes — the population under 18 accounts for 22.4% of the total.

- **The following information was retrieved from the last updated US Census numbers of 2021(S2802), 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables**

6.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers or Internet in Caroline County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does have internet subscriptions is 12.5%, while 1.4% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone), the percentage that does have internet subscriptions is 7.3%, while 0.7% do not have a computer in the household. African Americans, the percentage that does have internet subscriptions is 32.7%, while 4.3% do not have a computer in the household. Hispanic or Latino, the percentage that do not have an internet subscription is 5.3%, while 0.0% do not have a computer in the household.

6.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 13.7%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

Caroline County, VA, is working to provide reliable high-speed internet service to every household and business. The Board of Supervisors partnered with Breezeline to offer broadband service to around 482 homes. The project is expected to be completed by December 2022. A second grant application was submitted to provide universal broadband coverage but was unsuccessful due to a lack of technical information. The County has issued an RFP for internet service providers to cover all areas without coverage, including 390 homes. The Board of Supervisors is committed to providing broadband service to all in Caroline County.

7. Digital Divide in Hanover County

- Hanover County has a population estimate of 112,938 according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 2.7% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 85.2% of the county population is White. The African American population is about 9.6%, and the Hispanic population is 3.6%. Some 19.3% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers or internet in Hanover County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 9.3%, while 5.2% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 21.3%.

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7.1 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Hanover County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does have internet subscription is 3.6%, while 2.0% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that do not have internet subscription is 3.8%, while 1.8% do not have a computer in the household. There is no number or percentages of data listed for African and Hispanic/Latinos, regarding an internet subscription or computer in the household.

7.2 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 2.6%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

7.3 Access to technology is crucial for children's learning, but in some areas, many under 18 lack access to computers or the Internet. This, along with other factors, can hinder their potential from an early age. We must address this digital divide to ensure equity and set our children up for success in academics.

Hanover County, VA**,** has partnered with All Points Broadband, Dominion Energy, and Rappahannock Electric Cooperative to bring high-speed broadband internet to underserved areas. The "Connect Hanover" initiative will target areas without at least 25 Mbps/3 Mbps and provide minimum speeds of 100 Mbps/100 Mbps. The partnership will lease "middle mile" fiber capacity to improve electrical grids and reduce costs. Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act may be used, and residents can complete an online survey to determine if their area is underserved. Construction began in August 2022.

8. Digital Divide in Fredericksburg

8.1 The Fredericksburg has a population estimate of 28,757, according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 2.8% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 61.9 of the county population is White. The African American population is about 20.7%, and the Hispanic population is 11.3%. Some 14.3% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Fredericksburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 11.7%, while 5.4% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 20.9%.

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8.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Fredericksburg. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet subscription is 7.3%, while 3.7% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that do not have internet subscription is 6.3%, while 2.1% do not have a computer in the household. African Americans the percentage that does have internet subscription is 4.0%, while 8.2% do not have a computer in the household. Hispanic or Latino the percentage that does have internet subscription is 33.3%, while 4.8% do not have a computer in the household.

8.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age that do not have an Internet subscription in the household is 9.2%, and 0.7% does not have a computer in the household. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged

because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

Fredericksburg, VA, Governor Northam has announced that a broadband access project is being launched to provide internet connectivity to approximately 7,200 households and businesses in Virginia's Northern Neck region currently without access. The project's initial phase will focus on underserved areas in King George, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland counties. It will utilize a $10 million grant from the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative, as well as federal and local funding and private investments.

In 2019, the General Assembly launched a pilot program to encourage cooperation between localities, electric utilities, and internet service providers, which has resulted in partnerships between electric utilities and broadband providers. These partnerships aim to connect areas without access to high-speed internet. Dominion Energy will install over 200 miles of fiber from Fredericksburg to Kilmarnock, acting as the project's backbone. The project will also improve the electric grid and power poles.

9. Digital Divide in Charles City County

9.1 Charles City County a population estimate of 31,957, according to the 2022 U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 3.5% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 67.7% of the county population is White. The African American population is about 26.4%, and the Hispanic population is 7.0%. Some 10.9% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Charles City County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 17.5%, while 606% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 22.4%.

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9.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Charles City County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet subscription is 11.2%, while 4.8% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that does not have internet subscription is 6.8%, while 3.3% do not have a computer in the household. African Americans the percentage that do not have internet subscription is 20.9%, while 8.7% do not have a computer in the household. Hispanic or Latino the percentage that does have internet subscription is 16.9%, while 0.0% do not have a computer in the household.

9.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age that do not have an Internet subscription in the household is 9.4% and 2.4% does not have a computer in the household. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

Charles City County, VA, received a Virginia Technology Initiative (VATI) federal grant of $2.6 million for broadband expansion in District 3. This grant is part of $19.1 million in projects granted to the county that saw Comcast install more than $5 million in fiber optic cables. Most of that route covered District 1 and District 2 within the county, while District 3. The project will bring reliable internet to the county and assist with education, the workforce, and small businesses.

10. Digital Divide in King William County

10.1 King Williams County has a population estimate of 18,492, according to the U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 3.8% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 79.5% of the county population is White. The African American population is about 14.8%, and the Hispanic population is 3.1%. Some 7.1% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in King William County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 2.8%, while 15.0% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 11.0%.

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10.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in King William County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet subscription is 16.1%, while 4.5% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that does have internet subscription is 14.1%, while 3.8% do not have a computer in the household. African Americans the percentage that does have internet subscription is 30.1%, while 8.3% do not have a computer in the household. Hispanic or Latino the percentage that does have internet subscription is 0.0%, while 0.0% do not have a computer in the household.

10.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age that does not have an Internet Subscriptions in the household is 11.0% and where there is no computer in the household is 0.6%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race,

ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

King Williams County, VA, all Points Broadband, and Dominion Energy have announced a partnership to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in unserved locations in the County. All Points has secured $1.5 million in federal funding to construct the first phase of its fiber-to-the-home network in King William. The partners are excited to extend broadband access to these areas and are committed to their ongoing effort to help unserved Virginians. All Points and Dominion Energy will collaborate to complete a network plan for submission and approval. King William residents can visit fiber.allpointsbroadband.com to register for future updates. operations by 2050.

11. Digital Divide in Stafford County

11.1 Stafford County has a population estimate of 163,380, according to the U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 4.1% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 67.7% of the county population is White. The African American population is about 21.9%, and the Hispanic population is 16.3%. Some 5.4% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Stafford County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 1.8%, while 4.2% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 11.0%.

- **The following information was retrieved from the last updated US Census numbers of 2021(S2802), 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables**

11.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Stafford County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does have internet subscription is 1.2%, while 0.9% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that does have internet subscription is 1.3%, while 0.9% do not have a computer in the household. There is no number or percentages of data listed for African and Hispanic/Latinos, regarding an internet subscription or computer in the household.

11.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age that do not have an Internet subscription for work is 13.7%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections services.

Stafford County, VA, has partnered with Comcast to bring high-speed internet to over 600 homes in the county's western region. The $5.7 million project is made possible by a $3.4 million VATI grant and is expected to be completed in 18 months. This is not the first time Stafford has worked to bridge the digital divide, and Comcast is committed to connecting residents and businesses to the digital economy.

12. Digital Divide in Spotsylvania County

12.1 The Spotsylvania County has a population estimate of 146,688, according to the U.S. Census quick facts. Its population grew 4.7% between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2022. Some 73.4% of the county population is White. The African American population is about 18.7%, and the Hispanic population is 12.7%. Some 7.2% of the population lives under the poverty line. The following data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Spotsylvania County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also, in some way, reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when accessing a computer or the Internet. The percentage that does not have internet is 6.8%, while 3.6% do not have a computer in the home. The percentage of the population under 18 years of age is 24.1%.

- **The following information was retrieved from the last updated US Census numbers of 2021(S2802), 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables**

12.2 According to the US Census 2021, the following information was retrieved. The data presents the number and the percentage of households without computers and/or internet in Spotsylvania County. The raw numbers can be impacted by the size of the populations in different parts of the city, and they also in some way reflect the population density in the areas. The percentages show the level of deprivation or isolation when it comes to having access to either a computer or internet. The percentage that does not have internet subscription is 0.9%, while 0.9% do not have a computer in the household. When looking at race -White (alone) the percentage that does have internet subscription is 0.8%, while 0.8% do not have a computer in the household. There is no number or percentages of data listed for African and Hispanic/Latinos, regarding an internet subscription or computer in the household.

12.3 The percentage of the population under 18 years of age living in households that do not have an Internet subscription is 0.3%. The digital divide is debilitating for any population group, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, or other determining demographics. The focus on the population under 18 years of age has emerged because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to receive educational services has been a function of one's ability to access the high-speed internet broadband connections service.

Spotsylvania County, VA, Virginia, is investing $2.9 billion over four years to improve broadband access and affordability, promote competition among internet providers, and achieve universal coverage by 2028. However, challenges remain in qualifying for grants and accurately mapping unserved areas. Without broadband being defined as a public utility, regulation, and expansion will continue to be limited.

Residents in rural Spotsylvania County now have access to expanded high-speed internet services through a partnership with DataStream Broadband, Inc. Marking the first time 5G service has been offered in rural Virginia, with broadband services now available in the Wilderness and Belmont areas. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the necessity of fast and reliable internet for individuals working remotely, receiving education online, accessing healthcare virtually, and running small enterprises. DataStream services are working to bridge the digital divide throughout the county, providing rural communities with access to important services and opportunities to participate fully.

Part II. Broadband Service Provider and Percentage of Coverage Areas Access

BroadbandUSA is a push to initiative supports efforts to expand access to broadband services and ensure their effective utilization across the entire United States; this program has been initiated by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). This program aims to assist state, local, and tribal governments, as well as industry and nonprofit organizations, in improving broadband connectivity and ensuring all citizens have access to the digital world.

November 16, 2023, The U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner and time Kaine (both Democratics Representatives for the State of Virginia announced a $4,999,975.50 for broadband expansion across the state of Virginia through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Let us uncover the progress within our region! The progress to bring broadband to our region has already begun, in progress, and/or completed.

- The City of Williamsburg, VA has 100% internet connection access through one of these service providers listed below.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Cox Communications
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - HughesNet ~ Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite
    - Unlimitedville

- James City County, VA 99.97% has internet connection access through one of these service providers listed below.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Cox Communications
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - HughesNet ~ Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite
    - Unlimitedville

Technology Type

DSL:

DSL provides internet service via phone cables and is up to ten times faster than dial-up service.

Cable:

Cable provides internet speeds faster than DSL through the same cables used for cable TV.

Satellite:

Satellite internet is widely available, but offers slower speeds due to a far-traveling signal.

Fiber:

Fiber relies on glass strands to relay digital code and is much faster than both DSL and cable.

- King and Queen County time internet connection access through one of these service providers listed below. The coverage area is unknow at this time.
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - HughesNet ` Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite
    - XStarlink ~ Satellite
    - AlwaysON ~ Fix Wireless
    - Wilkes & RiverStreet Internet

- New Kent County has 96.38% internet connection access through one of these service providers listed below.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Cox Communications
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - HughesNet
    - Viasat ~ Satellite
    - Unlimitedville
- York County, Va has 100% internet connection access through one of these service providers listed below.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Cox Communications
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - HughesNet ~ Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite
    - Unlimitedville

- Charles City County, VA Coverage is available for 86% of Charles City, VA. ViaSat offers the fastest download speed of 150 Mbps with 100.00% coverage of Charles City, VA. DSL coverage is widely available in Charles City, VA, since 1 internet provider offers service here.
- internet connection access through one of these service providers listed below.
    - Verizon ~ DSL and Television
    - HughesNet ~ Satellite and Phone
    - Viasat ~ Satellite and Phone
    - Acelanet ~ Fixed Wireless

- King William, VA, there are 4 residential internet providers covering 89.30% of the city. The average home can get speeds up to 614 Mbps. Through one of these service providers listed below.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - HughesNet ~ Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite
    - Xfinity ~ Satellite
    - Atlantic
    - Dish ~ Satellite
    - Direct TV ~ Satellite

- Caroline County, VA there are 6 residential internet providers covering **90.89%** of the county. The average home can get speeds up to 865 Mbps.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - Xfinity ~ Satellite
    - Atlantic ~ Cable
    - Dish ~ Satellite
    - iWiSP ~ Satellite

- Hanover County, VA there are 6 residential internet providers covering **90.89%** of the county. The average home can get speeds up to 865 Mbps.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - Xfinity ~ Satellite
    - Atlantic ~ Cable
    - Dish ~ Satellite
    - iWiSP ~ Satellite

- Fredericksburg, VA has **100%**, broadband coverage in Fredericksburg is comparable to the rest of Virginia - 97%, and comparable to broadband coverage across the U.S. - 95%.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - Cox Communications
    - HughesNet ~Satellite
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - Xfinity ~ Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite

- Spotsylvania, VA has **100%**, broadband coverage in Spotsylvania Courthouse is comparable to the rest of Virginia - 97%, and comparable to broadband coverage across the U.S%.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - HughesNet ~Satellite
    - Verizon Home Internet
    - EarthLink 5G
    - Xfinity ~ Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite
- Stafford, VA has broadband coverage in 97 the rest of Virginia - 97%, and comparable to broadband coverage across the U.S%.
    - T-Mobile Home Internet
    - HughesNet ~Satellite
    - Verizon Fios
    - XStarlink
    - AlwaysON ~ Wifi
    - KGi Communications ~ Fixed Wireless
    - Xfinity ~ Satellite
    - Viasat ~ Satellite

Control-Lick see what services are provided in your zip code.
TV and Internet Providers in James City County, VA | BestNeighborhood.org

Control-Lick here to access the Commonwealth Broadband Connection
Commonwealth Connection - Virginia Broadband Map (commonwealth-connection.com)

Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

Part l Efforts to Distribute the Broadband Survey

- ***June 19, 2023***. Staff attend the Juneteenth Freedom Celebration 2023, sponsored by the Village Initiative for Equity in Education, 901 N. Boundary Street, Williamsburg, VA 23188. Handed out 100 surveys and flyers and explain the reason for the need for broadband survey.
- ***June 22,2023***. WJCC-CAA made efforts to reach out to as many people as possible in our region. The agency submitted the broadband flyer to Peachjar.com with the links to view and complete the broadband survey. The flyer was accepted by a total of 18 schools. **WJCC-Public Schools the survey was sent to nine elementary schools and Stafford County Schools** the survey was sent to nine Title-one schools. The broadband survey reached a total of **17,459 emails**; these emails represented families of students that attended the 18 schools.
- Throughout the month of **June and July 2023**, the broadband survey was sent to over 300 stakeholders recipients email address throughout the 12 regions (this includes all schools, county's offices contacts).
- ***July 10, 2023***.The Agency traveled to Hanover County, Charles City County, and New Kent County and visit with:
    - *i.* Hanover County Parks & Rec Center, 7515 Library Dr., Hanover, VA 23069. Drop off 26 surveys and flyers for parents of children attending the recreation center.
    - *ii.* Hanover County Social Service, 12304 Washington Hwy, Ashland, VA 23005. There were a total of 50 surveys and flyers left on sight.
    - *iii.* Pamunkey Regional Library (Ashland Branch) 201 S. Railroad Ave, Ashland, 23005.
    - *iv.* Hanover County Central Rappahannock Regional Library, 7527 Library Dr. Hanover, VA 23609.Survey and Flyers left on sight.
    - v. Charles City County Park & Rec Center, 8320 Ruthville Rd, Providence Forge, VA 23140, and left survey and flyers to be completed.
    - vi. Charles City County Social Services, 10900 Courthouse Rd., Charles City, VA 23030. Survey and Flyers were left on sight.
    - vii. Charles City County Heritage Public Library, 10790 Courthouse Rd, Charles City, VA 23030. Survey and flyers were left on sight.
    - viii. New Kent County Parks & Rec Center, 11809 New Kent Hwy Ste. 4, New Kent, VA 23124. Survey & Flyers were left on sight.
    - ix. Fredericksburg County - Fredericksburg Economic Development, 706 Caroline St. Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Surveys and flyers were left on sight.
    - x. King Williams - Pamunkey County YMCA YMCA, 3135 King Williams Ave, West Point VA 23181.
- ***July 11, 2023.*** The Agency traveled to York County, and James City County visited with:
    - *xi.* York County Yorktown Library, 8500 George Washington Memorial. Hwy, Yorktown, VA 23692. Survey and flyers left on sight.
    - *xii.* York County Yorktown Square, 100 Rivermeade Ct., Yorktown, VA 23690. There were 50 copies of the surveys left with Assistant Property Manager, that provided to tenants, but did not get none of the flyers back.
      James City County Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail, 9320 Merrimac Trail, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Unable to just leave the flyers.

xiii. James City County Grove Christian Outreach Center, 8800 Pocahontas Trail, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Left over 100 surveys and flyers and received two surveys back.

- ***July 19, 2023***. The Agency attended a summer event:

xiv. Frank Abrams Rec Center hosted by Williamsburg Regional Library- visitors completed 38 surveys in-person.

Requirement 2: Coordinate and host focus groups with your clientele and representatives of local and regional organizations that work with the covered population.

Part ll - Interviews:

New Kent Community Round Table

March 9, 2023

I attended the New Kent Community Round Table on March 9, 2023. During the discussion, attendees discussed multiple issues important to county residents related to daycare, transportation, and broadband access. Residents shared concerns about the cost of connecting to the broadband line from the home. Often costs were exorbitant, making the option to access service unaffordable.

Williamsburg Baptist Church. Williamsburg, VA

July 10, 2023

There was a total of 13 people in attendance.

Group of Business: Challenges

Review listed of questions. The majority of the business did not have any issues with access to the broadband service. However, their main concerns were that are some locations within the company that single was not the best and they use an antenna to boost internet single. One individual who works restoring services to internet and companies stated often people are not aware that there are internet boosters that will help to fix some issues the internet services. Additionally, note that they have experience more issues when assessing the internet with home services. Another common issue was the concern for some of their clients who cannot afford the high-speed internet.

Branch Manager/Librarian

Pamunkey Regional Library

July 10, 2023

Hotspot/Laptop Bundles

Libraries have about 250 hotspots available for checkout across ten sites. There are also 150 laptop bundles. Hotspot/laptop bundles consist of one (1) Verizon or T-Mobile hotspot and one (1) Chromebook in a laptop sleeve with chargers for both pieces of equipment. Chromebooks are laptops that run Google's Chrome operating system (OS).

The checkout period for a hotspot/laptop bundle is 90 days. There are no renewals. Hotspots are automatically deactivated if not returned.

Challenges

Libraries have difficulty getting the word out about their programs. Often people falsely assume that libraries are outdated and that they have not kept up with the modern, digital age. However, libraries are equipped to serve patrons and offer collaborative spaces and labs where digital learning can occur.

While some patrons think the library is "just books," the library has a huge digital footprint that includes free access to audiobooks, e-books, Adobe Creative Suite, and a digital media library. Patrons can also access wireless printing, assistance with email set-up/sending emails, and video conferencing. Public access computers are available along with unsecure, public WIFI that is accessible for patrons to use with their personal devices.
Libraries try to get the word out about their programs but sponsoring community-building activities to market the library as a positive place in the community. They sponsored meetups, teacher events, neighborhood events, and community events. A recent community event had 250 attendees.

Branch Manager, Pamunkey Regional Library
July 10, 2023
The quality of broadband service in Hanover County often depends on the weather. While residents may always be connected, their service may slow down during inclement weather.
Library patrons feel comfortable and are open to receiving assistance with digital access from library staff when needed. Services are currently provided in English only. The library would benefit from more Chromebooks and Hotspots to reduce the amount of time patrons wait on the waitlist. Patrons wait approximately two weeks for a mobile hotspot.

Central Rappahannock Regional Library
July 10, 2023
The library provides free, unsecured WIFI and offers hotspots and Chromebooks for checkout for up to 2 weeks. Patrons who do not have a printer at home can come to the library to print emails, forms, and access government websites. Patrons also use onsite computers extensively. When patrons log off the computer, each device deletes all files and history from the device to protect confidential information.

About 35% of patrons are aging, and about half of this group require assistance to use the library's technology resources. A one-hour computer basics course is offered to ageing patrons.
While most patrons speak English, the second most common language spoken by patrons is Spanish. Speakers of other languages are available based on the individual needs of patrons.

Fredericksburg Economic Development
July 10, 2023
Economic Development, Fredericksburg, VA
In addition to infrastructure such as roads, rail, airports, and broadband, there is a growing recognition that economic development also needs to capitalize on demographic trends that show people drawn to urban areas. Surveys show that 80 percent of Americans desire walkable communities with transportation options. This high percentage includes younger workers beginning to establish themselves and older generations looking to age in place. In this context, localities are encouraged to establish and enhance their sense of place, attracting residents that constitute a quality workforce that will, in turn, draw businesses looking to hire them. Employers are not only looking at the available infrastructure but the quality of the local talent.
Broadband

Affordable access to telecommunication services is recognized as basic infrastructure, and the high-performance network capable of providing electronic services is called broadband. The City of Fredericksburg is well covered by broadband service, but the Northern Virginia/Washington D.C. area is home to many enterprises that support government agencies and require, as an absolute necessity, secure telecom access with redundancies that guarantee uninterrupted service. Many firms looking to relocate or establish themselves in Fredericksburg must have those specific capabilities.
The Fredericksburg business community is seeking partnerships with the regional planning commission to provide enhanced broadband service, and the city should consider whether it will participate in this expansion of the local broadband capability. Goals for Public Services, Public Facilities, and Preserved Open Space.

Fredericksburg plans to encourage Internet providers to build out their fiber-optic and broadband cable infrastructure to provide the fastest and most reliable service possible to all citizens and businesses.

Pamunkey County YMCA
July 10, 2023
WIFI access in the region is expensive, according to employees and patrons of the Pamunkey County YMCA. Costs are $120 to $130 per month. Three companies provide broadband service to the area: Hughes Net, Red Tip, and Viasat. Respondents shared that Cox and Direct TV serve West Point. Service across the area is hindered by inclement weather, particularly when it rains, and the internet slows.
To access the internet, respondents use hotspots and their Verizon phones. Some noted that they “can barely get by" with slow speeds. The library in West Point was noted as being useful. It was a great place to do schoolwork. A young person at the YMCA shared that when he “wants to watch TV, mom has to turn on her phone.” Residents often cannot download movies quickly, and streaming shows are often glitchy.

King & Queen Department of Social Services
July 10, 2023
I spoke with a representative of the Department of Social Services. He personally used a router, hotspot, and modem to access the internet. His connection to the internet was admittedly spotty. However, it was usually good enough to play video games, stream videos, and attend online college.
He used both the computer and cell phone to access the internet. He was comfortable with computers, having built them previously. Broadband access was critical in his life, particularly for attending school and communicating with friends. He shared that “way out here in the country,” it is difficult to meet people, so having a good broadband connection is critical.

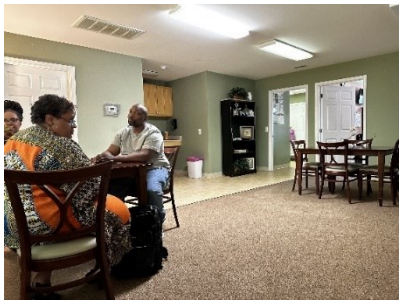
West Point Small Business Owner
July 10, 2023
A small business owner in West Point shared that he used Cox internet service and was pleased with it, noting that Cox recently cleared up a problem in the area successfully.
The owner relied on broadband services to manage the retail shop, used broadband to stay connected, streamed music, ran credit card payments, video conferences, posted social media marketing, and conducted business-related research.

Powhatan Apartment
June 29, 2023.

Powhatan Apartment is a target audience for this within the lower income bracket. There were two people interviewed. The tenants that do not have internet service are because they cannot afford the service.

Challenges

The community has issues with the internet service performance, some areas services are slow and buffing.



The residents found it challenging to conduct home school during the COVID-19 pandemic. Senior residents need help talking to the Doctor via phone or telehealth and prefer in-person doctor visits.

One individual stated that most people they are in contact with use their phones to gain access to the internet.

Seven residents completed the survey before the meeting and thought they could skip it if they conducted the study.

Pamunkey Regional Library
July 11, 2023

- Chromebooks and hotspots are available for
- Hotspot/laptop bundles consist of one (1) Verizon or T-Mobile hotspot and one (1) Chromebook in a laptop sleeve with chargers for both pieces of equipment. Chromebooks are laptops that run Google's Chrome operating system (OS).
- The checkout period for a hotspot/laptop bundle is 90 days. There are no renewals. Hotspots are automatically deactivated if not returned.
- The library would benefit from more hotspots and Chromebooks to serve the predominantly rural area with a high need for WIFI access. Traffic was slow in the library. During a 15 to 20-minute interview, two patrons entered the library. Most patrons to the library use the WIFI.
- Caroline County
- Lady Smith Library
- Verizon and T-Mobile have the best coverage in Caroline County, although Verizon does not cover certain areas. One-on-one classes are offered at the Lady Smith Branch library.

Broadband Listening Session: Williamsburg-James City County Community Action Agency (WJCC-CAA)
3300 Acorn Street, Suite A, Williamsburg, VA 23188

July 12, 2023
Attendees:

- WJCC-CAA Staff (Wmbg, JCC, & New Kent)
- DHCD
- WJCC-CAA, Manager
- WJCC-CAA, CEO
- Williamsburg Regional Library
- York County
- House of Mercy

Comments from the Broadband Listening Session:

- **JCC Library:** JCC Library checks out hotspots and laptops to patrons for one week. Hotspots are used for job interviews, telehealth appointments, etc. Digital literacy training is provided. Recently 200 people participated, 95 of which were in their 80's or 90's.
- The most significant barrier to accessing broadband services is pricing and reliability. Local providers are Cox and Glofiber.
- **Williamsburg-James City County School (WJCC):** WJCC offers a discounted rate for broadband services to income-eligible parents. According to attendees, the school system has yet to budget for paper and instead directs parents and students to resources on the Internet. Children suspended from school may not have access to broadband services, resulting in their falling further and further behind. School-issued devices often need to be updated with obsolete software. Students with disabilities may have "exacerbated struggles with technology" that causes them to fall further behind. Computers also drop students, making it appear that students are not engaged when, in actuality, it is a technical issue.
- **Williamsburg/JCC:** Highland Park is a predominantly African American Area with slower service. The vicinity around Camp Perry often needs more assistance. GLofiber is competition for Cos, but "Cox doesn't care!" Recently an older adult was charged $85 per hour for a Cox service call because batteries were low in her remote.
- **York County:** York County has access to fast broadband internet. Students are encouraged to take their own devices to school. About 6% of residents rely on their smartphone or tablet. Phone calls are often dropped in Lackey, a predominantly African American neighborhood in York County.
- **Telehealth:** When people try to use telehealth services, they often need help hearing or seeing the healthcare provider due to limited broadband access.
- **Communication about broadband services:** We must build awareness of services for senior citizens, students, etc. Marketing can occur through non-digital options such as postcards, word of mouth, social services, parent meetings, and community action.

Broadband Discussion: Williamsburg Health Foundation Meeting
July 12, 2023

Attendees:
- Department of Social Services, WMBG & JCC
- CDR
- WJCC-CAA
- WJC Schools
- WHF Staff

Comments from the Broadband Discussion:
- "If you don't have good credit, you can't get broadband."
- "Websites need to be mobile friendly."
- Digital access is a social determinant of health.
- There are digital access gaps in Virginia.
- We must teach people how to use technology.
- "Last mile coverage" from the street to the house is problematic for some.
- Some families must view their medical records on a cell phone.
- The city was trying to get broadband in Williamsburg, but there was little interest.
- Broadband can facilitate virtual medical visits at a reduced rate.
- Veterans might not go to a specific place for services but would be willing to participate from their homes.
- A local nonprofit organization has noted that parents are addicted to screens, and screen-dependent babies and children are currently appearing.
- "Collect data on the things that matter. Help get things done." Key data collection questions include: How would we measure productivity? The intensity of services? The quality of services?

Broadband Discussion: Williamsburg-James City County Community Preschool Taskforce Meeting
3300 Acorn Street, Suite A, Williamsburg, VA 23188
July 13, 2023
Attendees:

- Wmbg Social Services
- JCC Social Services
- CDR
-WJC Schools

Comments:

- COX: Glofiber is currently installing fiberoptic lines out in New Kent. Service is reported to be reliable and faster.
- Affordability for families: Free devices and the internet are provided to low-income families.
- Young, energetic professionals will not tolerate slow, unstable broadband networks.
- Families often access the internet with only their cell phones. This presents a barrier to access because critical forms are not accessible because they are formatted for computer screens.

Broadband Listening Session: Atlee Branch Lib
Pamunkey Regional Library
Atlee Branch Library
9212 Rutlandshire Drive
Mechanicsville, VA 23116 (Hanover County)
July 21, 2023
Attendees:

- Charles City County Administrator
- Charles City County Assistant Administrator
- New Kent, County Administrator
- New Kent, Chamber of Commerce
- Cole, DHCD
- Thrive Virginia
- WJCC-CAA, Manager
- WJCC-CAA, CEO

King and Queen County: King and Queen County was described as being "out there." There are no grocery stores. Gas stations and other stores were said to be at the northern end of the county. Few businesses at the top and end of the county resulted in limited employment opportunities. The middle of the county was described as a "business desert." Agriculture and logging are prominent in the area, with "older families holding on to land." There is one community space in the county and no recreational facility. For those that enjoy a rural setting, provisions could be made for those who telework.
Currently, broadband providers are putting down lines. Cell phones are used frequently to access the internet.

King William County: A King William County resident shared that she had no broadband at her house. Breezeline, a cable internet provider based in Massachusetts, has put down lines in her area but stopped three miles from her home several years ago. She consistently relies upon a hotspot, cell phone, and a Verizon jet pack for internet access.

Thrive Virginia is in the process of establishing a Family Resource Center in a rural area that will provide computer labs, assist with job applications, and provide meeting space.

New Kent: The county has received $33 million to ensure that every house in the county has broadband service. The project is 60% complete, with 3200 homes currently without access. County goals include connecting the unconnected and upgrading service from coaxial cable to broadband.

Charles City County: Federal and state funding models are challenging. Charles City was able to use funds to connect two-thirds of the county with Comcast. They faced implementation challenges related to matching funds, and due to rising costs, the awarded funds only covered about 50% of originally planned expenditures.

Charles City County has found it challenging to introduce a 2nd provider. Broadband providers in rural areas do not want competition. They are more willing to come into an area when they are guaranteed the entire region. However, some discussed that when providers are "the only game in town," they are not as

responsive when problems arise. Often with Comcast, for example, there is no service in your area, but my neighbor has it across the street." Small, rural communities have expectations for service. When issues arise with the broadband provider, residents will call county administration after finding no resolution at the broadband call center.

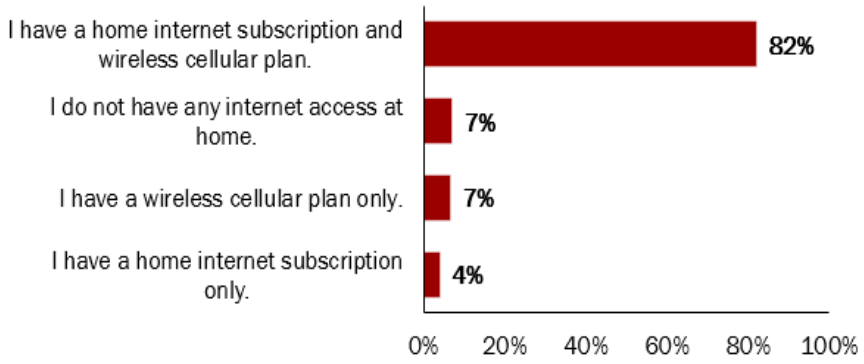
Communication with Constituents about Broadband Services: Counties offer services related to digital literacy because residents "do not understand the process." Some segments of the population are "hard to reach in an educational setting," so counties partner with cultural organizations to serve constituents with unique barriers related to English as a second language or veteran status, for instance.
There is limited to no community space to host digital literacy classes. Counties use libraries, schools, gyms, and sheriff's offices to host events.
Getting the word out about events is also challenging since social media marketing may be inherently flawed when trying to reach people with no or limited access to broadband services. This population does not respond well to "old school ways of communication" like the local newspaper. Generally, word of mouth and sending information at home with children works best.

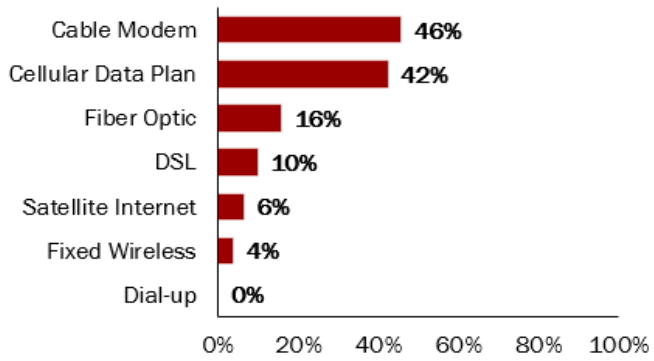
Comments from the Broadband Listening Session:

- "Stakeholders go to the meetings (like this one), not people with lived experiences."
- A workforce can be raised to help install lines laid in rural areas. They can be trained in maintenance as well.
- Seniors and other people without smartphones or computers have few or no places to go to access the Internet.
- Telehealth visits are required before an individual can see a doctor in King William. Doctors charge for this service.
- RING doorbells do not always work in rural areas because of poor internet connections.
- It is essential that we understand the nature of digital opportunity. It includes infrastructure, equity, access, privacy& security, affordability, and use.
- "Grandkids helping grandparents go online."
- Our discussion today is about "Where should the money go? And what does the digital divide look like?"
- During the COVID pandemic, many had no broadband access at all. School systems provided hotspots. K-12 students in both King William and King & Queen counties are "still struggling to recover from learning loss."
- We must be aware of discrepancies between upload and download speeds.
- There are internet access centers at each school in certain counties.
- Broadband would "… allow access to day treatment for in-school counseling."

Summary of the Regional Broadband Survey

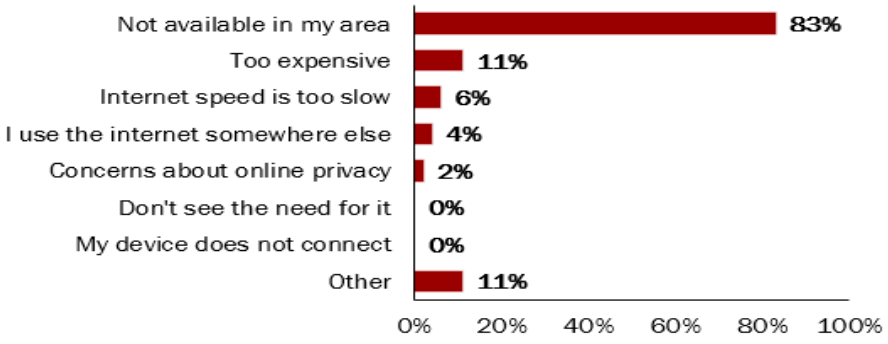
The WJCC-CAA partnership with the DCHD, to conduct the Broadband Survey across twelve counties demonstrating that there is still work to be done to ensure that everyone has access to high-speed internet services that is also affordable. The results of the survey indicated from those who participated that the majority of households use some form of home internet service and wireless cellular plan.



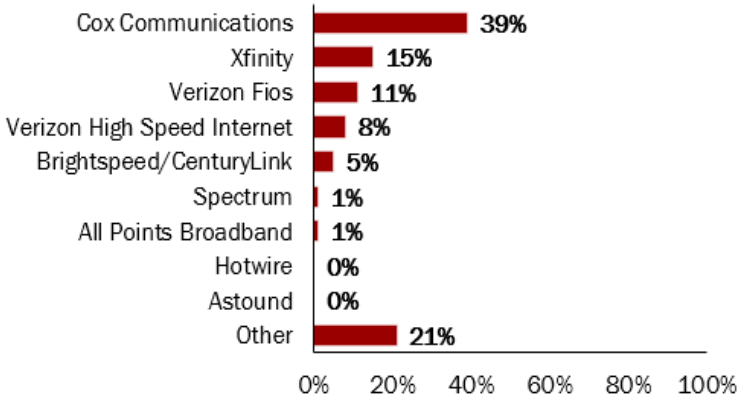


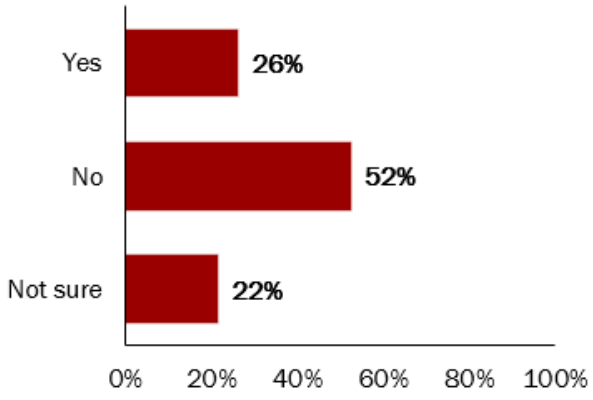
Most of the respondents access the internet using a cable modem and almost an equal number of the respondents use their cellular data plan.

Respondents that live in our rural areas still do not have access to the internet in their homes.

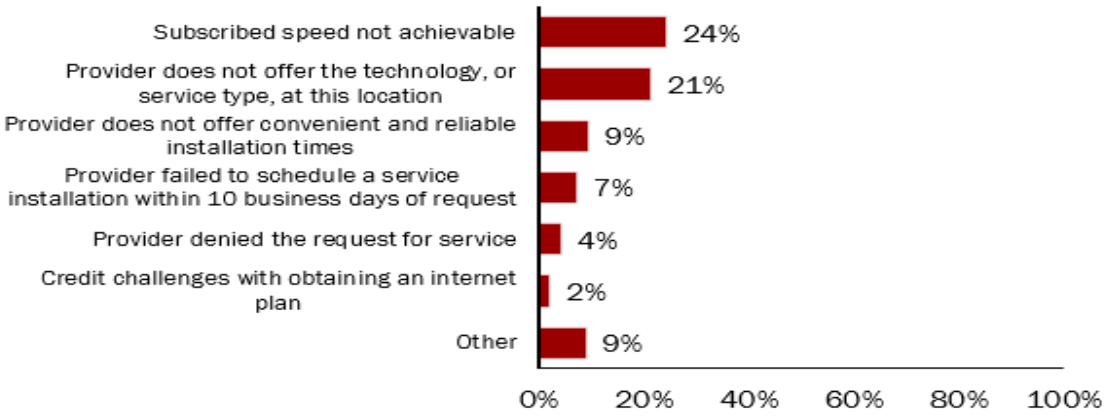


Thirty-nine percent of the respondents to the broadband survey use Cox Communication as their internet provider, while fifty-two percent are not willing to pay more for better internet service.





The more common problem is the speed of internet service they receive.



The survey has many details, and here are some of the key points. Most respondents were white, lived in rural areas, and were sixty years old or older. As of August 19, 2023, four hundred and ninety-one people have completed the survey in this region. Most of the respondents who participated in the broadband survey were from James City County, VA. Unfortunately, we missed hearing from some community members, which would have provided more detailed affordability data. However, we hope to have future opportunities to gather this information.

Implementation

Part I

Developing a comprehensive implementation strategy to bridge the digital divide requires careful planning and consideration of various factors. Below is an outline that addresses the barriers to digital participation while establishing goals, ensuring sustainability, and incorporating evaluation mechanisms:

1. ** Defining the Strategy's Goals and Objectives**

Goal 1: Ensure equitable access to digital resources and opportunities for all populations.
Goal 2: Enhance digital literacy and skills across communities.
Goal 3: Provide affordable access to devices and connectivity.
Goal 4: Establish robust technical support for users.
Goal 5: Foster effective digital navigation and online safety awareness.

2. Identifying Covered Populations:

The specific populations that the strategy aims to cover, consider factors such as socio-economic status, rural/urban locations, age groups, and marginalized communities. These populations include the following:

- Low-income
- Aging (60+)
- Incarcerated individuals (non-federally)
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities

- Individuals with a language barrier/low literacy
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in rural areas.

3. Core Activities:

- Digital Infrastructure Enhancement: Collaborate with telecommunications companies and governments to expand broadband coverage in underserved areas.
- Digital Literacy Programs: Develop training modules that cover basic to advanced digital skills, including online communication, internet safety, digital citizenship, and using various software and tools.
- Affordability Initiatives: Partner with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to offer subsidized plans or discounted connectivity for low-income individuals and families.
- Device Provision: Organize initiatives to provide affordable or free devices to individuals who lack access.
- Technical Support: Establish helplines, online forums, or local centers where users can receive assistance for technical issues.
- Digital Navigation Resources: Create user-friendly guides and resources to help individuals navigate the digital landscape effectively.

4. Sustainability and Effectiveness:

- Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborate with private sector companies, non-profit organizations, and government agencies to share resources, knowledge, and funding for sustainable implementation.
- Community Engagement: Involve local community leaders and organizations in designing and implementing programs to ensure they meet specific needs and remain relevant.
- Long-term Funding: Advocate for dedicated funding from government budgets, grants, and corporate social responsibility initiatives to ensure ongoing support.
- Capacity Building: Train local trainers and educators who can continue digital literacy efforts even after the initial implementation phase.

5. Evaluation and Update Mechanisms:

- Regular Assessments: Conduct periodic assessments to measure the progress of each goal and objective.
- Data Collection: Gather quantitative data on digital adoption rates, digital skills improvement, and access to devices and connectivity.
- Feedback Loops: Establish mechanisms for users to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the programs and identify areas for improvement.
- Adaptive Implementation: Based on evaluations and feedback, update the strategy to address emerging challenges and incorporate new technologies and best practices.

6. Monitoring and Reporting:

- Designated Monitoring Body: Create a body responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring progress, and reporting to relevant stakeholders.
- Transparency: Regularly publish reports detailing achievements, challenges faced, and the way forward.

By developing and implementing this holistic strategy, we will work towards bridging the digital divide and ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to participate fully in the digital world.

Part II

The proposed implementation strategy aims to address gaps in existing regional, local, and private efforts by taking a holistic and collaborative approach. Here's how the strategy addresses these gaps:

1. Comprehensive Approach:

Existing efforts might focus on individual aspects of the digital divide, such as connectivity or digital literacy, without considering the interplay between various barriers. The proposed strategy recognizes that addressing the digital divide requires a comprehensive approach that tackles multiple barriers simultaneously: affordability, devices, digital skills, technical support, and navigation. By integrating all these elements, the strategy ensures a more effective and holistic solution.

2. Collaboration and Partnerships:

Many local and private efforts lack collaboration with other stakeholders, leading to duplication of efforts or limited impact. The proposed strategy emphasizes public-private partnerships, involving governments, non-profit organizations, community leaders, and corporations. This collaborative approach enables the pooling of resources, sharing of expertise, and leveraging existing networks to reach a wider audience and create a more coordinated effort.

3. Targeted Interventions:

The strategy addresses gaps by identifying specific covered populations that might have been overlooked by existing efforts. It tailors interventions to the unique needs of these populations, whether they are rural communities, marginalized groups, or specific age demographics. By focusing on the needs of each group, the strategy ensures that no one is left behind.

4. Sustainability Planning:

While some local and private efforts have achieved short-term gains, they may struggle to maintain impact over the long term. The proposed strategy emphasizes sustainability by involving multiple stakeholders in planning, funding, and implementation. This diversification of support reduces dependency on a single source and increases the likelihood of ongoing support, ensuring that the initiatives remain effective beyond the initial implementation phase.

5. Regular Evaluation and Adaptation:

Gaps in existing efforts can arise from an inability to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging challenges. The proposed strategy addresses this by incorporating mechanisms for regular evaluation and feedback. By continuously assessing progress, gathering user feedback, and staying attuned to technological advancements, the strategy can adapt to evolving needs and maintain its relevance over time.

6. Data-Driven Decision Making:

Many existing efforts lack a data-driven approach, making it difficult to measure impact and identify areas that need improvement. The proposed strategy emphasizes data collection and analysis to monitor progress, measure the success of interventions, and identify gaps that might arise during implementation. This enables evidence-based decision-making and allows for timely adjustments to the strategy as needed.

7. Inclusive Design:

The strategy aims to bridge gaps by adopting an inclusive design approach that considers the diverse needs, abilities, and preferences of individuals. This ensures that digital resources, training materials, and support mechanisms are accessible and user-friendly for all, including those with disabilities or different levels of digital familiarity.

In summary, the proposed implementation strategy addresses gaps in existing efforts by taking a comprehensive, collaborative, and data-driven approach. It targets specific populations, fosters sustainability, and regularly evaluates and adapts to ensure that the barriers to digital participation are effectively addressed across regions, communities, and populations.

Part III

a. Engagement with Workforce Agencies:

The region recognizes the critical role that workforce agencies, such as regional workforce agencies and local workforce boards, play in connecting individuals with opportunities for skill development and employment. To accomplish the implementation strategy, the region plans to engage and partner with the following agencies:

1. Virginia Peninsula Community College
2. SCORE
3. Local Chambers of Commerce
4. Virginia Department of Social Services

WJCC-CAA will partner with these agencies in the following ways:

- Collaborative Programming: The region will collaborate with workforce agencies to integrate digital literacy and technology training into existing workforce development programs. This will ensure that job seekers have the necessary digital skills to succeed in a technology-driven job market.

- Resource Sharing: The region and workforce agencies will share resources, including training materials, curriculum, and expertise, to create a seamless pathway for individuals to acquire both digital skills and job-specific skills.

- Referral Systems: Workforce agencies will refer individuals who lack digital skills to the region's digital literacy programs, ensuring a continuous flow of individuals seeking to improve their digital capabilities.

b. Partnership with Labor Organizations and Community-Based Organizations:

To enhance the implementation strategy's reach and effectiveness, the region will collaborate with labor organizations and community-based organizations that have a strong presence and understanding of local communities. Here's how the partnership will unfold:

Tailored Outreach: Labor organizations and community-based organizations often have deep insights into the needs and barriers faced by specific populations. The region will work with these partners to design targeted outreach campaigns that address the unique challenges faced by their constituencies.

Local Advocacy: Labor organizations and community-based organizations can advocate for the importance of digital skills and support the strategy's goals in their communities. This advocacy will raise awareness and drive participation.

Resource Allocation: By partnering with these organizations, the region can tap into existing networks, spaces, and resources to host digital literacy workshops, access to devices, and other related activities.

c. Collaboration with Institutions of Higher Learning:

Institutions of higher learning including four-year colleges, universities, community colleges, and training providers, are valuable resources for providing specialized training and educational opportunities. The region will collaborate with these institutions in the following ways:

Curriculum Integration: The region will work with educational institutions to integrate digital literacy components into their curricula. This could include embedding digital skills training into existing courses or creating new courses specifically focused on digital literacy.

Training Partnerships: Collaborative workshops, seminars, and training sessions can be organized, where educational institutions contribute their expertise in teaching and technology education to enhance the region's digital literacy efforts.

Credentialing: Institutions of higher learning can provide recognized certifications or credentials for individuals who complete digital literacy and technology training programs, enhancing their employability.

Resource Sharing: Educational institutions can provide access to online learning platforms, resources, and educational tools that support the region's digital literacy programs.

Inclusive Approach Across Partnerships:

Throughout all partnerships with workforce agencies, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and institutions of higher learning, the region will emphasize an inclusive approach. This means ensuring that programs, resources, and training are accessible to individuals of all backgrounds, abilities, and demographics, further promoting equitable digital inclusion.

By engaging and partnering with these various stakeholders, the region can leverage its expertise, resources, and networks to accomplish the implementation strategy effectively and address the barriers to digital participation across the region.

Part IV

Creating a detailed timeline for the implementation of the plan is crucial to ensure smooth execution and accountability. Below is a general timeline that outlines key milestones and activities over a multi-year period. Keep in mind that the timeline can be adjusted based on the region's specific circumstances, resources, and priorities.

Year 1. Quarter 1: Months 1-3
Stakeholder Engagement: Identify and convene key stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profits, educational institutions, and private sector partners.
Needs Assessment: Conduct a thorough assessment of covered populations' digital needs, identifying specific barriers and challenges.

Year 1. Quarter 2: Months 4-6
Strategy Development: Collaboratively design the detailed implementation strategy, setting goals, objectives, and core activities.
Funding Allocation: Secure funding from government budgets, grants, and corporate sponsorships to support the strategy's execution.

Year 1. Quarter 3: Months 7-9
Resource Preparation: Develop digital literacy training modules, technical support materials, and outreach campaigns.
Partnerships: Formalize partnerships with workforce agencies, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and educational institutions.

Year 1. Quarter 4: Months 10-12
Launch Digital Literacy Programs: Initiate digital skills training workshops, online courses, and community-based training sessions.
Device Distribution: Begin distributing devices to individuals who lack access.

Year 2: Quarter 1: Months 13-15
Program Expansion: Scale up digital literacy programs to reach a wider audience, focusing on underserved communities.

Continuous Improvement: Gather user feedback and make adjustments to training materials and delivery methods.

Year 2: Quarter 2: Months 16-18
Technical Support Implementation: Establish helplines, online forums, and local centers for technical assistance.
Online Safety Awareness: Launch campaigns to educate participants about online safety and digital privacy.

Year 2: Quarter 3: Months 19-21
Workforce Integration: Collaborate with workforce agencies to embed digital skills training into existing job readiness programs.
Accessibility Enhancement: Ensure that all training materials and resources are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Year 2: Quarter 4: Months 22-24
Monitoring and Evaluation: Conduct the first round of evaluations to assess the impact of the strategy on digital inclusion metrics.
Sustainability Planning: Review funding sources and explore opportunities for long-term financial support.

Year 3: Quarter 1: Months 25-27
Community Engagement: Leverage labor organizations and community-based organizations to drive participation in digital literacy initiatives.
Collaboration with Educational Institutions: Launch joint training sessions with higher education institutions.

Year 3: Quarter 2: Months 28-30
Progress Reporting: Publish a comprehensive report highlighting achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.
Capacity Building: Train local trainers and educators to lead digital literacy programs independently.
Quarter 2:

Year 3: Quarter 3: Months 31-33
Strategy Review: Conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation strategy to assess its effectiveness and relevance.
Curriculum Enhancement: Update the digital literacy curriculum to reflect technological advancements.

Year 3: Quarter 4: Months 34-36
Long-term Sustainability: Establish funding models, partnerships, and mechanisms to ensure the continuity of digital inclusion efforts beyond the initial plan.
Ongoing:

Regular Evaluation: Conduct periodic evaluations to measure progress and identify areas for refinement.

Continuous Adaptation: Adapt the strategy to address emerging technological trends, changing demographics, and evolving needs.

This timeline provides a broad overview of the implementation process. The specifics will depend on the region's resources, the pace of progress, and the extent of collaboration with various stakeholders. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and flexibility in adjusting the timeline as needed will be key to the successful implementation of the plan.

Part V

Collaboration with Key Stakeholders:
The region recognizes that successful implementation of the plan requires close collaboration with a range of key stakeholders. The following approach outlines how the region plans to engage these stakeholders:
Government Agencies: Collaborate with local, regional, and national government bodies responsible for digital inclusion, education, and workforce development. Regular meetings and workshops will be organized to align strategies, share resources, and ensure coordination.
Non-Profit Organizations: Partner with non-profit organizations focused on digital literacy, community development, and social equity. Joint initiatives, resource sharing, and co-hosted events will amplify the impact of both the region's efforts and those of the non-profits.
Educational Institutions: Engage institutions of higher learning, community colleges, and training providers to integrate digital literacy into their curricula. Joint training sessions and curriculum development workshops will promote the region's goals within the educational sector.
Private Sector Companies: Collaborate with corporations, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and tech companies to support funding, device provision, and technical expertise. Public-private partnerships will be established to ensure sustainable funding and resource allocation.
Labor Organizations: Partner with labor unions and associations to advocate for the importance of digital skills in the workforce. These organizations can provide insights into workforce needs and contribute to program design.
Community-Based Organizations: Engage local grassroots organizations that have strong ties to specific communities. These organizations can assist in program delivery, outreach, and ensuring the plan is tailored to meet community needs.
Educational Service Agencies: Collaborate with educational service agencies to access educational resources, training materials, and expertise that align with the plan's objectives.

List of Collaborating Organizations:

Williamsburg Health Foundation
Williamsburg-James City County Preschool Taskforce
West Point YMCA
Fredericksburg Economic Development
New Kent County Administration
Charles City County Administration
Pamunkey Public Libraries

The Administering Entity for the region collaborated with the following organizations in developing the plan:

- Williamsburg Health Foundation
- Williamsburg-James City County Preschool Taskforce
- West Point YMCA
- Fredericksburg Economic Development
- New Kent County Administration
- Charles City County Administration
- Thrive Virginia
- Williamsburg Regional Library
- James City County Library
- York County Library
- Pamunkey Public Libraries

We plan to continue our collaboration with these organizations and add the following:
Regional Workforce Agency: The Regional Workforce Agency will contribute insights into workforce development needs and how digital skills can enhance job readiness.
Community Digital Literacy Center: The Community Digital Literacy Center established by WJCC-CAA will provide expertise in digital skills training and program delivery for underserved communities.
University Extension Program: The University Extension Program will share resources and curriculum ideas for integrating digital literacy into higher education programs.

Local Non-Profit Coalition: The Local Non-Profit Coalition will collaborate on community outreach strategies, resource sharing, and advocating for digital inclusion.

Private Telecommunications Companies: Private Telecommunications Companies will provide subsidized connectivity plans for low-income individuals and technical assistance for digital infrastructure improvements.

Labor Union: Labor Unions offer insights into the digital skills needed in various industries and advocate for workforce development initiatives.

Regional Education Consortium: Regional Education Consortium will contribute to the development of digital literacy training materials and online resources.

Local Chamber of Commerce: Local Chambers will provide connections to local businesses for potential partnerships and funding support.

Disability Advocacy Group: Advocacy groups will ensure that digital accessibility and inclusion considerations were integrated into the plan's development.

Community College Network: The Community College Network will collaborate on developing pathways for individuals to transition from basic digital literacy to more advanced technical skills.

Local School Systems: Local school systems will provide guidance on aligning digital literacy initiatives with existing educational programs.

By collaborating with these organizations, the Administering Entity ensures a diverse range of expertise, resources, and perspectives are incorporated into the plan's development, leading to a more robust and effective implementation strategy.

Commonwealth's Digital Opportunity Plan: Foundational Strategy and Key Activities
Foundational Strategy:

The Commonwealth's Digital Opportunity Plan aims to bridge the digital divide by providing equitable access to digital resources, enhancing digital skills, ensuring affordable connectivity and devices, offering technical support, and promoting online safety awareness. The plan is built on collaboration, inclusion, and sustainability, addressing barriers identified in the "Current State of Digital Opportunity" section and filling gaps in existing efforts.

Barriers Addressed:

- Affordability: Many individuals lack affordable access to the internet and devices.
- Digital Skills: There is a gap in digital literacy and technical skills across communities.
- Access to Devices: A portion of the population lacks access to necessary devices.
- Technical Support: Insufficient support for users facing technical issues.
- Digital Navigation: Limited understanding of navigating the digital landscape.
- Telehealth: Many individuals lack access to telehealth services due to slow internet speeds or inadequate devices.

  Measurable Goals:

  Goal 1: Increase digital literacy rates by 25% in underserved communities within 3 years.
  Goal 2: Ensure 70% of covered populations have access to affordable internet connectivity within 2 years.
  Goal 3: Distribute devices to 50% of individuals who lack access within 18 months.
  Goal 4: Establish a robust technical support network with a 24-hour helpline within 1 year.
  Goal 5: Improve digital navigation skills, resulting in a 30% increase in online safety awareness within 2 years.

  Key Activities:

  Year 1: Quarter 1: Months 1-3:

- Collaborate with regional workforce agencies to integrate digital literacy into job training programs.
- Establish partnerships with ISPs to offer subsidized internet plans.

  Year 1: Quarter 2: Months 4-6:

- Develop digital literacy curriculum in collaboration with educational institutions.

- Launch digital literacy workshops in community centers.

Year 1: Quarter 3: Months 7-9:

- Partner with community-based organizations for targeted outreach to underserved populations.
- Begin device distribution programs, prioritizing low-income individuals and students.

Year 1: Quarter 4: Months 10-12:

- Establish a technical support hotline with trained staff.
- Conduct online safety awareness campaigns in collaboration with non-profit organizations.

Year 2: Quarter 1: Months 13-15:

- Scale up digital literacy workshops to reach more communities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of digital literacy programs through user feedback.
- Months 16-18:

Year 2: Quarter 2: Months 16-18:

- Launch digital skills courses in collaboration with local universities and colleges.
- Provide technical support training for community volunteers.

Year 2: Quarter 3: Months 19-21:

- Integrate digital skills training into workforce development programs.
- Expand device distribution to schools and libraries.

Year 2: Quarter 4: Months 22-24:

- Assess progress toward affordability goals and adjust strategies as needed.
- Conduct a second round of evaluations to measure improvements in digital navigation skills.

Year 3: Quarter 1: Months 25-27:

- Collaborate with labor organizations to advocate for the importance of digital skills in various industries.
- Establish sustainability models, including corporate partnerships for ongoing funding.

Year 3: Quarter 2: Months 28-30:

- Evaluate the impact of digital literacy on employment rates and career advancement.
- Develop a long-term plan for regular evaluation and updates.

Year 3: Quarter 3: Months 31-33:

- Collaborate with institutions of higher learning to offer online digital literacy courses.
- Review and adjust the plan based on the findings of the ongoing evaluation process.

Year 3: Quarter 1: Months 34-36:

- Publish a comprehensive report detailing achievements, challenges, and the way forward.
- Establish a dedicated body to oversee plan evaluation and updates.
- Ongoing: Regularly assess and adapt strategies based on feedback and changing technological trends. Collaborate with stakeholders for continuous improvement and inclusivity.
- By following this foundational strategy and implementing the key activities outlined, the Commonwealth's Digital Opportunity Plan aims to bridge the digital divide and provide equitable digital access and skills to all communities across the region.

Appendices: Timeline

WORKPLAN:

Start Date		Comment Section	Meet	Survey	Press Release & Mail	Email	Focus Grou	Community Meet	Analysis Surv	Complete Asse	Task Com
April	1	Survey		X							
April	6	Assign CNA Board									
April	10	Focus Group what questions are need for survey					X				
April	14	Monthly Planning Meetingds (1 hr)	X								
April	16	Focus Group what questions are need for survey					X				
April	21	Focus Group what questions are need for survey					X				
April	22	Travel to meet community partners						X			
April	23	Travel to meet community partners						X			
May	1	Press Release			X						
May	7	Continue creating survey		X							
May	9	Interview referral families					X				
May	15	Interview referral families					X				
May	17	Finalize Survey		X							
May	22	Open Survey Collection		X		X					
May	24	Continue Survey Collection		X		X					
May	30	Continue Survey Collections		X		X					
June	1	Analyze Survey results		X					X		
June	15	Write Report							X		
July	1	Write Report							X		
July	15	Proof Report							X		
July	17	Approve Report									
August	1	Final Report Submission									

Appendices Selected Picture Online

These pictures were taken from various websites and not taken by the WJCC-CAA Agency.

Broadband work in Williamsburg, VA

https://peninsulachronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GloFiber-work-Ted-Maslin.jpg

Broadband work in New Kent County, VA

http://co.new-kent.va.us/ImageRepository/Document?documentId=7543

Broadband work in James City County, VA

https://peninsulachronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Glo-Fiber-Shentel.jpeg

Broadband work in Fredericksburg County, VA

https://i0.wp.com/fxbgtoday.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/02234330/ground.jpg?fit=1024%2C684&ssl=1

Broadband work in Spotsylvania County, VA

https://i0.wp.com/fxbgtoday.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/03000850/digital.jpg?fit=897%2C598&ssl=1

Williamsburg Baptist Church in Williamsburg, VA

https://bpprodstorage.blob.core.windows.net/bpprodcontainer/2654741/images/222fca89-ca97-4335-b373-49464bc7f951WBC%20Church%20Front%204.jpg

Broadband work in York County, VA

https://www.yorkdispatch.com/gcdn/presto/2021/01/06/PPYD/16fdad36-2748-4502-a40c-b3bc7b963256-210106_BK_RT_fiber_optic_5.jpg?width=660&height=519&fit=crop&format=pjpg&auto=webp