

# A Connected Florida: Access, Opportunity, Workforce, Prosperity, Resiliency

*Florida's Digital Adoption and Use Plan*



State of Florida

Florida Office of Broadband  
Florida Department of Commerce



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# 1 Executive Summary

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Reliable broadband Internet access is necessary for access, communication, job seekers and job creators in a modern community and in a connected economy. Broadband plays a central role in family and community connections, K-12 education, workforce education, job training, upskilling, job seeking, business development, industry and market sector growth, access to health care services, emergency preparedness and response, supporting the needs of Florida’s federally recognized tribes, and – collectively – community resilience.

Along with access to digital devices and the required skills to use those devices, broadband is critical to an individual’s economic mobility and overall quality of life. Individuals who lack broadband access cannot realize these economic and social benefits, and the expansion of broadband represents a tremendous opportunity to drive Florida’s continued prosperity. This is particularly true for rural, unserved, and underserved communities across Florida, where expanded access will encourage increased business growth, greater educational and employment opportunities, and better access to public and private programs and services.

Bottom line – broadband access has become an input that impacts all Floridians’ outcomes.

## Where Florida Stands Today

Although 94 percent of Florida has access to sufficient broadband service, this does not tell the full story of broadband and digital access in the state. This is because, despite a relatively high rate of access, Florida has the second highest percentage of state residents who do not use the Internet – and the third highest percentage of residents who do not use digital devices, including PCs, laptops, or tablets.<sup>1</sup> A myriad of barriers exist that prevent more Floridians from adopting and using the Internet and digital devices – including affordability, lack of digital skills and resources, language barriers, and insufficient awareness around the benefits of digital connectivity. The state has initiated efforts to address these and other barriers to adoption and use, but much more work is required to help close the digital divide.

Florida is one of the most diverse states in the U.S. across the eight covered populations outlined in the Digital Equity Grant Planning Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). In seven of the eight covered populations, a greater percentage of Florida’s population is composed of more members of covered populations than the national average. This relationship is particularly pronounced across three covered populations: minority groups, aging individuals, and individuals facing language barriers.<sup>2</sup>

Covered populations include:<sup>3</sup>

1. Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level;
2. Incarcerated individuals;
3. Individuals with disabilities;
4. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group;
5. Aging individuals;

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c5e6cf675865464a90ff1573c5072b42>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Notice of Funding Opportunity – State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, p. 8 <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/DE%20PLANNING%20GRANT%20NOFO.pdf>

6. Veterans;
7. Individuals with a language barrier; and
8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

Certain populations face unique challenges related to Internet accessibility, affordability, navigation, and digital skills. These impacts extend far beyond the inability to use and navigate the Internet. A lack of digital access or a lack of digital skills, a necessary component of access, can have downstream repercussions when it comes to civic, employment, economic, health, and educational opportunities that are needed for full participation in modern society.

To create a connected Florida – where Floridians have access and opportunity to participate fully in the workforce, achieve prosperity and live resiliently – Floridians need the public and private sectors’ help in closing gaps in digital access.

To begin addressing these challenges, the Florida Office of Broadband (“Office of Broadband” or “Office”) was created in 2020. One of the Office’s major accomplishments to date is the creation of a *Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband* in 2022, which lays out the vision of the Office, the roles for state and local participants, and the strategies to undertake as Florida works toward a fully connected citizenry, both economically and socially. This plan was published in 2022 after extensive stakeholder outreach, interviews with subject matter experts, and research. The plan lays out many of the initial strategies that will be used to “reduce the digital divide that exists between areas that are fully equipped to realize the benefits of broadband Internet service and those that are not.”<sup>4</sup> A primary principle embedded within these strategies is harnessing the knowledge and resources of local governments and community partners.

As part of the Office of Broadband’s initial efforts to develop partnerships within communities, Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPTs) were formed. LTPTs were established under section 288.9961, Florida Statutes to work with counties to help understand their current broadband availability, locate unserved and underserved areas, identify relevant assets, and build partnerships. The sixty-seven LTPTs, one within all of Florida’s counties, are a unique attribute to the broadband accessibility landscape in Florida and are a key resource in understanding barriers to connectivity. LTPTs understand their communities’ unique needs and know the local partners and leaders that can help address those needs, making LTPTs a valuable asset for the state’s digital access efforts.

The knowledge-gathering and partnership identification efforts conducted by LTPTs lay the groundwork for the state’s digital adoption and use efforts. In addition to these county-level teams, there is a growing set of organizations – covering public and non-profit sectors – offering digital adoption and use services and programming across the state. The Office of Broadband has been working to identify these organizations and develop partnerships through ongoing stakeholder engagement since its creation.

Through existing and new partnerships, Florida is prepared to mitigate the following barriers to digital adoption and use, which were identified during the plan development process:

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<sup>4</sup> Florida Office of Broadband, Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband 2022, [https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0\\_2](https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0_2)

- Limited digital literacy
- Lack of accessible supporting resources
- Community skepticism about government and/or private companies
- Insufficient digital infrastructure
- Unaffordable broadband service
- Limited access to or ownership of digital devices
- Insufficient digital capacity of community anchor institutions (CAIs)

Where Florida is Going

The aim of digital adoption is to empower all Floridians and communities to reap the benefits of a connected economy. To achieve this vision, Florida outlined ten measurable objectives and five implementation strategies – displayed in its Strategic Framework in Figure 1 – to support communities in accessing the Internet meaningfully and safely with devices that are broadly available.

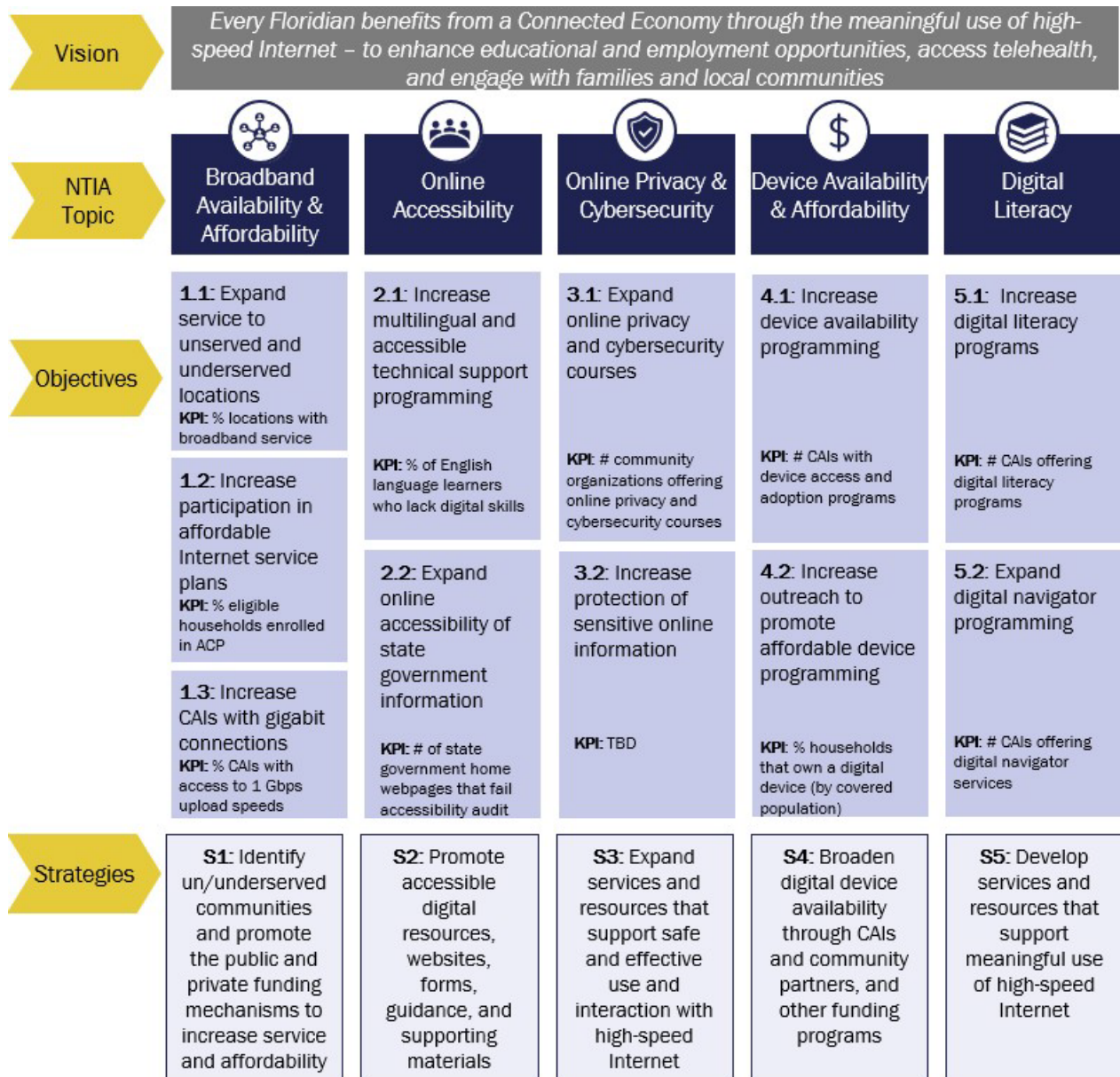


Figure 1: Florida’s Digital Adoption and Use Strategic Framework

## Next Steps

The Digital Equity Act has made available \$2.75 billion to establish three grant programs that promote digital adoption and use across the United States. Through the Digital Equity Planning Grant, Florida has developed this Digital Adoption and Use Plan (“DAU Plan” or “plan”) that lays out the strategies to bring the skills, resources, and knowledge needed to all Floridians so they can benefit from a fully connected economy. This plan is comprised of the following components:

- An overarching vision and objectives for achieving digital adoption and use;
- The needs and gaps the state aims to address;
- Existing assets and partnerships the state will harness to achieve its goals; and
- A plan for implementation, including strategies and activities.

Along with these key structural components, the plan also includes six core themes. These themes will emerge in each of the Plan’s objectives and strategies, as well as the approach to stakeholder engagement and implementation activities.

## Themes for Florida’s Digital Adoption and Use Plan

- Take inspiration from Florida’s Strategic Plan for Broadband: The inspiration for many of the components found in this plan was taken from Florida’s Strategic Plan for Broadband (“Strategic Plan”). Developing the Strategic Plan involved many of the same steps – including robust stakeholder engagement; leading practices research; and asset, needs, and gaps identification. The intent of this plan is to align as closely as possible with the Strategic Plan where appropriate, while also including additional data and information as required by the Digital Equity Act NOFO.
- Empower local governments and locally-owned solutions: The state will play a key role in supporting digital adoption and use initiatives and programming across Florida. However, local communities are best positioned to understand and customize digital access efforts to most effectively reach their residents. This plan acknowledges the distinct roles of the state and local communities, in addition to other key players and community anchor institutions. LTPTs will be a key part of this approach.
- Identify and collaborate with trusted community advisors: A key tenet of this plan is its emphasis on trusted community advisors to help drive adoption and digital access. Stakeholder engagement highlighted an overwhelming belief and support for the power of community partners – to both help support more Floridians in having the skills to participate meaningfully in a digital world and to increase the provision of Internet-enabled devices that meet each Floridian’s unique needs.
- Understand the unique barriers for Florida’s covered populations: Everyone engages with the Internet from a different starting point. The unique demographic composition of the communities in Florida plays a role in how individuals approach and engage in high-speed Internet. Only by understanding the challenges that might face the covered populations can Florida begin to explore the best solutions to broadband adoption and use.
- Align with the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Action Plan: The Digital Adoption and Use Plan was developed concurrently with the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan to encourage cohesion and avoid contradictory strategies.

## 2 Introduction and Vision for Digital Adoption and Use

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Florida developed this Digital Adoption and Use Plan to serve as the state's benchmark and roadmap for closing the digital divide and increasing digital access across the state. The contents of this plan are informed by a vision and an overarching aim for what a connected economy looks like for all Floridians. Complementary goals, strategies, and objectives serve as a guiding framework for how the state will go about realizing its vision and addressing the needs and gaps of broadband availability, affordability, and adoption. The following section outlines the state's vision and associated goals, strategies, and measurable objectives in more detail, as well as information on how this plan aligns with existing efforts in the state. This chapter details the following elements of the current state of broadband and digital access:

- [2.1 Vision](#) – Introduces the overarching vision for digital adoption and use.
- [2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts](#) – Maps key existing goals and policy initiatives of Florida.
- [2.3 Strategy and Objectives](#) – Outlines the supporting strategies and measurable objectives to track progress toward achieving Florida's vision for digital adoption and use.

### 2.1 Vision

The Florida Office of Broadband envisions a future where every Floridian benefits from a connected economy through the meaningful use of high-speed Internet – to enhance educational and employment opportunities, access telehealth, and engage with families, and local communities. This plan identifies the available resources, existing needs, and implementation strategies that will help reduce the digital divide that exists between areas that are fully equipped to realize these benefits and those that are not.

Reducing this divide will not be a one-size-fits-all approach. Florida's geographic size and significant size of its covered populations mean that various methods, technologies, and configurations will need to be deployed to reduce the digital divide for all Floridians. Local community leaders and organizations who understand these unique needs are best equipped to help Florida realize its vision for digital adoption and use. With the help of the state's LTPTs, CAIs, Florida's federally recognized tribes, local governments, Internet and Broadband Service Providers, and others, the state can reduce the digital divide for all its citizens. The state will also place a heavy emphasis on the use of reliable, up-to-date, and detailed data to effectively allocate resources. Harnessing the power of collaborative partnerships and accurate data, the state can better address both the availability and reliability of broadband, as well as the need for digital devices and the skills required to meaningfully use those devices.

The Florida Office of Broadband, located within the state of Florida's Department of Commerce ("FloridaCommerce"), is the administering entity for the state's broadband program, ensuring access, adoption and implementation for all populations within Florida. This Office, together with internal and external partners, will work to achieve the vision of widespread digital adoption and use so that every Floridian can access jobs and education; be more resilient in the face of economic challenges or environmental disasters; and enjoy better quality of life.



## 2.2 Alignment with Existing Efforts to Improve Outcomes

To make effective use of federal funding for broadband expansion, the Office of Broadband will align new investment with existing efforts in the state to improve life for all Floridians. Three significant documents provide a framework for understanding the goals of the government and people of the state: the *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, the *Framework for Freedom*, and the *Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband*. Although these documents cannot provide the full picture of activities occurring in Florida, together they provide a comprehensive roadmap of the state's large-scale priorities.

The [Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development](#) (SPED) was developed by FloridaCommerce in collaboration with dozens of partners from across state, including state-level agencies, local governments, local and regional economic development organizations, and workforce development entities. The report laid out three broad goals:

- Lead the nation in resilient, sustainable economic growth, and prosperity;
- Lead the nation in global competitiveness as a location for talent, business, innovation, and tourism; and
- Lead the nation in quality of life and quality places for residents, communities, and visitors.

These goals are composed of a series of strategies and tactics to improve business expansion, recruitment, retention, and job creation in the state and are organized into six key pillars: *Talent Supply and Education*, *Innovation and Economic Development*, *Infrastructure and Growth Leadership*, *Business Climate and Competitiveness*, *Civic and Governance Systems*, and *Quality of Life and Quality Places*. Taken together, the SPED offers the most comprehensive slate of efforts to improve the lives of Floridians.

In addition to the SPED, the [Framework for Freedom Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24](#) offers a fiscal perspective on the priorities of Florida's state government. The budget prioritizes taxpayer savings while also funding state services across seven areas: *education, environment, transportation and economic development, health and human services, public safety, military support, and government operations*. These areas span the gamut of Florida's society, and highlight the state's attention on the education, economic wellbeing, health, and safety of its residents.

Finally, the [Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband](#) represents the most complete picture of broadband's role in improving the lives of Floridians. The Strategic Plan is another FloridaCommerce strategy, whose vision is "to provide guidance to state decision makers about investments for the provision of high-speed, reliable broadband Internet service access to all Florida communities in support of telemedicine, education opportunities, workforce development, and community development [alongside] local and state government agencies, community organizations, and private businesses." To achieve the Strategic Plan's goal of connecting the entirety of Florida's economy to high-speed Internet, the document stresses the importance of the availability, adoption, and effective use of the Internet.



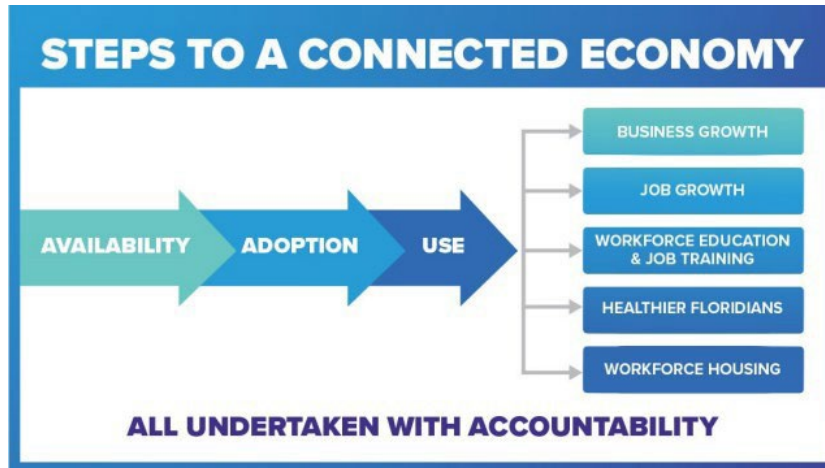


Figure 2. Steps to a Connected Economy

Taken together, the *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, the *Framework for Freedom*, and the *Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband* outline a set of priorities to improve outcomes in the state. These priorities – supplemented by select area-specific resources – align well with the following areas highlighted by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA):

- Economic and workforce development goals, plans, and outcomes;
- Educational outcomes;
- Health outcomes;
- Civic and social engagement; and
- Delivery of other essential services.

The table below presents a summary of Florida’s broad policy goals with respect to the aforementioned documents.

Table 1: Florida to NTIA Broadband Policy Goals Map

NTIA Area	Key Florida Goals	Connection to Digital Adoption and Use
Economic & Workforce Development <sup>5,6</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand Florida’s economic footprint through access to new markets, public-private partnerships, and a competitive business climate.</li> <li>• Continue to develop high-quality, modern infrastructure.</li> <li>• Promote the creation and growth of businesses through efficient government, accessible capital, and a robust supply of skilled workers from across the state.</li> </ul>	Broadband Internet is a critical resource for economic and workforce development in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century. Access to this resource drives innovation, grants access to new markets, investors, and human capital, and supports research and the exchange of market knowledge. With broadband, businesses can grow and compete at significant scale.

<sup>5</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, [https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0\\_6](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0_6)

<sup>6</sup> State of Florida, *Framework for Freedom Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24*, <http://www.boldvisionforabrighterfuture.com/PDFLoader.htm?file=HomeFY24.pdf>

NTIA Area	Key Florida Goals	Connection to Digital Adoption and Use
<b>Education</b> <sup>7,8,9,10</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align education and workforce development programs to foster employment opportunities and develop and retain talented workers with the skills to meet current and future employer needs.</li> <li>Focus on the continued development of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), health and other education programs to meet Florida's needs.</li> <li>Promote greater access to educational opportunities, educational choice, and training programs to students and families, particularly in rural and underserved communities.</li> <li>Strengthen quality and reputation of academic programs, scholarship, research, and innovation while continuing to build ties with communities and businesses.</li> </ul>	<p>The educational system benefits tremendously from broadband Internet. Broadband facilitates school choice and remote learning for individuals without alternatives and/or individuals with accessibility challenges associated with disabilities or language barriers. Students without broadband are at a distinct disadvantage compared to their broadband-enjoying peers. Broadband access helps rural and underserved communities grow and thrive, while also providing businesses with the workforce of the future.</p>
<b>Health</b> <sup>11,12,13</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and sustain vibrant, safe, healthy and resilient communities that attract workers, residents, businesses and visitors.</li> <li>Support Floridians in all communities and life stages to have opportunities to achieve healthier outcomes and societal contributions.</li> <li>Expand health care capacity throughout the state including access to telehealth opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>Broadband Internet connects individuals in underserved and/or rural areas with health care in a way not previously seen via telehealth and other public health services. These areas, in turn, are better able to attract businesses and employees to their communities.</p>
<b>Civic &amp; Social Engagement</b> <sup>14</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen local, regional, and statewide partnerships to accomplish Florida's economic and quality of life and quality places goals.</li> <li>Encourage local solutions to local problems with technical assistance, grant-based support, and continued communication with community organizations.</li> </ul>	<p>All areas of society can better engage via Broadband Internet. Broadband Internet facilitates richer, more connected, and more efficient communities.</p>
<b>Essential Service Delivery</b> <sup>15,16,17</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies at all levels.</li> <li>Continued investment in Florida's regulatory and government support functions by ensuring legal business practices, safeguarding taxpayer's personal data, protecting residents and visitors against</li> </ul>	<p>Broadband Internet makes government more efficient. Given broadband, citizens may access public services, communities can communicate about pressing challenges, and first responders are better able to react to problems in real-time.</p>

<sup>7</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, [https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0\\_6](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0_6)

<sup>8</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband*, [https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0\\_2](https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0_2)

<sup>9</sup> Florida Department of Education State Board of Education, *Strategic Plan*, <https://www.fldoe.org/policy/state-board-of-edu/strategic-plan.stm>

<sup>10</sup> State University System of Florida Board of Governors, *2025 System Strategic Plan*, [https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/SPC\\_05b\\_2025\\_System\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_Amended\\_Oct2019\\_CE.pdf](https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/SPC_05b_2025_System_Strategic_Plan_Amended_Oct2019_CE.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, [https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0\\_6](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0_6)

<sup>12</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband*, [https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0\\_2](https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0_2)

<sup>13</sup> Florida Department of Health, *Long Range Program Plan*, <http://floridafiscalportal.state.fl.us/Document.aspx?ID=24411&DocType=PDF>

<sup>14</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, [https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0\\_6](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0_6)

<sup>15</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development*, [https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0\\_6](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/division-of-strategic-business-development/fl5yrplan/fl-strategic-plan-booklet-2.pdf?sfvrsn=376778b0_6)

<sup>16</sup> State of Florida, *Framework for Freedom Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24*, <http://www.boldvisionforabrighterfuture.com/PDFLoader.htm?file=HomeFY24.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, *The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband*, [https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0\\_2](https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0_2)

NTIA Area	Key Florida Goals	Connection to Digital Adoption and Use
	financial crimes, and maintaining state-owned infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide and encourage local communities to coordinate infrastructure projects, such as roads and broadband Internet, to reduce overall costs.</li> </ul>	

Florida’s federally recognized tribes were included in the plan development process. FloridaCommerce engaged the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Through tribal consultation letters, in-person and virtual meetings, and questionnaires, FloridaCommerce was able to learn the perspectives of Florida’s federally recognized tribes on the broadband needs of their communities. FloridaCommerce is committed to continued engagement with Florida’s federally recognized tribes over the course of the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan and Digital Adoption and Use Plan development process to develop strategies to expand broadband deployment and digital adoption for tribal populations.

***Coordination with BEAD and other digital adoption and use funding***

Florida will coordinate its use of funds from the State Capacity Grant Program, the BEAD Program, and other existing and future federal, state, or private sources. As agreements are drafted with internet service providers, the office will coordinate and leverage their existing programs in digital literacy. Both the BEAD and DAU programs are administered by the same state entity, the Office of Broadband. Administration of these programs by the same state entity will allow for easier coordination among the two programs, including identifying interdependencies, exchanging data and resources, sharing a wider array of stakeholders, and more. In addition, while BEAD is focused primarily on deploying broadband infrastructure, both programs share similar objectives around high-speed Internet access, affordability, and adoption and use (see Section 2.2 of Florida’s BEAD Five-Year Action Plan).

State Capacity Funding will also be coordinated with two recent Office of Broadband funding programs that support digital adoption and use: the Capital Projects Fund Digital Connectivity Technology Program and the Capital Projects Fund Multi-Purpose Community Facility Projects Program. The \$13M Digital Connectivity Program provides funds to subrecipients to enhance digital connectivity by providing essential devices, equipment, and training that will directly enable work, education, and health monitoring, located in communities with an identified critical need. The \$87M Multi-Purpose Community Facility (MPCFs) Projects Program provides funds to subrecipients for the construction of or improvements to buildings designed to jointly and directly enable work, education, and health monitoring, located in eligible communities with an identified critical need for the project. For example, eligible MPCFs must provide a location from which job seekers can search for and apply for jobs, take continuing education classes, or receive training in digital skills, resume writing, and how to interview for a position and other skills. The facilities will also be required to provide a public location for access to digital devices for educational opportunities, such as digital literacy classes or other online learning experiences. MPCFs must include private areas where citizens can access their telehealth appointments or meet with healthcare providers.

Both of these Office of Broadband programs will begin in 2024. The Office of Broadband will coordinate and streamline the distinct focus areas for each of these programs so that funds can be maximized, and lessons learned from each program can be applied to the others.

## 2.3 Strategy and Objectives

Using the overarching vision for digital adoption and use along with the existing goals of the state, Florida outlined measurable objectives and implementation strategies (see Figure 3). The statewide goals outlined in this section focus primarily on those related to Florida’s Digital Adoption and Use Plan. Implementation of the DAU Plan, however, is intertwined with the broader BEAD program. For a fuller understanding of Florida’s broadband strategy, see the Florida Five-Year Action Plan documentation.

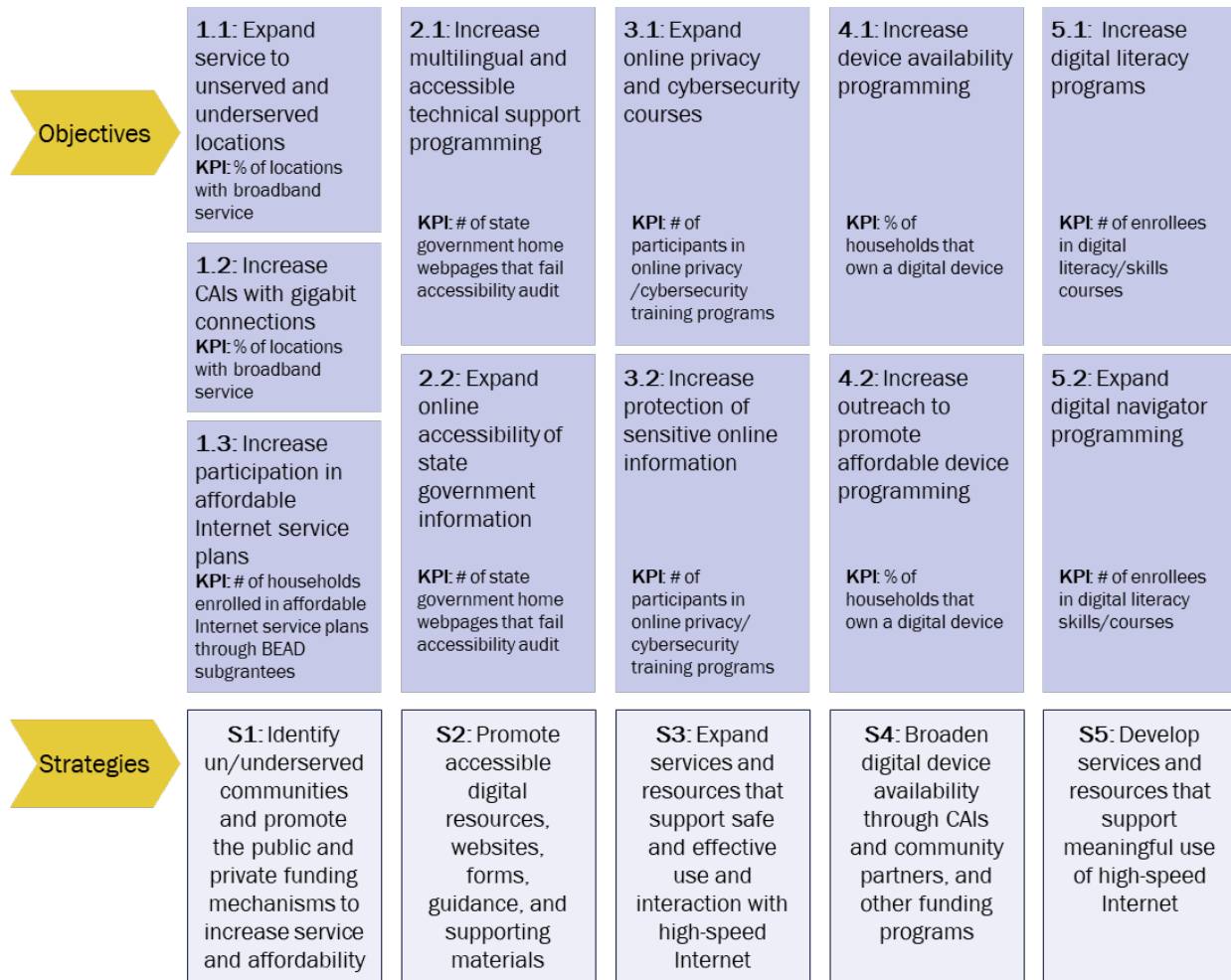


Figure 3: Digital Adoption and Use Plan Objectives and Strategies

### 2.3.1 Broadband Availability & Affordability



Broadband Availability & Affordability		
<p><b>1.1:</b> Expand service to unserved and underserved locations</p> <p><b>KPI:</b> % of locations with broadband service</p>	<p><b>1.2:</b> Increase CAIs with gigabit connections</p> <p><b>KPI:</b> % of locations with broadband service</p>	<p><b>1.3:</b> Increase participation in affordable Internet service plans</p> <p><b>KPI:</b> # of households enrolled in affordable Internet service plans through BEAD subgrantees</p>
<p><b>S1:</b> Identify un/underserved communities and promote the public and private funding mechanisms to increase service and affordability</p>		

The first step in realizing the state’s vision for digital adoption and use is ensuring that broadband is available and affordable. While the state of Florida has made significant strides to increase service availability across the state, key gaps remain, particularly in rural locations across the panhandle and north-central regions of the state. And, even where broadband access is available, many families cannot afford service to their home or do not know they qualify for subsidized service.

Florida aims to overcome these hurdles by working with Internet service providers (ISPs) and communities to expand access to unserved and underserved areas and by increasing participation and awareness of affordable Internet service plans. To track progress on broadband availability and affordability efforts, the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used:

#### Objective 1.1: Expand service to unserved and underserved locations

- KPI: % of locations with broadband service
  - Baseline: 94% / Short-term: 97% / Long-term: 100% (NTIA goal)
  - Data source: FCC National Broadband Map
- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

#### Objective 1.2: Increase CAIs with gigabit connections

- KPI: % of locations with broadband service
  - Baseline: TBD / Short-term (~3 years): TBD / Long-term (~5 years): TBD
  - *Note: Not all CAIs are captured in the FCC National Broadband Map. As a result, the FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband intends to supplement an existing inventory of CAIs with broadband service information gained from the BEAD Challenge Process.*
  - Data sources: FCC National Broadband Map, FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband CAI Inventory

#### Objective 1.3: Increase participation in affordable Internet service plans

- KPI: # of households enrolled in affordable Internet service plans through BEAD subgrantees
  - Baseline: TBD / Short-term: TBD / Long-term: TBD
  - Data sources: BEAD ISP Reporting, FCC Urban Rate Survey

**Note:** While many ISPs already provide affordable service plans in Florida, many tied to the Affordable Connectivity Program, the FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband intends to leverage BEAD subgrantee reporting to track expansion in new affordable Internet service plans through BEAD. Baseline, short- and long-term targets will be developed once those awards and deployment timetables are better defined.

- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

### 2.3.2 Online Accessibility



Online Accessibility	
<b>2.1:</b> Increase multilingual and accessible technical support offerings  <b>KPI:</b> # of state government home webpages that fail accessibility audit	<b>2.2:</b> Expand online accessibility of state government information  <b>KPI:</b> # of state government home webpages that fail accessibility audit
<b>S2:</b> Promote accessible digital resources, websites, forms, guidance, and supporting materials	

Even for those who have access to reliable broadband, barriers may still remain when trying to use the Internet. Populations with mental or physical impairments or language barriers may be particularly impacted. Individuals in these populations may require supporting materials or special modes of communication that meet their needs or digital devices that are available in their home language to access broadband.

The state will help address these challenges by supporting accessible resources that encourage multilingual and accessible technical support offerings and by supporting the expansion of accessible state government information online. To track progress of online accessibility efforts, the following KPIs will be used:

#### Objective 2.1: Increase multilingual and accessible technical support programming

- KPI: # of state government home webpages that fail accessibility audit
  - Baseline: TBD during first year of plan implementation / Short-term (~3 years): Reduce by 50% / Long-term (~5 years): Reduce to 0%
  - Data source: Florida State Agencies  
**Note:** Once accessibility audit materials are selected or developed, the baseline number of agencies that pass or fail will be determined.
- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area



## Objective 2.2: Expand online accessibility of state government information

- KPI: # of state government home webpages that fail accessibility audit
  - Baseline: TBD during first year of plan implementation / Short-term (~3 years): Reduce by 50% / Long-term (~5 years): Reduce to 0%
  - Data sources: Florida State Agencies  
*Note: Once accessibility audit materials are selected or developed, the baseline number of agencies that pass or fail will be determined.*
- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

### 2.3.3 Online Privacy & Cybersecurity

A potential barrier in achieving sustainable adoption of broadband is the concern around privacy and the protection of sensitive online information. Florida Digital Service, housed within the Department of Management Services, is currently working with the Florida Cybersecurity Advisory Council to identify long-term strategies to enhance the state's cyber hygiene and protect Floridians' personal information from cyber threats.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the Office of Broadband's conversations with community organizations revealed that many groups are already working to expand educational resources to residents, particularly aging populations, on how to keep personal information safe on digital devices.

Florida Center for Cybersecurity, also known as Cyber Florida, operates on behalf of the state of Florida. Cyber Florida was created in 2014 on behalf of the Florida State Legislature to help position the state as a national leader in cybersecurity. To do so, the Center's focus is on three mission areas: education, research, and outreach. Currently, Cyber Florida works with both private and public partners to support and educate Floridians. Cyber Florida operates a variety of education and training programs, and tracks enrollment in each of these programs. The Office of Broadband will collaborate with Cyber Florida on a regular basis to inform progress towards online privacy and cybersecurity goals.

The Office of Broadband will continue work to expand the services and resources available to support the safe use of the Internet through both education courses on privacy and cybersecurity, as well as initiatives that increase protection of online information. These activities will be carried out both within state government, and through ongoing collaboration with community organizations. To track progress on online privacy and cybersecurity efforts, the following KPIs will be used:

## Objective 3.1: Expand online privacy and cybersecurity courses

- KPI: # of participants in online privacy/cybersecurity training programs
  - Baseline: TBD / Short-term (~2 years): Increase by 10% / Long-term (~5 years): Increase by 20%
  - Data source: Cyber Florida  
*Note: Cyber Florida offers and facilitates a range of educational courses, trainings, and research initiatives in the state. The FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband intends to continue collaboration with Cyber Florida to determine which set of educational initiatives best fit the spirit and aim of this objective.*
- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with



disabilities / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

Objective 3.2: Increase protection of sensitive online information

- KPI: # of participants in online privacy/cybersecurity training programs
  - Baseline: TBD / Short-term (~2 years): Increase by 10% / Long-term (~5 years): Increase by 20%
  - Data source: Cyber Florida
    - Note:** Cyber Florida offers and facilitates a range of educational courses, trainings, and research initiatives in the state. The FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband intends to continue collaboration with Cyber Florida to determine which set of educational initiatives best fit the spirit and aim of this objective.*
- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

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<sup>18</sup> Florida Digital Service, "Our Work," <https://digital.fl.gov/our-work/>

### 2.3.4 Device Availability & Affordability



Device Availability & Affordability	
<b>4.1:</b> Increase device availability programming	<b>4.2:</b> Increase outreach to promote affordable device programming
<b>KPI:</b> % of households that own a digital device	<b>KPI:</b> % of households that own a digital device
<b>S4:</b> Broaden digital device availability through CAIs and community partners, and other funding programs	

Florida has the third-highest percentage of residents who do not use personal computers, laptops, or tablets.<sup>19</sup> While there are many reasons one may not use a digital device, some of the common device adoption barriers identified through Florida’s broadband stakeholder and community engagement were a lack of affordability and inadequate education and awareness about the benefits of owning a digital device.

To combat these challenges, the Florida Office of Broadband will encourage greater device access and proficiency for all communities through supporting new device availability programming and outreach and awareness. Through these efforts, Florida aims to increase its device adoption rate and help all residents benefit from digital connectivity. To track progress on device availability and affordability efforts, the following KPIs will be used:

#### Objective 4.1: Increase device availability programming

- **KPI:** % of households that own a digital device
  - Baseline: 95% / Short-term (~2 years): 96% / Long-term (~5 years): 97%
  - Data source: American Community Survey (ACS)
- **Key Covered Populations**
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

#### Objective 4.2: Increase outreach to promote affordable device availability programming

- **KPI:** % of households that own a digital device (by covered population)
  - Baseline: 95% / Short-term (~2 years): 96% / Long-term (~5 years): 97%
  - Data source: American Communities Survey (ACS)
- **Key Covered Populations**
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

<sup>19</sup> National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, <https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c5e6cf675865464a90ff1573c5072b42>

### 2.3.5 Digital Literacy



Digital Literacy	
5.1: Increase digital literacy programs	5.2: Expand digital navigator programming
KPI: # of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses	KPI: # of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses
S5: Develop services and resources that support meaningful use of high-speed Internet	

In addition to issues around affordability, another likely contributor to Florida's low broadband and device adoption rates is a lack of experience using technology to access the Internet. Broadband public workshop and stakeholder discussions surrounding certain populations' low levels of digital literacy, especially among seniors, brought attention to the need for training resources and technical support services that enable residents to confidently use and operate computers and smart devices. This type of training and one-on-one support will not only teach residents *how* to use the Internet and digital devices, but *why* digital connectivity is so crucial to quality of life through improved educational and employment opportunities, the ability to access telehealth services, quicker access to government services, and more.

Florida's asset inventory on broadband adoption ([section 3.1.4](#)) reveals that there are existing resources that promote digital literacy in the state. The Florida Office of Broadband will plan to build off these efforts so that more residents can meaningfully use and interact with high-speed Internet. The state will work with community partners to increase both digital literacy programming and the availability of digital navigators, who serve as trusted digital guides in local communities (e.g., through ongoing assistance with affordable Internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support). To track progress on digital literacy efforts, the following KPIs will be used:

#### Objective 5.1: Increase digital literacy programs

- KPI: # of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses
  - Baseline: TBD, digital literacy/skills offerings still under review / Short-term: Increase by 10% / Long-term: Increase by 20%
  - Data source: TBD
  - Note:** The FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband continues to hold collaborative discussions with CAIs, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) initiatives and other workforce training initiatives, and other divisions of FloridaCommerce to determine the best set of offerings to achieve the aims of this objective.*
- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

#### Objective 5.2: Expand digital navigator programming

- KPI: # of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses

- Baseline: TBD, digital literacy/skills offerings still under review / Short-term (~2 years): Increase by 10% / Long-term (~5 years): Increase by 20%
- Data source: TBD
  - Note:** The FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband continues to hold collaborative discussions with CAIs, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) initiatives and other workforce training initiatives, and other divisions of FloridaCommerce to determine the best set of offerings to achieve the aims of this objective.*
- Key Covered Populations
  - Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with disabilities / Veterans / Individuals with a language barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

## 3 Current State of Digital Access: Barriers and Assets

### 3.1 Asset Inventory

This section catalogues how public and private organizations throughout Florida are working to address the state's digital divide. Assets were identified through public workshops, stakeholder interviews, questionnaires, and other data gathering efforts.

The inclusion of an asset does not indicate the state of Florida's endorsement of the effort, nor does it represent interest from the state to participate or support any given asset. Additional information about the activities the state of Florida will pursue is available in Section 5 of this plan. This chapter details the following elements of the current state of broadband and digital access:

- [3.1.1 Digital Access Assets by Covered Population](#) – Provides an overview of digital access assets in Florida by covered population.
- [3.1.2 Existing Digital Access Plans](#) – Catalogues digital access plans and programs developed by Florida counties, cities, and Tribes.
- [3.1.3 Existing Digital Access Programs](#) – Catalogues digital access programs developed by Florida counties, cities, organizations, and Tribes.
- [3.1.4 Broadband Adoption](#) – Identifies and describes the current state of broadband adoption throughout Florida and programs that support broadband adoption.
- [3.1.5 Broadband Affordability](#) – Identifies and describes the current state of broadband affordability in the state and programs that support broadband affordability.

#### 3.1.1 Digital Access Assets by Covered Population

Florida is home to a vast network of libraries, hospitals, schools, colleges and universities, non-profits, and other community organizations that provide support for digital access. The following table contains a non-exhaustive but robust sample of the resources available in the state to continue digital access efforts. There are a variety of digital assets that support digital use and adoption in covered populations and all Floridians.

Table 2. Digital Access Assets in the State of Florida

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Additional Information
Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services	Career, Technology, and Training Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired	The Career, Technology, and Training Center program incorporates instruction in a variety of independence skills, as well as access computer technology, adaptive equipment, devices, and many other skills that contribute to independence and the confidence to seek the highest level of employment possible.	Individuals with disabilities	<a href="#">Link</a>
Florida Alliance for Assistive Services & Technology (FAAST)	Short-Term Device Loans	FAAST has a variety of assistive technology devices that can be borrowed at no cost to the individual. These short-term loans help individuals	Individuals with disabilities	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Additional Information
		decide the most appropriate device to purchase and can also be used as short-term accommodations.		
Seniors on a Mission	Beginners Technology Program	The Beginners Technology Program is operated out of a mobile unit parked in the immediate community to help senior adults learn how to better use their cell phones and tablets.	Aging populations	<a href="#">Link</a>
Florida Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services	Device Loaner Programs	Using federal funding, libraries and nonprofits may receive funding to expand Wi-Fi access to parking lots and to develop loaner programs for digital devices (e.g., laptops) and hotspots.	Low-income populations	
Hispanic Federation of Florida	Latino Digital Skills Centers	The Hispanic Federation has three Latino Digital Skills Centers throughout Florida. The centers use a customized digital workforce curriculum suitable for individuals with beginner, intermediate and advanced skill sets and responsive to the needs of local employers.	Low income and persons with language barriers	<a href="#">Link</a>
Florida Division of Emergency Management, Florida Storm Relief	Free Public Wi-Fi Access	In coordination with private sector partners, the Florida Division of Emergency Management has opened free, public wi-fi access locations throughout areas impacted by Hurricane Ian.	All	
Aeras Foundation, Inc.	Digital Devices	The Aeras Foundation accepts donations of gently used digital devices from community organizations, universities, businesses, etc. The foundation then refurbishes the device and distributes it to students and community members in need of devices.	Low-income populations	<a href="#">Link</a>

### 3.1.2 Existing Digital Access Plans

All Florida counties, municipalities, regions, and federally recognized tribes were given an opportunity to submit digital access plans to the state of Florida. Table 3 below includes examples of these digital access plans. The county-level LTPTs have received requests by the state to submit plans from their respective jurisdictions. Additional plans are anticipated in the coming year.

Table 3: Local Digital Access Plans

Organization Name	Description	Covered Population	Link/Additional Information
Miami-Dade County	Provide a path forward for Miami-Dade County to be more connected and accessible, while addressing the opportunities and needs of all residents.	All	<a href="#">Miami-Dade County</a>
Hillsborough County	An action plan to provide increased, equitable, and effective broadband Internet service coverage throughout the county.	All	<a href="#">Hillsborough County</a>



### 3.1.3 Existing Digital Access Programs

Florida’s state agencies, county, and municipal governments, private organizations, and nonprofits are currently engaged in activities to support digital adoption and use. Table 4 below catalogs information or resources related to digital access, including existing state policies, mapping, other technological resources used to inform broadband-related activities, studies and best practices, and outreach endeavors.

Table 4: Local Digital Access Programs

Organization Name	Digital Access Program	Program Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
The Patterson Foundation	Digital Navigator Program	Through the Digital Navigator Program, part of the Digital Access for All initiative, The Patterson Foundation is training local organizations to connect asset-limited families and individuals with opportunities to obtain digital connectivity, devices, skills, and support.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
The Patterson Foundation	The Gap	Through The Gap, part of the Digital Access for All initiative, The Patterson Foundation creates opportunities for eligible asset-limited families and individuals to enroll in the ACP program and benefit from low-cost Internet and devices to foster access and well-being – closing this enrollment gap.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Coral Gables City	Public Wi-Fi Access	Using funds from the SLFRF program authorized by ARPA, the Coral Gables City will offer free wireless Internet access to citizens and visitors at City facilities and venues.	All	N/A
GetSetUp Digital Literacy Program	Digital Literacy	Digital literacy resource to help seniors.	Aging populations	<a href="#">Link</a>
AARP Virtual Community Center – Tech Events	Digital Literacy	Digital literacy resources that have a wide variety of virtually led technology and digital skills training open to residents nationwide and promoted by the local Florida AARP.	Aging populations	<a href="#">Link</a>

Florida Literacy Coalition, Inc.	Digital Literacy	Florida Literacy Coalition's "Digital Literacy and Adult Learning Strategies for Success" course helps adults learn digital literacy skills and strategies.	Aging populations	<a href="#">Link</a>
OIC of South Florida	Digital Literacy	OIC of South Florida's Workforce Readiness Program provides digital literacy assessments and trainings.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Comcast	Digital Access	Comcast's Internet Essentials program provides low-cost devices with low-cost access to Floridians.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Digital Inclusion St. Pete	Digital Access	Digital Inclusion St. Pete's "Gadgets for Good" program distributes refurbished devices to nonprofits and individuals in Florida.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
CareerSource Florida	Digital Access	CareerSource Florida has computer donation programs in various counties, serving rural, un/underserved regions.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Comcast	Digital Navigator	Comcast's Digital Navigator grant to Miami-Dade College to train students to become digital navigators for their community.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Leon County's Digital Navigator Program	Digital Navigator	Leon County's Digital Navigator Program trains and deploys digital navigators to help expand enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program and other eligible discounts.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Community Tech House	Digital Navigator	Community Tech House provides digital literacy support and partners with community organizations in Florida to donate digital devices.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

### 3.1.4 Broadband Adoption

The 2017-2021 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the United States Census Bureau estimates that the state of Florida is home to around 8 million households. Among these households, the ACS finds that 74% of households have a broadband Internet subscription through fiber, cable, or digital subscriber line (DSL). This translates to some 2 million households that have not adopted broadband wireline services such as fiber, cable, and DSL. However, there are numerous existing programs and services within the state of Florida that are working to close this adoption gap, including community organizations offering digital skills training and affordable devices, low-cost Internet plans for select populations, and more. The broadband adoption assets listed below mirror those in Florida’s BEAD Five-Year Action Plan but are not exhaustive of all assets available in the state.<sup>20</sup>

Table 5: Broadband Adoption Assets

Asset	Description
Programs that provide digital literacy and digital skills training;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Employ Florida’s Digital Skills Training</a> is the state’s online repository of virtual training courses for jobseekers<sup>21</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">GetSetUp’s Digital Literacy Program</a> is a digital literacy resource for seniors<sup>22</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">AARP Virtual Community Center – Tech Help Events</a> include a wide variety of virtually-led technology and digital skills training open to residents nationwide, and promoted by the local Florida AARP<sup>23</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Florida Literacy Coalition’s “Digital Literacy and Adult Learning Strategies for Success”</a> course for adults to learn digital literacy skills and strategies<sup>24</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Comcast’s Internet Essentials Program</a> provides Internet security training to youth and seniors free of charge, as well as additional online digital literacy and skills training<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">United Way’s “Techquity” Program</a> raises funds and partners with digital access organizations and community anchor institutions to provide digital literacy training<sup>26</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hispanic Federation’s Digital Accelerator Program</a> is an ongoing digital literacy training program that provides funding to local, Latino-led non-profits to enhance digital skills and literacy training; Florida’s Miami EdTech was one of 20 organizations nationwide to receive this funding<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">OIC of South Florida’s Workforce Readiness Program</a> provides digital literacy assessments and trainings<sup>28</sup></li> </ul>
Programs that provide subsidized or low-cost devices (e.g., computers, tablets);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Comcast’s Internet Essentials program</a> provides low-cost devices with low-cost access to Floridians<sup>29</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Digital Inclusion St. Pete’s “Gadgets for God”</a> program distributes refurbished devices to nonprofits and individuals in Florida<sup>30</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">CareerSource Florida</a> has computer donation programs in various counties, serving rural, un/underserved regions<sup>31</sup></li> </ul>

Digital Navigator programs;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Patterson Foundation’s Digital Navigator Program</a> trains local organizations to connect asset-limited families and individuals with opportunities to obtain digital connectivity, devices, skills, and support<sup>32</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Comcast’s Digital Navigator grant to Miami-Dade College</a> will help support training students to become digital navigators for their community<sup>33</sup> <a href="#">Leon County’s Digital Navigator Program</a> trains and deploys digital navigators to help expand enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program and other eligible discounts<sup>34</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Tech House</a> provides digital literacy support and partners with community organizations in Florida to donate digital devices<sup>35</sup></li> </ul>
Existing ISP programs that promote adoption (e.g., adoption campaigns, low-cost plans, digital access initiatives);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Charter Communication’s K-12 Stay Connected Program</a> is a partnership with local governments and school districts that allows schools to offer high-speed, cable broadband Internet access direct to students, educators, and staff in their homes<sup>36</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Comcast’s Internet Essentials</a> provides low-cost plans, digital access training and outreach, low-cost devices and Wi-Fi “lift” zones to help bridge the digital divide<sup>37</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">CenturyLink’s Lifeline</a> offers low-income families with access to broadband for \$50 a month<sup>38</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Cox’s Connect2Compete</a> program provides access to a connection in all areas where Mediacom’s broadband network is present and is available for students who are on free or reduced lunch<sup>39</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spectrum’s Internet Assist</a> program offers a low-cost, high-speed broadband service for eligible households, which include those who qualify for one of the following federal programs: National School Lunch Program; Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the NSLP; or Supplemental Security Income<sup>40</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Metro by T-Mobile</a> offers affordable data plans for several types of digital devices<sup>41</sup></li> </ul>
Incentives (e.g., subsidies, tax benefits) for incorporation of broadband across different sectors (e.g., education, agriculture, economic development, telemedicine);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Florida Digital Classrooms Program (DCP)</a> permits E-Rate eligible schools to request state match funding for broadband special construction infrastructure projects<sup>42</sup></li> </ul>
Public computing labs;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Florida Boys &amp; Girls Clubs</a> have computing labs throughout the state of Florida<sup>43</sup></li> </ul>
Loaner computer/hotspot programs;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Florida Public Library System</a> – Florida public libraries loan devices and hotspots for public use<sup>44</sup></li> </ul>

Computer refurbishing programs; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The On It Foundation</a> collects used computers and donates them to low-income residents in Florida<sup>45</sup></li> </ul>
Digital Access coalitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Digital Inclusion St. Pete</a> is a collaboration of 40+ community organizations focused on eliminating the digital access gap through Internet access, device distribution, and technical support and training in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, Florida<sup>46</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> Apart from “digital skills training in service of workforce development,” section 3.1.4 of the Digital Equity Plan Guidance aligns with the guidance in Section 3.3.2 of the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan Guidance as it pertains to what programs, services, and types of organizations to include for Broadband Adoption assets.

<sup>21</sup> Employ Florida Education Services, <https://www.employflorida.com/vosnet/MenuLandingPage.aspx?enc=Kt8ubp6xpBXFJGGwpUEHTJrEFXsfohStfgt3JXg+sRo=>

<sup>22</sup> GetSetUp: Live classes for older adults, <https://www.getsetup.io/partner-with-us>

<sup>23</sup> AARP Virtual Community Center, [Tech Help Events - AARP Virtual Community Center - Find Free Online Events - AARP](#)

<sup>24</sup> Florida Digital Literacy Coalition, Florida’s Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center, [https://floridaliteracy.org/about\\_us\\_programs\\_and\\_services.html](https://floridaliteracy.org/about_us_programs_and_services.html)

<sup>25</sup> Comcast Internet Essentials, <https://corporate.comcast.com/impact/digital-equity/internet-essentials>

<sup>26</sup> United Way “Techquity Program,” <https://www.uwof.org/>

<sup>27</sup> “Miami Ed Tech Receives Grant from Hispanic Federation and Comcast NBCUniversal to Close the Digital Divide That Disproportionately Impacts Latinos,” Florida Internet and Television, <https://internetandtvfl.com/miami-ed-tech-receives-grant-from-hispanic-federation-and-comcast-nbcuniversal-to-close-the-digital-divide-that-disproportionately-impacts-latinos/>

<sup>28</sup> OIC of South Florida Workforce Readiness Program, <https://oicsfl.org/training-education-division/>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Digital Inclusion St. Pete, Devices, <https://www.digitalstpete.com/devices>

<sup>31</sup> CareerSource Florida, <https://careersourceflorida.com/>

<sup>32</sup> Patterson Foundation Digital Navigator Program, <https://www.thepattersonfoundation.org/digital-navigator-program.html#:~:text=The%20Patterson%20Foundation's%20Digital%20Navigator,devices%2C%20skills%2C%20and%20support.>

<sup>33</sup> “Comcast Awards Miami Dade College \$100,000 Grant to Advance Digital Equity,” Comcast Florida, <https://florida.comcast.com/2022/07/12/comcast-awards-miami-dade-college-100000-grant-to-advance-digital-equity/>

<sup>34</sup> “Community Leaders Announce Plans with Comcast to Promote Digital Inclusion,” Business Wire, <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230627184220/en/Community-Leaders-Announce-Plans-with-Comcast-to-Promote-Digital-Inclusion>

<sup>35</sup> “Community Tech House Helps to Bridge the Digital Divide,” The Weekly Challenger, <https://theweeklychallenger.com/community-tech-house-helps-to-bridge-the-digital-divide/>

<sup>36</sup> Stay Connected K-12, <https://enterprise.spectrum.com/services/industries/k-12/stay-connected.html#:~:text=Stay%20Connected%20K%2D12%20allows,teaching%20and%20working%20are%20uninterrupted.> Charter Communications K-12 Stay Connected Program, <https://enterprise.spectrum.com/services/industries/k-12/stay-connected.html>

<sup>37</sup> Comcast Internet Essentials, <https://corporate.comcast.com/impact/digital-equity/internet-essentials>

<sup>38</sup> CenturyLink Consumer Assistance Programs, <https://www.centurylink.com/aboutus/community-development/lifeline.html>

<sup>39</sup> Cox Connect2Compete, <https://www.cox.com/residential/internet/connect2compete.html>

<sup>40</sup> Spectrum Internet Assist, <https://www.spectrum.com/internet/spectrum-internet-assist?opredirect=browse-content-spectrum-internet-assist>

<sup>41</sup> Metro by T-Mobile, Connected Devices, <https://www.metrobyt-mobile.com/plans/connected-devices#:~:text=Choose%20your%20device%20data%20plan,your%20existing%20Metro%20phone%20plan.&text=Stream%2C%20scroll%2C%20and%20connect.,%2415%2Fmo.>

<sup>42</sup> Florida Digital Classrooms Plan Guidance, <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Version-8176/dps-2015-130a.pdf>

### 3.1.5 Broadband Affordability

Research shows that cost is a significant barrier to broadband adoption, especially for low-income households. According to polling conducted during a series of 10 virtual public workshops hosted by the Office of Broadband in 2021, cost was cited as the second most important factor to Florida communities regarding their broadband Internet, with reliability being the most important factor.<sup>47</sup> The relationship between cost and Internet adoption has been well documented. A 2021 Pew Research Center study on Internet use in the United States found that while only 8% of adults with annual household incomes of over \$75,000 did not have a home broadband subscription, 43% of adults with annual household incomes below \$30,000 did not have one.<sup>48</sup>

The assets described below play an important role as the state of Florida looks to continue to reduce cost barriers for residents.

Table 6: Broadband Affordability Assets

Asset <sup>49</sup>	Description
Number of residents eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.5 million eligible households as of September 2023<sup>50</sup></li> </ul>
Percent of eligible residents who have accessed the ACP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45% of eligible households (almost 1.6 million) enrolled out of 3.5 million eligible households as of September 2023<sup>51</sup></li> </ul>
Discounted or subsidized broadband service and equipment programs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Florida's E-Rate Assistance Program</a> provides a team of E-Rate coordinators to assist Florida schools and libraries at no cost with applying for the E-Rate Program using master services</li> </ul>

<sup>43</sup> BGCSDC Gene Matthews Club, <https://bgcsdc.org/our-clubs/gene-matthews-club>

<sup>44</sup> Florida Library Development Programs, <https://dos.myflorida.com/library-archives/library-development/programs/>

<sup>45</sup> The On It Foundation, <https://theonitfoundation.org/>

<sup>46</sup> Digital Inclusion St. Pete, <https://www.digitalstpete.com/>

<sup>47</sup> Florida Office of Broadband 2021 Workshop Summary, [https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/2015-community-development/ocp/obworkshopsummaryfinal5f1c2da4cbbb61cbb02aff01004f56df.pdf?sfvrsn=a0a14cb0\\_10](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/2015-community-development/ocp/obworkshopsummaryfinal5f1c2da4cbbb61cbb02aff01004f56df.pdf?sfvrsn=a0a14cb0_10)

<sup>48</sup> Pew Research Center (published on April 7, 2021), Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet. Accessed at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/#panel-2ab2b0be-6364-4d3a-8db7-ae134dbc05cd>.

<sup>49</sup> These assets mirror those outlined in Florida's BEAD plan. Section 3.1.5 of the Digital Equity Plan Guidance aligns with the guidance in Section 3.3.3 of the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan Guidance as it pertains to what programs, services, and types of organizations to include for Broadband Affordability assets.

<sup>50</sup> Affordable Connectivity Plan Dashboard, <https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/no-home-left-offline/acp-data/#dashboard>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

Asset <sup>49</sup>	Description
and/or assistance accessing these programs	<p>contracts; the team also provides schools and libraries with updated news, resources, and information on the E-Rate Program<sup>52</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Charter Communication’s K-12 Stay Connected Program</a> is a partnership with local governments and school districts that allows schools to offer high-speed, cable broadband Internet access direct to students, educators, and staff in their homes<sup>53</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Comcast’s Internet Essentials program</a> provides low-cost plans, digital access training and outreach, low-cost devices and Wi-Fi “lift” zones to help bridge the digital divide<sup>54</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">CenturyLink’s Lifeline program</a> offers low-income families with access to broadband for \$50 a month<sup>55</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Cox’s Connect2Compete program</a> provides access to a connection in all areas where Mediacom’s broadband network is present and is available for students who are on free or reduced lunch<sup>56</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Spectrum’s Internet Assist program</a> offers a low-cost, high-speed broadband service for eligible households, which include those who qualify for one of the following federal programs: National School Lunch Program (NSLP); Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the NSLP; or Supplemental Security Income<sup>57</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Metro by T-Mobile</a> offers affordable data plans for several types of digital devices<sup>58</sup></li> </ul>
Provider agreements and contracts that are near expiration (i.e., provide the opportunity for new agreements and contracts that provide more affordable broadband services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No current agreements have been identified but additional research is planned, and relevant provider agreement information will be updated as possible</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Needs Assessment

The purpose of Florida’s needs assessment is twofold: 1) to describe the baseline levels of covered populations in the state; and 2) to identify the state’s barriers to digital adoption and use both generally and specifically to those in designated covered populations. This information will be drawn from several sources, such as the NTIA Internet Use Survey, the NTIA Indicators of Broadband Need Map,

<sup>52</sup> Florida E-Rate Assistance Program, [https://www.dms.myflorida.com/business\\_operations/telecommunications/suncom2/e\\_rate](https://www.dms.myflorida.com/business_operations/telecommunications/suncom2/e_rate)

<sup>53</sup> Stay Connected K-12, <https://enterprise.spectrum.com/services/industries/k-12/stay-connected.html#:~:text=Stay%20Connected%20K%2D12%20allows,teaching%20and%20working%20are%20uninterrupted>. Charter Communications K-12 Stay Connected Program, <https://enterprise.spectrum.com/services/industries/k-12/stay-connected.html>

<sup>54</sup> Comcast Internet Essentials, <https://corporate.comcast.com/impact/digital-equity/internet-essentials>

<sup>55</sup> CenturyLink Consumer Assistance Programs, <https://www.centurylink.com/aboutus/community/community-development/lifeline.html>

<sup>56</sup> Cox Connect2Compete, <https://www.cox.com/residential/internet/connect2compete.html>

<sup>57</sup> Spectrum Internet Assist, <https://www.spectrum.com/internet/spectrum-internet-assist?opredirect=browse-content-spectrum-internet-assist>

<sup>58</sup> Metro by T-Mobile, Connected Devices, <https://www.metrobyt-mobile.com/plans/connected-devices#:~:text=Choose%20your%20device%20data%20plan,your%20existing%20Metro%20phone%20plan.&text=Stream%2C%20scroll%2C%20and%20connect.,%2415%2Fmo>



and ACS. Plans to decrease the digital adoption and use gap will continue from the baselines established in this section.

Florida is one of the most diverse states in the U.S. across the eight covered populations outlined in the Digital Equity Grant Planning Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). In seven of the eight covered populations, a greater percentage of Florida’s population is composed of more members of covered populations than the national average (see Figure 4: Covered Populations in Florida). This relationship is particularly pronounced across three populations: *minority groups*, *aging individuals*, and *individuals facing language barriers*. At the same time, the percentage of Florida’s population living in *rural communities* is considerably smaller than the national average (8.5% vs. 20%). While the percentage of Florida’s rural population may be relatively small, the impact of these communities is significant as nearly 2 million Floridians in these communities often live in unserved or underserved communities. Availability of broadband in these areas will be a focus for BEAD funding.

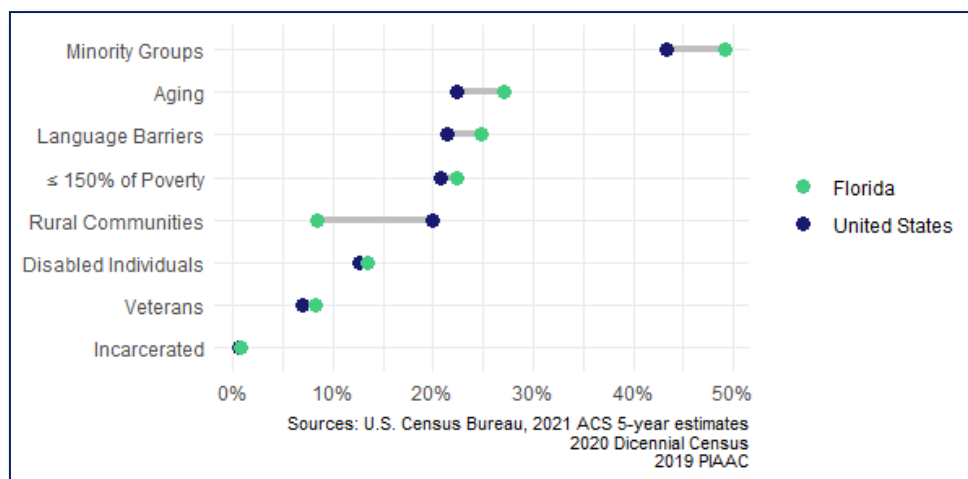


Figure 4: Covered Populations in Florida<sup>59</sup>

In terms of broadband connectivity, Florida is noteworthy in two ways. On the one hand, a significantly higher percentage of Floridians have access to broadband compared to the national average. This ranks Florida in the upper half of states in terms of broadband availability.

19<sup>th</sup> Highest

Percent of population in areas where fixed broadband is available (96.3% vs. 94.1% national average) \*

2<sup>nd</sup> Highest

Population not using the Internet (25.4% vs. 18.4% national average) \*\*

3<sup>rd</sup> Highest

Population not using a desktop, laptop, or tablet computer (40% vs. 33% national average) \*\*

Statistics via NTIA Digital Equity Act Population Viewer; \* FCC Fourteenth Broadband Deployment Report (2021), includes fixed broadband only; \*\* National Telecommunications and Information Administration Internet Use

<sup>59</sup> Population information on minority groups, aging individuals, individuals up to 150% of the federal poverty line, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and incarcerated individuals is from 2021 ACS 5-year estimates; information on individuals from rural communities is from 2020 Decennial Census; and information on individuals facing language barriers is from 2019 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) and 2019 1-year estimates (via the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer).

On the other hand, while Floridians enjoy a high rate of broadband access, they also reflect some of the country’s highest levels of residents not using either the Internet or digital devices (e.g., PCs, laptops, or tablet computers). Florida is second only to Nevada in the highest percentage of state residents who do not use the Internet and is tied with Texas for the third highest percentage of residents who do not use PCs, laptops, or tablets.

Evidence suggests that the divergence between broadband coverage and digital resource usage may be driven in part by Florida’s large aging population (see Figure 6). In Florida, individuals ages 65 and older are nearly 9% less likely to have broadband Internet than those ages 18 to 64. Adults ages 18-64 are also four times more likely to have a computer than those over 65. This age-based variation should be considered when trying to increase broadband and computer usage across the state.

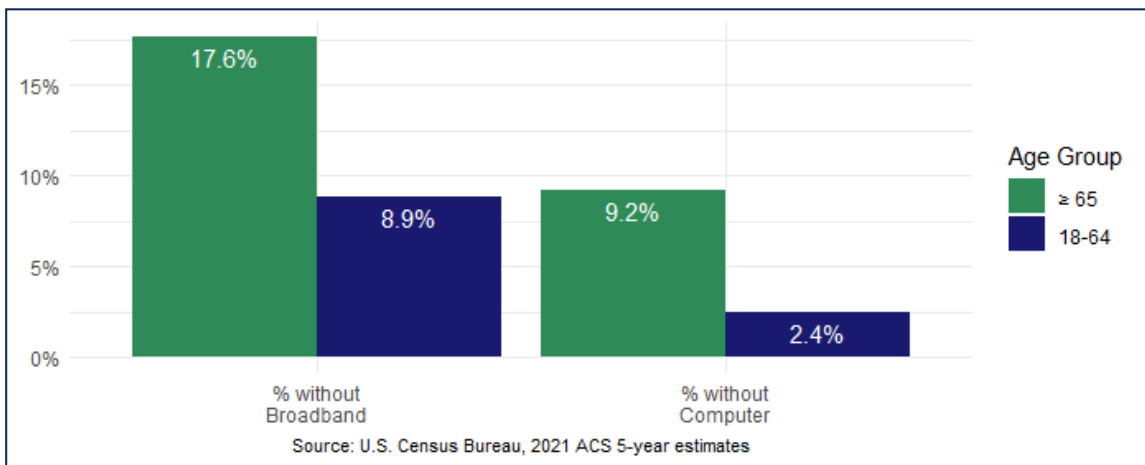


Figure 6: Household Broadband Use and Computer Ownership by Age Group in Florida

### 3.2.1 Covered Population Needs Assessment

Months of stakeholder engagement (including one-on-one interviews, six public in-person workshops, three public webinars, and a series of questionnaires tailored to stakeholder groups), research and analysis of covered populations in Florida, and strategic work conducted by the Office of Broadband have identified several of the most pressing obstacles facing the residents of the state. These obstacles can be separated into two categories of barriers: adoption and affordability. While these categories are not exhaustive, they represent the primary challenges affecting Floridians and the areas in which investment will offer the greatest benefit to residents. In addition, while barriers to broadband access stemming from adoption and affordability concerns may apply to any resident of Florida, these barriers affect individuals belonging to covered populations even more acutely. The remainder of this section will explore the contours of these covered populations in Florida and discuss the challenges faced by these groups.

*Households with Income at or Below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, or “Covered Households”* Individuals living in “a household, the income of which for the most recently completed year is not more than 150% of an amount equal to the poverty level, as determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census” face the greatest number of obstacles to accessing broadband Internet of all covered populations.<sup>60,61</sup> Anything affecting broadband affordability understandably limits the ability of this population to buy broadband services at a price that is not cost-prohibitive. The knock-on effects of these cost-based limitations continue to limit adoption (e.g., limited digital literacy). Given that the price of broadband is a major limitation to uptake, individuals living in covered households are a major focus of BEAD funding.<sup>62</sup>

### *Aging Individuals*

Florida has a significant number of residents over the age of 60 in comparison to other states. Figure 7 outlines the composition of Florida’s population by the age of its residents. Florida is significantly older than the rest of the country; it has both a lower percentage of residents under the age of 18 (20% vs. 22.5%) and a higher percentage of residents who are at least 60 years old (27% vs. 22.4%).

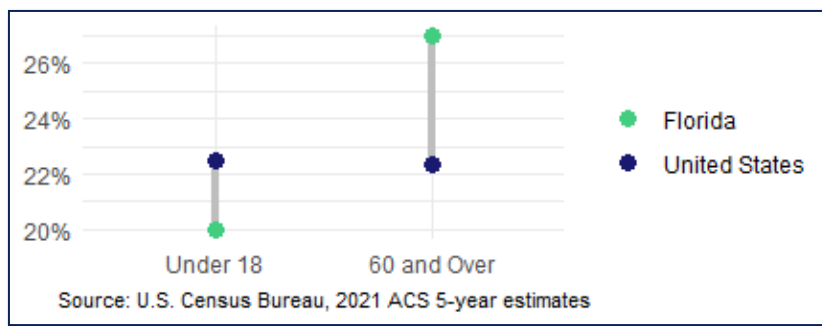


Figure 7: Florida Population by Age

Aging individuals are particularly at risk of experiencing limited digital literacy as these residents are also less likely to use the Internet or personal computers than other groups (see Figure 6 above). Because many members of this covered population are also retired and therefore rely on a fixed income, aging people may be vulnerable to losing access to broadband if prices increase.

### *Incarcerated Individuals*

Individuals in this population are oftentimes limited in their access to digital devices which can limit their capacity to learn new digital skills. It is important for people to have such skills to establish careers outside of the penal system to reduce recidivism.

### *Veterans*

Veterans face a nuanced set of barriers to digital adoption and use. While the overall population of veterans tend to fare well in American society – for example, they are less likely to be below the poverty line than nonveterans – they are at risk of lacking full access to broadband services due to their increased likelihood of being in additional covered populations. As shown in Figure 8 below, veterans in Florida are more likely to be 55 or older compared to the rest of the population (13.7% vs. 4.1%).

<sup>60</sup> Notice of Funding Opportunity – State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, NTIA, <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/DE%20PLANNING%20GRANT%20NOFO.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Digital Inequality and Low-Income Households, Department of Housing and Urban Development, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall16/highlight2.html>

<sup>62</sup> Digital Inequality and Low-Income Households, Department of Housing and Urban Development, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall16/highlight2.html>

Floridian veterans are also more than twice as likely to have a disability than non-veterans (29.6% vs. 14.4%). Other studies have shown that “rural Americans are disproportionately represented in the veteran population, comprising 19% of all U.S. veterans compared with 16% of the general population.”<sup>63</sup> Issues that disproportionately affect people who are older, who have disabilities, and/or who live in rural communities, therefore, are more likely to impact veterans as well.

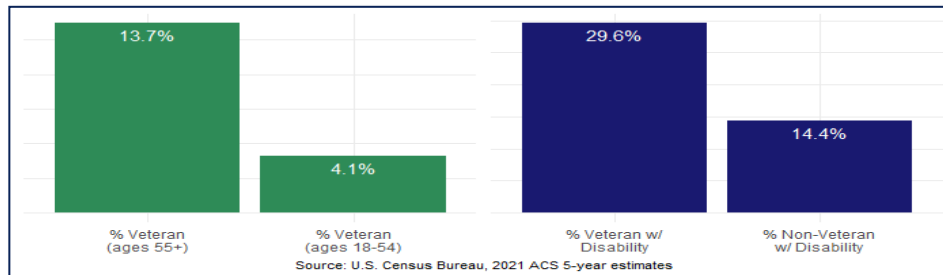


Figure 8: Veterans in Other Covered Populations

### Individuals with Disabilities

People with disabilities may require accommodations to fully access broadband Internet. Such accommodations may include physical devices or supporting materials with assistive/adaptive technology. Without access to these technologies, people with disabilities may find it challenging to maintain or improve their digital literacy. If someone’s disability limits their ability to commute to or otherwise work on-site, they may rely upon hybrid or remote working conditions that require digital literacy. Provision of these accommodations will allow people with disabilities to benefit from expanded broadband Internet services in Florida.

### Individuals with Language Barriers and Low Literacy Skills

People with language barriers (i.e., English learners and individuals with low levels of literacy) face similar challenges to individuals with disabilities; namely individuals facing language barriers may require supporting materials and/or digital devices that are available in their home language to access broadband. In addition, individuals with low literacy skills may also require supporting materials.

The Hispanic identity of many Floridians is reflected in languages other than English spoken in the state (see Figure 9). While the number of speakers of languages other than English and Spanish in Florida is similar to the proportion in the whole of the United States (7.9% vs. 8.5%), Florida has a significantly larger percentage of Spanish-speakers than the rest of the country (22% vs. 13.2%). Not only do a higher percentage of Floridians speak Spanish than do residents of the United States at-large, but Floridian Spanish-speakers also report speaking English “less than very well” at higher rates than Spanish-speakers elsewhere (42% vs. 39.5%).<sup>64</sup>

Low literacy can negatively impact Floridian’s ability to read, understand, and process information displayed on screens and devices. In addition, by hindering technology use, low literacy prevents individuals with from experiencing any of the vast benefits that Internet use and connectivity can offer.

<sup>63</sup> Rural Veterans at a Glance, Department of Agriculture, [https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/42891/40612\\_eb25.pdf?v=0#:~:text=Thus%2C%20rural%20Americans%20are%20disproportionately,percent%20of%20the%20general%20population](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/42891/40612_eb25.pdf?v=0#:~:text=Thus%2C%20rural%20Americans%20are%20disproportionately,percent%20of%20the%20general%20population)

<sup>64</sup> Speakers of non-English languages other than Spanish, meanwhile, report greater English proficiency than similar individuals nationwide (33.5% vs. 36.3%).

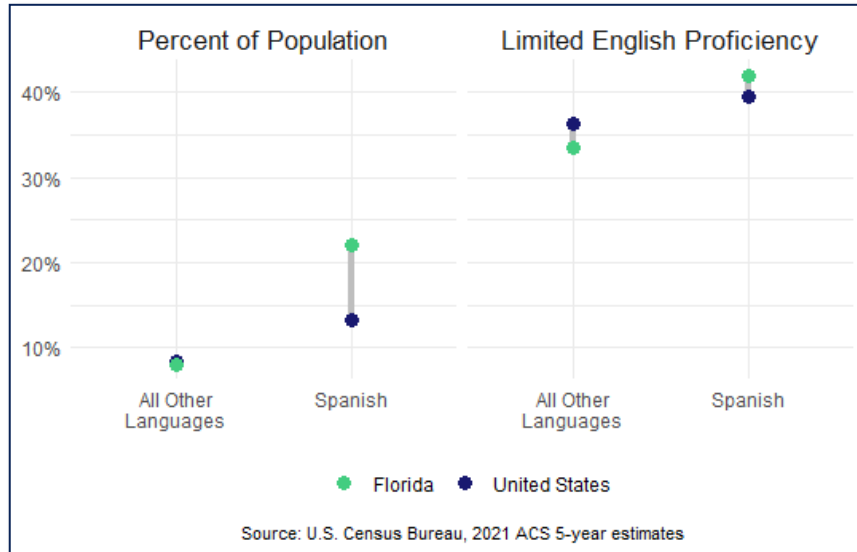


Figure 9: Languages Other than English Spoken and Limited English Proficiency in Florida

*Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group*

Florida seeks to increase access to technology and increase digital literacy for all covered populations, including racial and ethnic minority groups. The existence of gaps in internet use and device ownership for some racial and ethnic minority groups is well documented, as noted within the New NTIA Data Show Enduring Barriers to Closing the Digital Divide, Achieving Digital Equity | National Telecommunications and Information Administration.<sup>65</sup> Even in Florida, the percent of households without an Internet subscription varies by race and ethnicity, as well as the percent of households with no computer in the household as documented within Section 2802 of the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>66</sup>

Members of racial and ethnic minority groups are also more likely to overlap with some of the other covered groups, such as households with a household income at or below 150% of the federal poverty level or individuals with language barriers. These are examples of individuals who may confront multiple barriers to digital access and literacy. Figure 10 below demonstrates that Florida’s most prominent outlying demographic groups are Hispanic individuals and African Americans.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.ntia.gov/blog/2022/new-ntia-data-show-enduring-barriers-closing-digital-divide-achieving-digital-equity>

<sup>66</sup> <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2802?q=Florida>

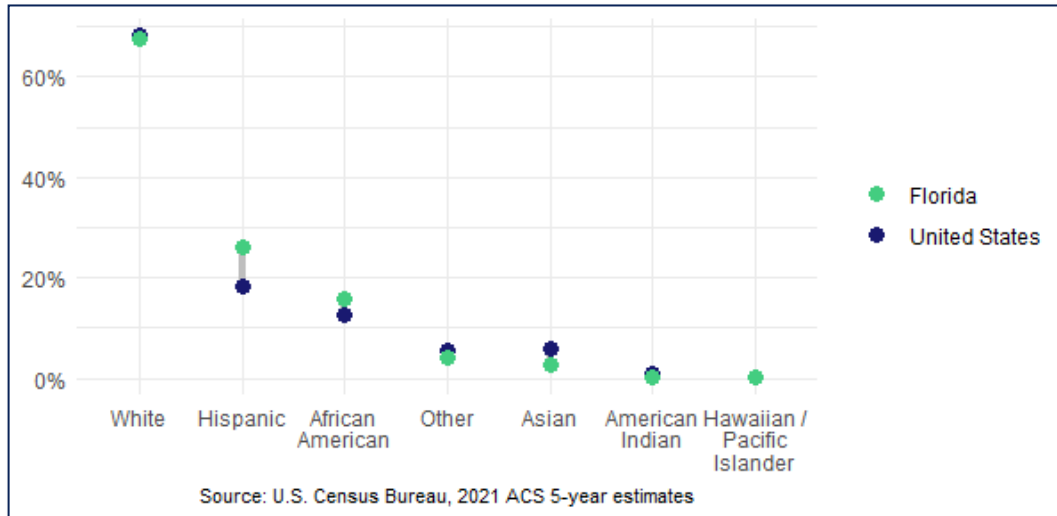


Figure 10: Florida's Demographic Composition by Racial and Ethnic Identification

*Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area*

Rural communities are defined by the state of Florida as “a county with a population of 75,000 or less; a county with a population of 125,000 or less which is contiguous to a county of 75,000 or less; any municipality within one such county; and/or an unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in paragraph (c) and verified by the department.”<sup>67</sup> Rural areas in Florida face challenges stemming from the lack of broadband infrastructure. The lack of broadband infrastructure has resulted in high Internet service prices in rural areas, which in turn has made it difficult for rural residents and CAIs to consistently access the Internet. Investment in rural broadband infrastructure should significantly improve uptake of these services.

*Conclusion: Barriers to Covered Populations*

Florida is one of the most diverse states in the U.S. across the eight covered populations outlined in the Digital Equity Grant Planning Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Florida has a higher percentage of residents who are *aging*, *facing language barriers*, and/or who claim *Hispanic heritage*. At the same time, the relative percentage of *rural* residents in Florida is smaller than in the rest of the country. Ultimately, all eight of Florida's covered populations face barriers to accessing broadband Internet. These *adoption* and *affordability* barriers and their application to covered populations are summarized in Table 7. The following two sections will investigate these barriers and consider how their associated obstacles apply to covered populations in Florida.

<sup>67</sup> Section 288.0656 (Rural Economic Development Initiative), Florida Statutes, [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=0200-0299/0288/Sections/0288.0656.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0200-0299/0288/Sections/0288.0656.html)

Table 7: Barriers to Covered Populations Identified Through Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Potential Barriers	Obstacles	Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level	Aging individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Individuals with Disabilities	Individuals with a Language Barrier	Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group	Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
Adoption	Limited digital literacy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Lack of accessible supporting resources					✓	✓	✓	
	Community skepticism about government and / or private companies	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Affordability	Insufficient digital infrastructure	✓						✓	✓
	Unaffordable broadband service	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
	Limited access to or ownership of digital devices	✓		✓		✓	✓		
	Insufficient digital capacity of CAIs	✓		✓					✓

### 3.2.2 Broadband Adoption

Adoption refers to social barriers which limit Floridians' ability and/or willingness to take advantage of broadband Internet services even when such services are available in their areas. Unlike affordability concerns, which stem from challenges rooted in supply-and-demand factors, adoption barriers can be addressed with increased education, communication, and consideration of special accommodations for some groups. Adoption obstacles include:

- Limited digital literacy;
- Lack of accessible supporting resources (e.g., unavailability of application materials in home language, lack of technical support for individuals with visual or auditory impairments); and
- Community skepticism about government and/or private companies.

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#### Broadband Adoption Obstacle 1: Limited digital literacy

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At-Risk Covered Populations:

- Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier

*Digital literacy* refers to “the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.”<sup>68</sup> Individuals lacking in digital literacy skills find it difficult to effectively use or otherwise understand digital resources like computers or the Internet. Individuals in several covered populations are more vulnerable to digital literacy concerns than others. It is important to note that negative impacts of knowledge and skill gaps in digital literacy threaten to grow as more work and educational opportunities have moved to remote and hybrid models. As digital telehealth services continue to expand, moreover, individuals who benefit from remote health care (such as aging people, veterans, people with disabilities, or people from rural communities) may be disproportionately harmed by poor digital literacy.

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#### Broadband Adoption Obstacle 2: Lack of accessible supporting resources

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At-Risk Covered Populations:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group

A lack of *accessible supporting resources* refers to materials related to information about how to apply for discounted broadband services, technical support, or learning opportunities. Such resources may be inaccessible for a variety of reasons. For example, resources may only be offered in English or specific dialects of other languages. Translations also may be overly technical or lacking specificity. Similarly, resources may not be accessible for individuals with disabilities who may require audiovisual accommodations such as closed captioning. A lack of accessibility can also stem from inappropriate communications strategies; institutions which rely primarily on social media or email communications may miss individuals with poor connectivity.

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<sup>68</sup>Digital Literacy, American Library Association, <https://literacy.ala.org/digital-literacy/>



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Broadband Adoption Obstacle 3: Community skepticism about government and/or private companies

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At-Risk Covered Populations:

- Covered households
- Incarcerated individuals
- Individuals with language barriers
- Individuals who are members of a racial / ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

A final challenge to adoption stems from some *communities' relationships with government and/or private companies*. These relationships can be influenced by several factors. Low-income individuals may mistrust ISPs if they have experiences of unexpected fees or disconnected service, while rural residents may be skeptical of interactions with previously unknown ISPs.<sup>69</sup> Many communities affected by the digital divide are those near less profitable locations for ISPs to offer their service, and therefore have been overlooked by these providers; these communities may carry adoption skepticism because of this prior experience with ISPs. Concerted efforts to effectively communicate with and understand the interests of all communities and to work alongside trusted voices within those communities will be crucial for successful broadband expansion in Florida.<sup>70</sup>

### 3.2.3 Broadband Affordability

Affordability refers to economic concerns which restrict Floridians' ability to acquire or otherwise use broadband Internet at an affordable cost. Several material conditions contribute to a lack of affordable Internet service options, such as:

- Constrained supply due to insufficient infrastructure;
- Prohibitively expensive broadband service options;
- Limited access to or ownership of digital devices by residents; and/or
- A lack of sufficient digital capacity on the part of community anchor institutions (CAI).

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#### Broadband Affordability Obstacle 1: Insufficient digital infrastructure

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At-Risk Covered Populations:

- Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

*Insufficient infrastructure* negatively impacts the supply of broadband and limits the ability of individuals to access an affordable Internet connection. Deploying broadband infrastructure requires high capital investment costs for ISPs. Existing ISP infrastructure investments, consequently, have been undertaken in areas where consumers are high in density and/or income. As a result, the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) and other federal efforts have sought to alleviate this gap. However, the fact remains that communities in less densely populated and/or less affluent areas have had limited access to necessary broadband infrastructure because “according to the FCC, the present cost of serving these areas exceeds expected revenues.”<sup>71</sup> To this point, the lack of digital infrastructure in these areas has forced residents to absorb high costs, to rely on CAIs, and/or to forgo broadband Internet altogether.

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<sup>69</sup> Broadband Challenges and Opportunities in Affordable Rental Housing, Pew Charitable Trusts, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/zh/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2023/04/broadband-challenges-and-opportunities-in-affordable-rental-housing>

<sup>70</sup> Advancing Digital Equity for All: Barriers & Strategies, Department of Education, <https://tech.ed.gov/advancing-digital-equity-for-all/barriers-and-strategies/>

<sup>71</sup> Understanding the Broadband Access Gap, Department of Housing and Urban Development, [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr\\_edge\\_featd\\_article\\_100614.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_100614.html)

## Broadband Adoption Obstacle 2: Unaffordable broadband service

At-Risk Covered Populations:

- Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Aging individuals
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

Beyond the constrained supply of broadband infrastructure, other factors may lead to broadband service options that are prohibitively expensive to consumers. For example, lack of competition between ISPs can have adverse effects on consumers. According to the think tank Public Knowledge, “most Americans have at most two options for a broadband provider and 35% only have one option. Studies show that prices for bundled packages with high-speed Internet connectivity are about \$25 higher per month than they should be due to lack of competition.”<sup>72</sup> Figure 11 below offers an overview of providers within each county in Florida. Broadband may also be unaffordable due to a household’s socioeconomic status because “even when infrastructure investments deliver network access to unserved and underserved communities, families won’t benefit unless they can afford Internet service.”<sup>73</sup> During a series of 10 regional workshops held by FloridaCommerce with industry leaders and statewide partners in 2021 to discuss broadband needs and opportunities, the issue of cost was identified as one of the most significant barriers to broadband accessibility.<sup>74</sup> These external drivers of the lack of broadband affordability in the United States imply that an expansion of broadband infrastructure alone may not close the country’s digital divide.

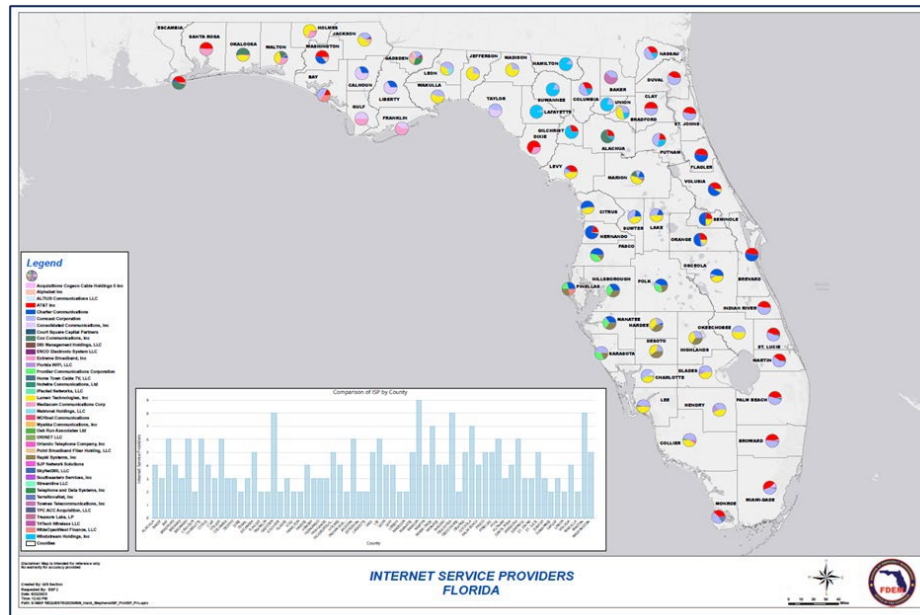


Figure 11: Florida ISPs

<sup>72</sup> The Path to Broadband Affordability, Public Knowledge, <https://publicknowledge.org/the-path-to-broadband-affordability/>

<sup>73</sup> Closing the Digital Divide With the Affordable Connectivity Program, Pew Charitable Trusts, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2023/06/01/closing-the-digital-divide-with-the-affordable-connectivity-program>

<sup>74</sup> Florida Office of Broadband 2021 Workshop Summary, [https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/2015-community-development/ocp/obworkshopsummaryfinal5f1c2da4cbbb61cbb02aff01004f56df.pdf?sfvrsn=a0a14cb0\\_10](https://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/2015-community-development/ocp/obworkshopsummaryfinal5f1c2da4cbbb61cbb02aff01004f56df.pdf?sfvrsn=a0a14cb0_10)

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### Broadband Adoption Obstacle 3: Limited access to or ownership of digital devices

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At-Risk Covered Populations:

- Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level
  - Incarcerated individuals
  - Individuals with disabilities
  - Individuals with a language barrier
- 

Even if individuals have access to broadband Internet services, *limited access to or ownership of digital devices* may restrict their ability to effectively use those services. Desktop and laptop computers are important tools to access information and to improve digital literacy, but they can be prohibitively expensive for less affluent families. Although those without personal computers can supplement their lack of access using a smartphone, “being limited to smartphone-only Internet access is associated with data cap limits, risk of service cancellations or suspensions due to financial constraints. In addition to the difficulty of performing essential tasks such as applying for jobs or writing papers on a smartphone’s small screen.”<sup>75</sup> Therefore, in-home broadband availability is insufficient to guarantee that families reap the full benefits of Internet access.

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### Broadband Adoption Obstacle 4: Insufficient digital capacity of CAIs

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At-Risk Covered Populations:

- Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Incarcerated people
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

Finally, for individuals without the ability to use broadband Internet at home, a *lack of sufficient digital capacity on the part of CAIs* may prohibit their Internet access entirely. CAIs play an important role in connecting communities with reliable, high-speed Internet across the country. While expanding infrastructure to remote areas has proven costly, expansion focused on CAIs offers strong potential return on investment given the considerable number of individuals utilizing their services. Some CAIs, however, lack funding and the resulting capacity to meet community needs.

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<sup>75</sup> Digital Inequality and Low-Income Households, Department of Housing and Urban Development, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall16/highlight2.html>

## 4 Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

### 4.1 Coordination and Outreach Strategy

At its heart, this plan is a community-based approach to identify and meet service needs in unserved and underserved areas. Because of this, the stakeholder engagement process is a critical component in both creating this plan and implementing it. Importantly, Florida’s Digital Adoption and Use Plan implementation strategy will align with and complement its BEAD Five-Year Action Plan outreach and engagement plan.

This section details the following elements of Florida’s stakeholder engagement process:

- [4.1.1 Stakeholder Engagement Principles](#) – Describes how the stakeholder engagement process aligns to NTIA local coordination evaluation criteria.
- [4.1.2 Stakeholder Identification](#) – Describes process for identifying stakeholders.
- [4.1.3 Engagement Activities](#) – Describes specific engagement mechanisms and activities used in plan development.
- [4.1.4 Scale of Outreach](#) – Describes the magnitude of stakeholder engagement activities.
- [4.1.5 Plans for Future Engagement](#) – Describes how the stakeholder engagement process will continue into future BEAD phases.

#### 4.1.1 Stakeholder Engagement Principles

The Office of Broadband referenced and considered the local coordination evaluation criteria included in the BEAD and DE NOFO and guidance when developing its stakeholder engagement process. As displayed in Table 8 below, the Office of Broadband implemented key engagement principles identified by the NTIA throughout the engagement process.

Table 8: Implementing Stakeholder Engagement Principles

Stakeholder Engagement Principle	Implementation Activities During Plan Development
Provide opportunities for the entire state of Florida to participate in plan development process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosted six public in-person workshops across Florida, as detailed in Figure 12</li> <li>• Hosted three public virtual workshops and posted webinar recordings on website</li> <li>• Provided contact email for stakeholders and the public to ask Office of Broadband questions and provide feedback</li> </ul>
Meaningfully engage diverse stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As detailed in Table 14 and Table 15, diverse stakeholder groups received outreach to participate in plan development activities through questionnaires, interviews, and in-person and virtual workshops</li> <li>• The Office of Broadband engaged with stakeholder groups it had not previously engaged</li> </ul>
Use multiple awareness and participation mechanisms to share information and outreach to stakeholder groups and Floridians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Office of Broadband deployed several mechanisms to support public awareness of engagement opportunities as detailed in <a href="#">Section 4.1.3</a></li> </ul>

Stakeholder Engagement Principle	Implementation Activities During Plan Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public in-person and virtual workshop information was shared on the Office of Broadband’s website during plan development process in June and July 2023. Information was also shared through FloridaCommerce’s stakeholder listserv</li> </ul>
<p>Establish, document, and follow clear procedures to ensure transparent plan development process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As further detailed in <a href="#">Section 4.1.3</a>, the Office of Broadband: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared virtual workshop recordings and presentations on the Office of Broadband’s website</li> <li>Continues to maintain an email inbox for stakeholders and Floridians to ask questions or provide feedback about plan development</li> <li>Provided Spanish interpretation services at all in-person workshops</li> <li>Provided American Sign Language interpretation services at all in-person and virtual workshops</li> <li>Provided an updated map on the Office of Broadband’s website that shows what areas have received funds under current or past grant programs to inform BEAD process</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Engage and outreach to unserved and underserved communities, including historically underrepresented and marginalized groups and/or communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified stakeholders it had not previously engaged with in the plan development process</li> </ul>

#### 4.1.2 Stakeholder Identification

Since its inception, the Office of Broadband has engaged stakeholders on broadband deployment and digital use and adoption. The Office of Broadband will continue to build on its previous stakeholder engagement successes and networks throughout the BEAD development process to account for Florida’s varied and unique needs, barriers, and opportunities of its citizens and communities in this plan.

The Office of Broadband specifically targeted the following types of stakeholder groups and entities to engage in the development process of this Digital Adoption and Use Plan based on NTIA guidance:

- Government entities - State agencies, (Education, Veterans Affairs, Elder Affairs, Children and Families, Persons with Disabilities, etc.) local governments
- Community anchor institutions<sup>76</sup> – Industrial, commercial and office park worksites, schools, libraries, medical and health care points of access, housing providers, public safety entities, institutions of higher education, and other community organizations that provide outreach,

<sup>76</sup> The Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband (Pages 11 and 41), [https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0\\_2](https://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/community-planning-development-and-services/broadband/the-florida-broadband-strategic-plan.pdf?sfvrsn=f76e55b0_2)

access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband Internet service by the entire population and local governments

- Local Technology Planning Teams – Statutorily created county-level teams devoted to technology and broadband planning for communities<sup>77</sup>
- Organizations supporting covered populations – Non-profits, community organizations, etc. that specifically target to serve one or more covered populations
- Workforce and economic development organizations – Chambers of Commerce, CareerSource Florida, Local Workforce Development Boards, labor organizations
- Private industry – Internet service providers and industry associations
- Florida’s Federally Recognized Tribes – the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida

The Office of Broadband identified these types of specific stakeholder groups and entities through the following methods:

- Previous engagement/contact – Stakeholder groups that previously engaged with the Office of Broadband through activities like developing its Strategic Plan or contacted the Office of Broadband about Florida’s BEAD plan development
- Desk research – Internet searches and research
- Existing structures – Local Technology Planning Teams, inter-agency collaborations
- Recommendations/word of mouth – Referrals from organizations or community members about other organizations or entities to engage in the planning process

Table 14 in Section 4.1.3 further details the scale of outreach efforts to stakeholder groups.

### 4.1.3 Engagement Activities

The Office of Broadband used multi-faceted and varied stakeholder engagement tactics to outreach and solicit feedback. The Office of Broadband will engage stakeholders through the following activities that are detailed further in this section:

- [4.1.3.1 Opportunities for Public Comment](#)
- [4.1.3.2. Local Technology Planning Teams](#)
- [4.1.3.3 Office of Broadband Website](#)
- [4.1.3.4 In-Person Community Engagement Public Workshops](#)
- [4.1.3.5 Virtual Community Engagement Public Workshops](#)
- [4.1.3.6 Community and Broadband Events](#)
- [4.1.3.7 Questionnaires](#)
- [4.1.3.8 Interviews](#)
- [4.1.3.9 Tribal Engagement](#)

#### 4.1.3.1 Opportunities for Public Comment

This plan was developed with input and engagement of stakeholders including discussions at the first annual Florida Broadband Summit. Additionally, as required by the Digital Equity Planning Grant NOFO, the Office of Broadband provided opportunity for public comment on its Digital Adoption and Use (DAU) Plan. The DAU Plan was posted on the Office of Broadband’s website for public

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<sup>77</sup> Fla. Stat. § 288.9961(4)(b)



Review and feedback for 30 days. The Office hosted a webinar to provide information on the DAUP and how to leave a public comment. The Office also provided technical assistance to any commenter who needed it. Public comments were accepted through mail and email.

Following the conclusion of the Public Comment Period, the Office of Broadband compiled and reviewed comments to draw out major themes and feedback. Responses to public comment were developed. The DAU was updated as appropriate to reflect any relevant considerations. A summary of public comments and the Office's responses can be found within [7.3 Appendix C: Summary of DAU Public Comments](#).

#### 4.1.3.2 Local Technology Planning Teams

LTPTs serve as the bridge between communities and the Office of Broadband. As established under section 288.9961(4)(b), Florida Statutes, LTPTs are county-level teams that “work with rural communities to help the communities understand their current broadband availability, locate unserved and underserved businesses and residents, identify assets relevant to broadband deployment, build partnerships with broadband service providers, and identify opportunities to leverage assets and reduce barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the community.” The Office of Broadband used the LTPT structure to disseminate information about plan development progress, public engagement opportunities to inform the plan, and to solicit local plans.

LTPTs may include but are not limited to representatives from libraries; K-12 education; colleges and universities; local health care providers; private businesses; community organizations; economic development organizations; local governments; tourism; parks and recreation; and agriculture.<sup>78</sup>

#### 4.1.3.3 Office of Broadband Website

The Office of Broadband used its website to invite all interested stakeholders and Floridians to participate in six in-person and three virtual workshops. The website also includes the recordings and presentation from each of the three virtual workshops.

The Office of Broadband website also shares a general contact email inbox that is regularly monitored to field stakeholder and community questions and feedback. Interested visitors can also subscribe to receive updates on the Office of Broadband's activities and initiatives, including many of the engagements outlined in this plan.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband, *Local Technology Planning Teams*, <https://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/broadband/office-of-broadband/local-technology-planning-teams>

<sup>79</sup> FloridaCommerce Office of Broadband, *Sign-up to receive updates from DEO's Office of Broadband*, <https://cloud.communications.deo.myflorida.com/Broadband>

#### 4.1.3.4 In-Person Community Engagement Public Workshops

The Office of Broadband hosted six in-person workshops across Florida that were open to the public, as detailed in Figure 12.

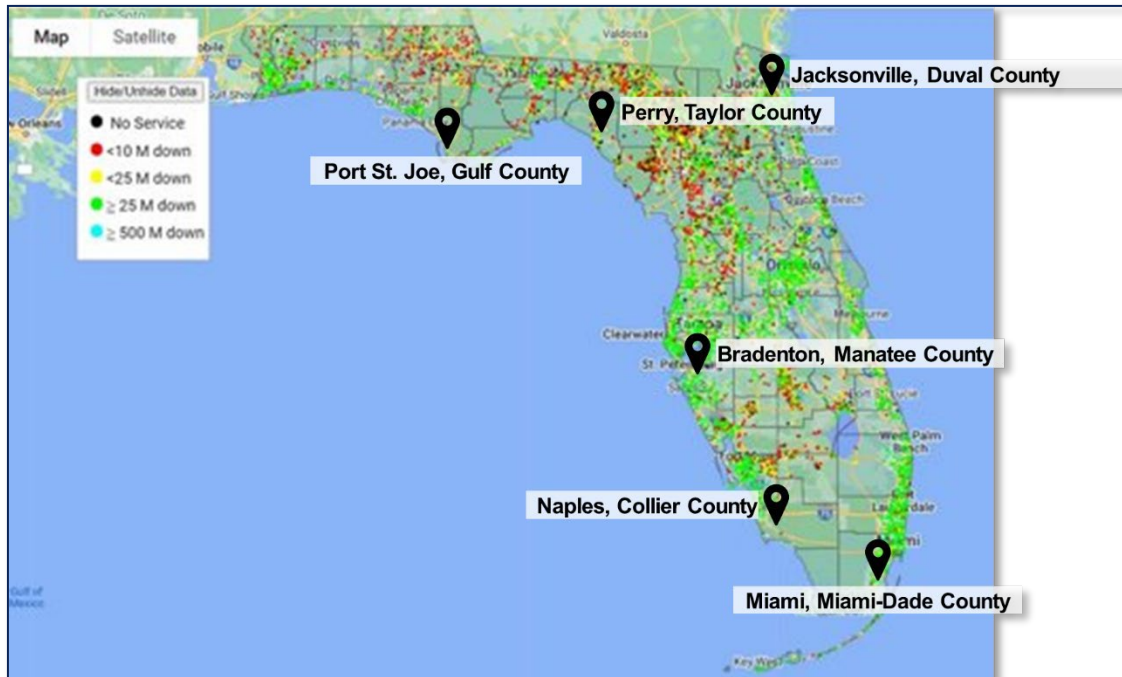


Figure 12: Map of Broadband Workshops

Workshops were scheduled for 90 minutes and focused on hearing directly from Floridians about barriers to Internet access and digital adoption and use. A sample workshop agenda is available in Table 9.

Time	Activity
10 min	Welcome and Introduction
10 min	Broadband 101
20 min	Overview of Federal Broadband Programs
15 min	Group Discussion
20 min	Interactive Activity
15 min	Q&A / Public Comment

Table 9. Sample In-Person Broadband Workshop Agenda

Workshops began with introductory remarks from FloridaCommerce and the Office of Broadband leaders. Workshop facilitators then gave an overview of what is broadband and its current state in Florida to develop a shared understanding about broadband concepts. Facilitators then shared information about BEAD and Digital Adoption and Use plans including timelines, eligible uses of funding, and program priorities. Facilitators then led a group discussion and activity with participants about what community members use the Internet for, barriers to accessing the Internet, and solutions to identified barriers. The Office of Broadband then heard public comments and answered questions from workshop participants.

American sign language (ASL) and Spanish interpretation services were offered at each workshop. Additionally, the FLORIDA Channel, a public affairs programming service funded by the Florida Legislature and produced and operated by WFSU-TV, broadcasted three workshops on PBS multicast channels, cable systems, and public, education and government access channels across the state. The FLORIDA Channel also recorded and publicly posted the recordings of the three workshops it broadcasted on its website.

#### 4.1.3.5 Virtual Community Engagement Public Workshops

The Office of Broadband hosted three virtual workshops that were open to the public. Like the in-person workshops, the virtual workshops were scheduled for 90 minutes and focused on hearing directly from Floridians about barriers to Internet access and digital adoption and use. A sample workshop agenda is available in Table 10.

Time	Activity
10 minutes	Welcome and Introduction
10 minutes	Broadband 101
20 minutes	Overview of Federal Broadband Programs
10 minutes	Interactive Activity
40 minutes	Q&A / Wrap Up

*Table 10. Sample In-Person Broadband Workshop Agenda*

Workshops began with introductory remarks from FloridaCommerce and the Office of Broadband leaders. Workshop facilitators then gave an overview of broadband and its current state in Florida to develop a shared understanding about broadband concepts. Facilitators then shared information about BEAD and Digital Adoption and Use plans including timelines, eligible uses of funding, and program priorities. Using the Office of Broadband’s public inbox, the meeting poll and chat features, facilitators then led participants in an activity about what community members use the Internet for, barriers to accessing the Internet, and solutions to identified barriers. The Office of Broadband then answered questions from workshop participants.

ASL interpretation services were offered at each workshop. Additionally, the FLORIDA Channel broadcasted the virtual workshops on PBS multicast channels, cable systems, and public, education and government access channels across the state. The FLORIDA Channel also recorded and publicly posted the recordings of the three workshops it broadcasted on its website.

#### 4.1.3.6 Community and Broadband Events

Aside from participation in public events across the state, the Office also hosted its own Broadband Summit from September 21-22, at Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando to bring together industry leaders, local government officials, workforce and economic development professionals, and community advocates to discuss the expansion of broadband Internet and its impact on infrastructure, business and job growth in Florida. Because of the intersectional nature of broadband deployment efforts and the vast numbers of stakeholders involved in the efforts, the Office knows that multiple opportunities for public input and updates is a key step to delivering broadband coverage to the state.

#### 4.1.3.7 Questionnaires

The Office of Broadband also developed questionnaires to provide another feedback avenue. A general “stakeholder questionnaire” as well as a more focused “ISP questionnaire” were sent to 262 stakeholder groups and ISPs and 33 total responses were received between both questionnaires.

The stakeholder questionnaire focused on gathering information about the covered populations (if any) the organization serves, feedback on Florida’s community anchor institutions definition, community programs to support Internet access, and feedback on how the Office of Broadband can improve access to the Internet, Internet capable devices, and digital skills in Florida. The ISP questionnaire focused on gathering information about workforce needs, challenges to expanding broadband infrastructure, the ISP’s current income-restricted or low-cost offerings, and feedback on how the Office of Broadband can improve access to the Internet, Internet capable devices, and digital skills in Florida. The text of both questionnaires is available in Appendix A.

Table 11 shows a full breakdown of the types of organizations that were invited to participate in the questionnaire and Table 12 shows a breakdown of those that completed the questionnaire. In Table 11, organizations are categorized by “entity type” and by the “covered population” that the organization represents. The “Total” column details the number of unique organizations by type who were *invited to participate* in the questionnaire. The “Covered Population” columns show the number of covered populations represented by the organizations that were invited to participate according to their entity type. Table 12 follows the same format as Table 11, but instead shows the organizations that *completed* the questionnaire.

Table 11. Organizations Invited to Complete Questionnaire by Covered Population

Entity Type	Total	Covered Population							
		Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups	Individuals with Language Barriers	Rural Communities	Individuals with Disabilities
Private industry	50	-	-	-	-	2	5	2	5
Community anchor institutions	76	10	5	3	5	4	21	6	16
Government entities	36	5	5	3	5	5	7	11	5
Local Technology Planning Teams	63	4	4	3	4	4	10	30	10
Organizations supporting covered populations	29	7	6	5	3	6	6	2	12
Workforce and economic development organizations	6	2	3	1	2	3	3	3	2

Entity Type	Covered Population								
	Total	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups	Individuals with Language Barriers	Rural Communities	Individuals with Disabilities
Seminole Tribe of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total	262	28	23	15	19	26	52	54	50

Table 12: Organizations that Completed Questionnaire by Covered Population

Entity Type	Covered Population								
	Total	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups	Individuals with Language Barriers	Rural Communities	Individuals with Disabilities
Private Industry	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Community anchor institutions	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	3	5
Government entities	6	4	5	2	4	5	5	3	4
Local Technology Planning Teams	6	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	4
Organizations supporting covered populations	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
Workforce and economic development organizations	8	7	8	7	7	8	8	1	7
Seminole Tribe of Florida	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	33	24	26	18	24	24	27	15	25

#### 4.1.3.8 Interviews

Using NTIA guidance and interview guide examples, the Office of Broadband conducted individual interviews with 32 organizations (including ISPs) and invited 112 organizations to complete interviews. Interview questions were tailored based on the stakeholder group’s unique focus and impact on broadband deployment and digital adoption and use. Interviews focused on identifying barriers the organization or its members face related to broadband and digital adoption and use, solutions, and direct feedback on plan development.

Table 13 shows a full breakdown of the types of organizations that were invited to participate in an interview and Table 14 shows a breakdown of those that completed an interview. In Table 13, organizations are categorized by “entity type” and by the “covered population” that the organization represents. The “Total” column details the number of unique organizations by entity type who were *invited to participate* in the interview. The “Covered Population” columns show the covered populations represented by the organizations who were invited to participate according to their entity type. Table 13 follows the same format as Table 14, but instead shows the organizations that *completed* the interview.

Table 13. Organizations Invited to Complete an Interview by Covered Population

Entity Type	Total	Covered Population							
		Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups	Individuals with Language Barriers	Rural Communities	Individuals with Disabilities
Private industry	14	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-
Community anchor institutions	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Government entities	10	2	1	1	2	1	3	4	2
Local Technology Planning Teams	63	4	4	3	4	4	10	30	10
Organizations supporting covered populations	18	5	5	4	4	5	2	2	5
Workforce and economic development organizations	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1
Seminole Tribe of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-

Entity Type	Covered Population								
	Total	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups	Individuals with Language Barriers	Rural Communities	Individuals with Disabilities
Total	112	14	13	10	12	17	19	40	20

Table 14. Organizations that Completed Interviews by Covered Population

Entity Type	Covered Population								
	Total	Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups	Individuals with Language Barriers	Rural Communities	Individuals with Disabilities
Private industry	9	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Community anchor institutions	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Government entities	4	1	1	-	1	1	3	3	2
Local Technology Planning Teams	4	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
Organizations supporting covered populations	12	4	6	5	2	5	3	3	5
Workforce and economic development organizations	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	-
Seminole Tribe of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total	34	9	11	7	6	12	12	10	12

#### 4.1.3.9 Tribal Engagement

Florida’s federally recognized tribes were included in the plan development process. FloridaCommerce engaged the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Through tribal consultation letters, in-person and virtual meetings, and questionnaires, FloridaCommerce was able to learn the perspectives of Florida’s federally recognized tribes on the broadband needs of their communities. FloridaCommerce is committed to continued engagement with Florida’s federally



recognized tribes over the course of the BEAD development process on strategies to expand broadband deployment and digital adoption for tribal populations.

#### 4.1.3.10 Scale of Outreach

Table 15 displays the number of stakeholders invited to engage in the plan development process, categorized by entity type and engagement type. The Total column details the number of unique entities by type who were invited to participate in plan development in at least one of four engagement mechanisms. The Engagement Mechanism columns show the number of entities within that total who were invited to participate in those means. These summary numbers are subsets of the entity totals and demonstrate the extent of the Office’s outreach to various parties.

Table 15. Number of Engaged Stakeholder Entities by Type and Engagement Mechanism

Entity Type	Total	Invited to Interview	Engagement Mechanism		
			Invited to Public Workshop (In-Person)	Invited to Public Workshop (Virtual)	Invited to Complete Questionnaire
Private industry	78	24	46	48	50
Community anchor institutions	144	13	79	23	76
Government entities	133	32	122	42	36
Local Technology Planning Teams	63	63	63	63	63
Organizations supporting covered populations	72	27	56	21	29
Workforce and economic development organizations	25	6	16	7	6
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	1	1	1	1	1
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	1	1	1	1	1
Grand Total	517	167	384	206	262

In Table 16, organizations are categorized by “entity type” and by the “covered population” that the organization represents. The “Total” column details the number of unique organizations by entity type who were invited to participate in one or more engagement mechanisms. The “Covered Population” columns show the covered populations represented by the organizations who were invited to participate according to their entity type.

Table 16. Stakeholder Entities Engaged by Covered Population

Entity Type	Total	Covered Population							
		Covered Households	Aging Individuals	Incarcerated Individuals	Veterans	Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups	Individuals with Language Barriers	Rural Communities	Individuals with Disabilities
Private industry	78	-	-	-	-	2	7	2	7
Community anchor institutions	144	50	9	3	5	5	63	9	56
Government entities	133	12	12	6	5	8	16	12	12
Local Technology Planning Teams	63	4	4	3	4	4	10	30	10
Organizations supporting covered populations	72	20	24	8	10	18	19	8	25
Workforce and economic development organizations	25	13	13	10	11	14	14	4	11
Seminole Tribe of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Total	517	99	62	30	35	53	129	65	121

#### 4.1.4 Plans for Future Engagement

Transparency and stakeholder engagement are key tenets by which the Office of Broadband operates. During each phase of these broadband and digital adoption and use efforts, the Office will continue to be transparent and engage stakeholders to develop program priorities that are aligned to Florida’s needs. As required by the NOFO, the Office of Broadband engaged and will continue to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders, including workforce agencies, labor or community-based

organizations, and institutions of higher learning.<sup>80</sup> Each new planning and implementation phase will be informed by more accurate mapping; local assistance to identify assets and address barriers; interdepartmental coordination; and workforce planning.

The Office of Broadband will continue to use a variety of engagement activities and mechanisms to share information and updates about plan development and implementation, including but not limited to:

- the Office of Broadband website,
- FloridaCommerce listserv,
- ongoing LTPTs meetings, and
- community and broadband events.

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<sup>80</sup> DE NOFO Page 22, <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/DE%20PLANNING%20GRANT%20NOFO.pdf>

## 5 Implementation

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Informed by the barriers to covered populations outlined in the Needs Assessment (Section 3.2) and Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement (Section 4), this section will chart a series of strategies and activities aimed at mitigating digital adoption and use barriers in Florida. The focus of Section 5 will be to support implementation of these strategies is smooth, successful, and addresses the needs uncovered throughout the assessment.

### 5.1 Implementation Strategy & Key Activities

Floridians face several significant barriers that might prevent or inhibit their adoption of broadband Internet. To overcome these barriers, Florida identified five implementation strategies aligned with the topic areas proposed in the NTIA guidance:

1. [Broadband Availability & Affordability](#): Identify un/underserved communities and promote the public and private funding mechanisms to increase service and affordability.
2. [Online Accessibility](#): Promote accessible digital resources, websites, forms, guidance, and supporting materials.
3. [Online Privacy & Cybersecurity](#): Expand services and resources that support safe and effective use and interaction with high-speed Internet.
4. [Device Availability & Affordability](#): Broaden digital device availability through CAIs, community partners and other funding programs.
5. [Digital Literacy](#): Develop services and resources that support meaningful use of high-speed Internet.

Together, these five strategies address both the material and immaterial factors that create barriers to broadband access in Florida. The strategies acknowledge that access to:

- A broadband connection is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to shrinking the digital divide; and
- digital devices, as well as the requisite skillsets to use the devices effectively are also critical to connecting more Floridians to broadband Internet.

The Office will utilize sustainability measures to routinely maintain and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and the programs it funds. These measures include but are not limited to: updating the plan proactively as new data and information is released, regular meetings and engagement with stakeholders, working with local digital adoption and use leaders and partners, collecting and incorporating feedback, and completing a regular review of progress by LTPTs.

Successful implementation of these strategies will benefit residents across the state, while giving particular attention to the specific needs of designated covered populations.

### 5.1.1 Broadband Availability & Affordability

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#### Strategy #1

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- Identify un/underserved communities, promote the public and private funding mechanisms to increase service and affordability, and increase number of CAIs with access to 1 gigabit per second (Gbps) connections<sup>81</sup>
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#### Objectives

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- 1.1: Expand service to unserved and underserved locations
    - KPI – Percent of locations with broadband service
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging individuals / Incarcerated individuals / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
  - 1.2: Increase CAIs with gigabit connections
    - KPI – Percent of locations with broadband service
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Incarcerated Individuals / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
  - 1.3: Increase participation in affordable Internet service plans
    - KPI – Number of households enrolled in affordable Internet service plans through BEAD subgrantees
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging individuals / Incarcerated individuals / Veterans / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- 

#### Covered Population Obstacles Addressed

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- Insufficient digital infrastructure
  - Unaffordable broadband service
  - Insufficient digital capacity of CAIs
- 

The first strategy seeks to limit barriers associated with broadband availability and affordability by first identifying unserved and underserved communities and then expanding service and affordability to those communities. This strategy's progress will be charted through three objectives: expansion of services to unserved and underserved locations, increased CAIs with gigabit connections, and increased participation in affordable Internet service plans among qualified individuals. Progress towards these goals may be measured by changes in Florida's percent of served locations and number of Florida households enrolled in affordable Internet service plans through BEAD subgrantees.

To achieve these objectives, the state of Florida may engage in a host of activities. Once unserved and underserved locations have been identified, the state may use funding to expand and upgrade coverage to those areas. It may also work alongside other partners – such as CAIs, ISPs, and Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPTs) – to create low-cost broadband plans, to promote the uptake of funding programs, and to continue developing infrastructure and grantmaking processes that encourage the expansion of affordable broadband to populations who lack full access to these services. To support ongoing monitoring of progress towards this strategy's goals, the state will regularly utilize the FCC National Broadband Map to assess progress on broadband construction.

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<sup>81</sup> 1 gigabit = 1000 megabits

Implementation of this strategy will benefit all Floridians, with individuals living within several covered populations reaping the greatest rewards. Rural residents face the most widespread dearth of broadband options that are both *functional* and *affordable*, and therefore will see a significant improvement in their ability to utilize broadband services. Individuals who reside in a household at or below 150% of the federal poverty level, on fixed incomes (e.g., aging residents), and/or more likely to live in rural areas (e.g., veterans) will also benefit from growth in the availability of affordable broadband plans at home and/or through CAIs.

*Key Activities*

- Connect currently unserved locations
- Upgrade currently underserved locations
- Increase gigabit broadband availability to CAIs
- Work with ISPs to offer low-cost broadband plans
- Promote use of existing affordable Internet mechanisms (e.g., ACP)
- Continue to build relationships with and engage Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPT)
- Develop an ongoing program to enhance the state broadband Internet dataset, leveraging other broadband Internet data resources including data collected by LTPTs and local and regional organizations
- Evaluate state and federal funding program requirements and determine the need for and best use of consultants to implement a grant-making process

Finally, it is important to note that while the strategy presented in this section bears significant implications for covered populations in Florida, it is part of a broader strategy related to the infrastructure development outlined in the state’s BEAD Five-Year Plan. Please see the Florida BEAD plan for a more detailed consideration of the state’s plans to expand broadband availability and affordability to its residents.

5.1.2 Online Accessibility

Strategy #2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote accessible digital resources, websites, forms, guidance, and supporting materials</li> </ul>
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.1: Increase multilingual and accessible technical support programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ KPI – Number of state government home webpages that fail accessibility audit</li> <li>○ Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2.2: Expand online accessibility of state government information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ KPI – Number of state government home webpages that fail accessibility audit</li> <li>○ Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Covered Population Obstacles Addressed

- 
- Lack of accessible supporting resources
  - Community skepticism about government and / or private companies
  - Insufficient digital capacity of CAIs
- 

The second strategy aims to advance access and use of online resources by intentionally developing and proliferating digital content that is accessible to populations facing language and/or disability-related barriers. This content will take the form of both state websites (e.g., making instructions on how to access affordable broadband programs available in Spanish on the website) as well as supporting documentation (e.g., using colorblind-friendly color schemes for documents). Indicators of success in these areas may include the number of state home websites that fail accessibility audits. Ongoing monitoring will include a regular review to determine if state agency websites meet standards.

Attempts to improve wide-ranging accessibility must be both backwards- and forwards-looking. On the one hand, state agencies will need to update existing digital resources that lack accessibility options (e.g., explanatory videos without subtitles) while ensuring that new resources are developed intentionally to include as many accessibility options as possible. In addition to the digital content provided through public sources, moreover, state agencies should also encourage partner organizations (e.g., ISPs, CAIs) to develop content that is accessible to a wide variety of Floridians. To support ongoing evaluation, state digital resources may be evaluated regularly to determine their level of accessibility and if accessibility options align appropriately with the demographic profile of Florida's population.

Efforts to improve the accessibility of broadband use in Florida will benefit two sets of covered populations. Firstly, individuals with disabilities will face lower barriers to their use of broadband Internet as owners of digital resources make more intentional accommodations for these populations. Secondly, individuals confronted by language barriers (oftentimes from racial and/or ethnic minority groups) may gain access to previously inaccessible digital resources once these resources are translated into their native languages. Empowerment of CAIs can help further eliminate barriers to entry faced by these groups.

#### *Key Activities*

- Develop and maintain technical support for residents to support broad usage and access to state-run programs using online processes
- Align efforts across state government to provide online information in a format that meets current accessibility standards
- Encourage ISPs and CAIs to develop similarly accessible content for their constituents

### 5.1.3 Online Privacy & Cybersecurity

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#### Strategy #3

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- Expand services and resources that support safe and effective use and interaction with high-speed Internet
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#### Objectives

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- 3.1: Expand online privacy and cybersecurity courses
    - KPI – Number of participants in online privacy/cybersecurity training programs
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level/ Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Veterans / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group /
-



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Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

- 3.2: Increase protection of sensitive online information
  - KPI – Number of participants in online privacy/cybersecurity training programs
  - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Veterans / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

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Covered Population Obstacles Addressed

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- Limited digital literacy
  - Lack of accessible supporting resources
  - Community skepticism about government and / or private companies
  - Insufficient digital capacity of CAIs
- 

The third strategy encourages awareness of privacy and cybersecurity concerns for Internet users. While active use of the Internet may afford individuals a host of benefits, access to this resource brings new dangers stemming from the actions of malicious actors or the naïve behavior of data owners. These dangers are particularly acute for those with limited previous access to broadband. To help prepare individuals for the risks they may encounter online, the state of Florida will seek to expand online privacy and cybersecurity education while further protecting sensitive online information under its own control. Success in this area may be measured by indicators such as the number of CAIs offering online privacy and cybersecurity courses. Ongoing monitoring for this strategy may include routine collaboration and data sharing with Cyber Florida.

Florida’s cybersecurity and privacy strategy revolves around three pillars: public education, partnerships with CAIs, and public awareness. To empower covered populations, the state will:

- Encourage the development of educational programs;
- Help CAIs promote trainings; and
- Promote the importance of protecting privacy and safely engaging the Internet.

The state will also focus attention on its own systems to support the continued safety of protected personal information (PPI). Progress towards these goals may be measured routinely by engaging CAIs and LTPTs to understand the online privacy and cybersecurity programs available to the public, and the performance of state agencies’ and ISPs’ cybersecurity systems on stress tests performed by Florida’s Cybersecurity Advisory Council or external auditors.

*Key Activities*

- Develop cybersecurity and privacy skills curricula
- Encourage targeted training programs
- Cultivate and promote efforts by the private sector and community-based organizations to provide cybersecurity and privacy skills training and technical support to covered populations
- Assess the cybersecurity infrastructure of state government’s digital resources which store residents’ PPI, while coordinating with ISPs to protect their consumers’ sensitive information

#### 5.1.4 Device Availability & Affordability

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##### Strategy #4

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- Broaden digital device availability through CAIs and community partners and other funding programs
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#### Objectives

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- 4.1: Increase device availability programming
    - KPI – Percent households that own a digital device
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Incarcerated Individuals / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
  - 4.2: Increase outreach to promote affordable device availability programming
    - KPI – Percent of households that own a digital device
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Veterans / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- 

#### Covered Population Obstacles Addressed

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- Limited access to or ownership of digital devices
  - Insufficient digital capacity of CAIs
- 

The fourth strategy focuses on providing Floridians with access to digital devices that are necessary to use the Internet. Florida recognizes how important devices are to connecting its citizens. To accomplish this task, the state will explore both increased device availability programming and increased outreach to promote affordable device availability programming.

Progress towards these objectives may be measured by looking at the percent of households that own a digital device by covered population.

Florida's strategy will rely upon the coordination of wide-ranging stakeholders. The state government intends to encourage and support programs from both CAIs and the private sector which give access to publicly available devices, allow for the purchasing of lower-cost devices, or provide affordable refurbishment services. In this arrangement, end-users will be able to make device decisions that make the most sense for them and their families. Ongoing monitoring of this strategy may be undertaken through yearly assessments of American Community Survey (ACS) data.

#### Key Activities

- Explore expansion of device loan programs in CAIs and other organizations
- Increase CAI public device access points
- Encourage and promote private sector efforts to increase access to devices and/or lower costs of devices
- Support refurbishment programs to promote device ownership

### 5.1.5 Digital Literacy

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#### Strategy #5

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- Expand digital literacy resources available via CAIs and community partners and other funding programs
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#### Objectives

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- 
- 5.1: Number of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses
    - KPI – Number of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Veterans / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
  - 5.2: Expand digital navigator programming
    - KPI – Number of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses
    - Key Covered Populations – Individuals living in households that have incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level / Aging Individuals / Incarcerated Individuals / Veterans / Individuals with Disabilities / Individuals with a Language Barrier / Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- 

#### Covered Population Obstacles Addressed

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- Limited digital literacy
  - Insufficient digital capacity of CAIs
- 

The fifth strategy focuses on the importance of digital literacy for Internet users. To benefit from the Internet, users must understand how to access and utilize it correctly. Florida seeks to promote the meaningful use of devices to improve the digital literacy of Internet users across Florida, the state will consider increasing support and promotion for digital literacy programs (measured by the number of CAIs offering digital literacy programs) and expand digital navigator programs (measured by the number of CAIs offering digital navigator services). Ongoing monitoring may include routine analysis of enrollment data and collaboration with course administrators. This strategy follows the same structure as the cybersecurity and privacy strategy, insofar as it seeks to develop educational options, to promote the digital literacy-related work of CAIs and private sector actors, and to leverage experienced Internet users to drive the effectiveness and uptake of digital literacy programs. Also like the cybersecurity and privacy strategy, progress towards these goals may be evaluated by engaging CAIs and LTPTs to understand the curricula, programs, and demand for digital literacy courses.

#### *Key Activities*

- Develop or identify digital skills curricula
- Encourage targeted training programs
- Cultivate and promote efforts by the private sector and community-based organizations to provide digital skills training and technical support to covered populations
- Identify opportunities to expand existing and new digital navigation services in Florida

## 5.2 *Timeline*

The Gantt chart below (Figure 13) outlines expected timings for the key activities outlined above as a part of the implementation strategy for Florida’s DAU Plan. It should be noted that the timing for activities is preliminary at this point in the development of the DAU Plan. FloridaCommerce will continue to iterate on these items based on engagement with stakeholders and lessons learned throughout the implementation process.

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
<b>Broadband Availability &amp; Affordability</b>							
Evaluate state and federal funding program requirements and determine the need for and best use of consultants to implement a grant-making process							
Manage the BEAD Challenge Process and subgrantee selection		★					
Develop an ongoing program to enhance the state broadband Internet dataset, leveraging other broadband Internet data resources including data collected by LTPTs and local and regional organizations							
Continue to build relationships with and engage Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPT)							
Work with ISPs to offer low-cost broadband plans - <i>KPI, # households enrolled in affordable Internet service plans through BEAD subgrantees</i>							
Encourage ISPs to improve location fabric through challenges							
Promote use of existing affordable Internet mechanisms (e.g., ACP, affordable service plans)							
Connect currently unserved locations - <i>KPI, % of locations with broadband service</i>							
Upgrade currently underserved locations - <i>KPI, % of locations with broadband service</i>							
Monitor the FCC Broadband Map for improvements in coverage							★
<b>Online Accessibility</b>							
Create inventory of government home web pages to assess (est. start Q3 2024)							
Develop accessibility guidelines and online accessibility assessment checklist		★					
Align efforts across state government to provide online information in a format that meets current accessibility standards - <i>KPI, # of state government home webpages that fail</i>							★
Assess government agency home webpages (est. start Q1 2025)							★
Encourage ISPs and CAIs to develop similarly accessible content for their constituents							
<b>Online Privacy &amp; Cybersecurity</b>							
Build continued understanding of cybersecurity, online safety, and online privacy courses and curriculums across Florida (est. start Q1 2024)		★					
Determine audiences currently being reached through existing online privacy and cybersecurity resources (e.g., general public, state and local government employees)							
Cultivate and promote efforts by the private sector and community-based organizations to provide cybersecurity and privacy skills training and technical support to covered populations							
Encourage online privacy and cybersecurity education and/or training for state and local government employees - <i>KPI, # of participants in online privacy / cybersecurity training programs</i>							
Encourage online privacy and cybersecurity education and/or training for general public - <i>KPI, # of participants in online privacy / cybersecurity training programs</i>							
Promote the cybersecurity educational curriculum for K-12 programs in Florida							
<b>Device Availability &amp; Affordability</b>							
Explore expansion of device loan programs in CAIs and other organizations							
Increase CAI public device access points							
Leverage LTPT understanding of device needs and availability per county							
Encourage and promote private sector efforts to increase access to devices and/or lower costs of devices - <i>KPI, % households that own a digital device</i>							★
<b>Digital Literacy</b>							
Develop or identify digital skills curricula across the state							
Identify opportunities to expand existing and new digital navigation services in Florida							
Identify targeted training programs for digital skills (e.g., workforce digital skills)							
Cultivate and promote efforts by the private sector and community-based organizations to provide digital skills training and technical support to covered populations							
Encourage enrollment and participation in digital literacy and digital skills programs - <i>KPI, # of enrollees in digital literacy/skills courses</i>							★
<b>Milestones</b>							
★ Completed BEAD subgrantee selection process							★ Inventory of digital safety and cybersecurity programs
★ End of BEAD deployment time period							★ Check household device ownership (long-term target)
★ Online accessibility assessment checklist							★ Check digital literacy/skills courses (long-term target)
★ Check on accessibility progress (long-term target)							

Figure 13: Expected Digital Adoption and Use Implementation Timeline

Overall, the implementation activities discussed above are understood to be core components of Florida’s approach to closing the digital divide in the state. With a particular focus on the state’s covered populations, the implementation strategy and key activities are expected to empower high need communities across the state to fully benefit from better access to quality, reliable, high-speed Internet.

## 6 Conclusion

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Florida's Digital Adoption and Use Plan identifies the available resources, existing needs, and implementation strategies that can help the state reduce the digital divide between areas and populations that are fully equipped to realize the benefits of digital connectivity and those that are not. The plan best positions Florida to achieve its vision in which every Floridian benefits from a connected economy through the meaningful use of high-speed Internet. The state of Florida expects to support this effort through key activities in the following areas of work:

- Broadband Availability & Affordability: Identify un/underserved communities and promote the public and private funding mechanisms to increase service and affordability.
- Online Accessibility: Promote accessible digital resources, websites, forms, guidance, and supporting materials.
- Online Privacy & Cybersecurity: Expand services and resources that support safe and effective use and interaction with high-speed Internet.
- Device Availability & Affordability: Broaden digital device availability through CAIs, community partners and other funding programs.
- Digital Literacy: Develop services and resources that support meaningful use of high-speed Internet.

The opportunity for Florida to significantly improve the way its residents interact with digital tools, resources, and spaces is truly generational in magnitude. In collaboration with LTPTs and other key partners, the state is committed to reducing the digital divide amongst communities so that all residents who desire digital connectivity have the means and capabilities to do so. The strategies and objectives of this plan will inform the State's actions in pursuing both the upcoming Digital Equity Capacity Building Grant and Competitive Grant programs. Funding received through these grants will be used to further deliver on Florida's vision for the future.

## 7 Appendices

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### 7.1 Appendix A: Questionnaire

#### Stakeholder Questionnaire:

#### Questionnaire Text:

*Thank you for participating in the Florida Broadband Stakeholder Questionnaire. Your responses will be used to help Florida accelerate work to bring access to high-speed Internet to Floridians. This questionnaire does not request or seek to collect any personal identifying information, and we ask that you not provide any in any of the open responses.*

- 1) What organization do you represent?  
Text box response
- 2) Please provide the name, position, and email address of a contact person for the organization that we can contact with any additional questions.  
Text box response
- 3) What Florida counties does the organization serve?  
Text box response
- 4) Which of the following populations (if any) does the organization serve in Florida?
  - a. None of the below
  - b. Aging individuals (60+)
  - c. Individuals with disabilities
  - d. Individuals with language barriers
  - e. Racial or ethnic minorities
  - f. Veterans
  - g. Individuals who are incarcerated
  - h. Low-income individuals
  - i. Individuals living in a rural area
  - j. All of the above
- 5) Which of the following challenges (if any) do populations that the organization serves in Florida face in accessing Internet? Select all that apply.
  - a. Internet is too slow
  - b. Internet is not available
  - c. Internet is too expensive
  - d. Internet is unreliable
  - e. Limited access to digital devices
  - f. Limited digital skills
  - g. Limited options to switch to a different Internet Service Provider
  - h. The populations the organization serves do not face any challenges
  - i. Other (please specify)
- 6) Florida defines community anchor institutions as industrial, commercial and office park worksites, schools, libraries, medical and health care points of access, housing providers, public safety entities, institutes of higher education, and other community support organizations that provide outreach, access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband Internet service by the entire population and local governments.

Entities that meet the definition of a community anchor institution may receive funding for deploying and/or upgrading broadband network facilities. Does your organization have any feedback on Florida's definition of community anchor institutions?

Text box response

- 7) What benefits would you expect to see if the people your organization serves in Florida had better access to Internet and digital devices? Select all that apply.
- a. Participation in the digital economy
  - b. Access telemedicine
  - c. Access to online banking or financial services
  - d. Access government services
  - e. Access to courses/trainings to improve job skills
  - f. Communicate with family and friends
  - g. Other (please specify)
- 8) To the best of your knowledge, what are the reasons people your organization serves in Florida do not have an Internet connection at home? Select all that apply.
- a. They can't afford the Internet subscription cost
  - b. They don't know how to connect to the Internet
  - c. They don't have sufficient digital literacy skills
  - d. They don't want to subscribe to the Internet because its slow at their home
  - e. They don't think the Internet is worth the subscription cost
  - f. They can't subscribe because their home is not served by any InternetService Provider
  - g. They have online privacy or cybersecurity concerns
  - h. They don't want digital devices (e.g., computers) that connect to the Internet
  - i. They can't afford digital devices that connect to the Internet
  - j. They have other means of accessing the Internet (e.g., at the library)
  - k. Other (please specify)
- 9) Please list or provide a link to the plans/programs your organization offers in Florida that are focused on increasing access to the Internet, Internet capable devices, and digital skills (e.g., local plans, digital literacy trainings, computer labs, outreach to drive Affordable Connectivity Program [ACP] Enrollment, loaning or donating digital devices to organizations or individuals). Please also include the approximate number of Floridians served annually by each of your programs.

Text box response

- a. Sharing best practices
  - b. Device donations
  - c. Forums to connect with other organizations on similar goals
  - d. Grant funding
  - e. Technical support
  - f. Other (please specify)
- 10) Please provide any additional feedback on any of your responses or provide additional ideas to help increase access to Internet, Internet capable devices, and digital skills in Florida.

Text box response

*Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. Please contact [Broadband@deo.myflorida.com](mailto:Broadband@deo.myflorida.com) with any questions.*



## ISP Questionnaire:

### Questionnaire Text:

*Thank you for participating in the Florida Broadband Stakeholder Questionnaire for Internet Service Providers. Your responses will be used to help Florida accelerate work to bring access to high-speed Internet to all Floridians. This questionnaire does not request or seek to collect any personal identifying or confidential information, nor does it request or seek to collect any proprietary data or documentation. We ask that you not provide any in any of the open responses.*

- 1) What Internet Service Provider (ISP) do you represent?  
Text box response
- 2) Please provide the name, position, and email address for an ISP staff member or representative that we can contact with any additional questions.  
Text box response
- 3) Does your ISP understand where expanded service opportunities exist should appropriate broadband infrastructure be expanded to serve currently unserved locations?  
Text box response
- 4) What are the biggest challenges faced by the ISP you represent when trying to expand its broadband infrastructure in Florida? Select all that apply.
  - a. Burdensome costs or processes for access to poles
  - b. Supply chain constraints (e.g., timeline or cost of fiber or other materials)
  - c. Financial constraints – business case is negative due to expected low uptake from residents because of low-income levels
  - d. Financial constraints – business case is negative due to expected low uptake from residents because of low density of subscribers
  - e. Financial constraints – business case is negative due to expected low uptake from residents because of competition from other ISPs
  - f. Financial constraints – access to capital
  - g. Costs for existing middle-mile options are too high
  - h. Lack of middle-mile options that are near residents
  - i. Burdensome process and/or costs to obtain permits, rights of way, or easements
  - j. Unable to access conduit (costs or availability)
  - k. Labor shortages
  - l. Other regulatory challenges (please specify)
  - m. Other (please specify)
- 5) Has the ISP you represent faced challenges in hiring staff for broadband deployment in Florida?
  - a. Yes – routes to question 6
  - b. No – routes to question 7
- 6) Please list the specific positions and the biggest obstacle in hiring for each position.  
Text box response
- 7) Does the ISP you represent offer training for staff involved in broadband deployment in Florida? If so, please describe.  
Text box response

- 8) Does the ISP you represent offer (or plan to create) an income-restricted or low-cost offering for customers in Florida?
- a. Yes – routes to question 9
  - b. No – routes to question 10
- 9) Please provide details on that offering (e.g., service type, monthly cost, speeds, eligibility).  
Text box response
- 10) The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) developed the FCC National Broadband Map to show the availability of broadband in Florida ([available here](#)). What feedback, if any, does the ISP you represent have on the accuracy of Florida’s map?  
Text box response
- 11) If the ISP you represent has participated in broadband grants in the past, what practices or processes worked well for the entities involved?  
Text box response
- 12) If the ISP you represent has engaged in an FCC fabric or availability challenge process, or a Florida Broadband grant application challenge process, what practices or processes worked well for the entities involved?  
Text box response
- 13) Please list or provide a link to the programs the ISP you represent offers in Florida that are focused on increasing access to Internet, Internet capable devices, and digital skills (e.g., digital literacy trainings, computer labs, outreach to drive Affordable Connectivity Program [ACP] enrollment, loaning or donating digital devices to organizations or individuals). Please also include the approximate number of Floridians served annually by each of your programs.  
Text box response
- 14) What are the main types of support the ISP you represent needs from the Florida Office of Broadband or other state entities to continue increasing access to Internet, Internet-capable devices, and digital skills? Select all that apply.
- a. Supply chain resilience initiatives for broadband deployment
  - b. Technical assistance
  - c. Increased funding/grants for broadband deployment
  - d. Expanded access to middle-mile infrastructure
  - e. Expanded access to middle-mile infrastructure at competitive rates
  - f. Ensuring skilled workforce for broadband roles
  - g. Other (please specify)
- 15) Please provide any additional feedback from the ISP you represent about its responses or provide additional ideas to help increase access to Internet, Internet capable devices, and digital skills in Florida.  
Text box response

## 7.2 Appendix B: Florida Public Library Digital Adoption and Use Resources

The appendix below lists available digital adoption and use resources in Florida public libraries but may not include all public libraries or resources.

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
Alachua County Library District	Computer Lab and Device Loaner Program	Offers a computer lab for public use, provides free Wi-Fi throughout the library, and implemented a hotspot loaner program.	All	<a href="#">Link (HotSpots)</a> <a href="#">Link (Computers)</a>
Apalachicola Margaret Key Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers four computers and four laptops for public use. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building and parking lot.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Bay County Library	Adult Digital Literacy Courses, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers digital literacy courses to teach how to use smart devices. Offers a computer lab for public use and provides free Wi-Fi throughout the library.	All	<a href="#">Link (Wi-Fi)</a> <a href="#">Link (Computers)</a> <a href="#">Link (Classes)</a>
Boca Raton Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Boynton Beach City Library	Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Brevard County Library System	Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers free Wi-Fi throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Broward County Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
	Public Wi-Fi Access			
Burton Memorial Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Charlotte County Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Citrus County Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
City of Fort Walton Beach Library	Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers free Wi-Fi that is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Clay County Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Crestview - Robert L.F. Sikes Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Cybrarium (Homestead)	Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program,	Offers computers for free public use, Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
	and Public Wi-Fi Access			
Delray Beach Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Destin Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses and computers for free public use.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Dixie County Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Dundee Public Library	Computer Lab	Offers computers for free public use.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Dunedin Public Library	Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Eagle Lake Public Library	Computer Lab	Offers computers for free public use.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Emily Taber Public Library	Computer Lab	Offers a computer lab for public use.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Flagler Beach City Library	Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers free Wi-Fi that is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Glades County Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Gulf Beaches Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs,	Offers computers for free public use, adult digital literacy courses, and free Wi-Fi is available	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	throughout the library building.		
Gulf County Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, adult digital literacy courses, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Hardee County Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Heartland Library Cooperative	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Helen Lehmann Memorial Library (Montverde)	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Jacksonville Public Libraries	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Jefferson County	Computer Lab and	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
Public Library	Public Wi-Fi Access	the library building and parking lot.		
Lake Alfred Library	Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers free Wi-Fi that is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Lake County Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Lake Worth Beach City Library	Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Lakeland Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Lantana Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Leon County Public Library	Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Maitland Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Manatee County Public Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Marion County Public	Adult Digital	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
Library System	Literacy Programs			
Martin County Library	Device Loaner Program	Implemented a hotspot and device loaner program.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Martin County Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Miami-Dade Public Library System	Mobile Device Lending Program	Gives access for Miami-Dade residents to borrow tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, and Chromebooks for up to 30 days free with a library card.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Miami-Dade Public Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building and parking lots.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Monroe County Public Libraries	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>



Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
Mulberry Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building and parking lot.	All	<a href="#">Link (Wi-Fi)</a> <a href="#">Link (Classes)</a>
Nassau County Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link (Services)</a> <a href="#">Link (Policies)</a>
New Port Richey Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Niceville Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
North Miami Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Northwest Regional Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link (Classes)</a> <a href="#">Link (Computers)</a>
Oakland Park Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Okeechobee County Library	Device Loaner Program	Implemented a hotspot loaner program.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
Okeechobee County Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Oldsmar Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Orange County Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Osceola Library System	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Palm Beach County Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Pasco County Libraries	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Pinellas Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Polk City Library	Computer Lab	Offers computers for free public use	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Riviera Beach Public Library	Computer Lab	Offers computers for free public use	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Robert L.F. Sikes Public	Computer Lab and	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
Library - Crestview	Public Wi-Fi Access	is available throughout the library building.		
Safety Harbor Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link (Classes)</a> <a href="#">Link (Hotspots)</a> <a href="#">Link (Wi-Fi)</a>
Sanibel Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building and parking lot.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Santa Rosa County Library System	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Sarasota County Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs, Computer Lab, Device Loaner Program, and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers adult digital literacy courses, computers for free public use, Wi-Fi hotspot loaners, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link (Services)</a> <a href="#">Link (Events)</a>
Seminole Community Library	Computer Lab and	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
	Public Wi-Fi Access	is available throughout the library building.		
Seminole County Public Library System	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link (Computers)</a> <a href="#">Link (Wi-Fi)</a>
St. John County Public Library System	Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers free Wi-Fi that is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
St. Lucie County Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
St. Pete Beach Public Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs	Offers adult digital literacy courses.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
St. Petersburg Library System	Public Wi-Fi Access and Device Loaner Program	Offers free Wi-Fi that is available throughout the library building and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners.	All	<a href="#">Link (Wi-Fi)</a> <a href="#">Link (Hotspots)</a>
Sumter County Library System	Computer Lab and Device Loaner Program	Offers computers for free public use and Wi-Fi hotspot loaners.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Suwannee River Regional Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Tarpon Springs Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Three Rivers Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use, and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
Three Rivers Library	Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers free Wi-Fi that is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Union County Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Valparaiso Community Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Valparaiso Community Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Volusia County Public Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Wakulla County Public Library	Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers free Wi-Fi that is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Walton County Public Library System	Computer Lab	Offers computers for free public use	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Washington County Public Library	Computer Lab	Offers computers for free public use	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
West Florida Public Libraries	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Wilton Manors Library	Computer Lab and Public Wi-Fi Access	Offers computers for free public use and free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library building.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>
Winter Haven Library	Adult Digital Literacy Programs and	Offers adult digital literacy courses and computers for free public use.	All	<a href="#">Link</a>

Organization Name	Asset Name	Asset Description	Covered Population	Link to Additional Information
	Computer Lab			

### 7.3 Appendix C: Summary of DAU Public Comments

On December 8, 2023, the Office opened the public comment period for its Digital Adoption and Use Plan (DAUP). The comment period ran for 30 days, ending January 7, 2024. The Office hosted a webinar on December 13, 2023, to provide information on the DAUP and how to leave a public comment. The Office also provided technical assistance to any commenter who needed it. Public comments were accepted through mail and email; all comments received were sent via email.

The Office received a total of seven public comments. Different topic areas of the plan were addressed, including covered populations, the plan’s vision statement and implementation, affordable digital devices, the Affordable Connectivity Program, and digital literacy. There were a variety of different commenters, including an internet service provider, non-profit organizations, a concerned citizen, and workforce development organizations. Additional detail on the comments, as well as the Office’s responses, are included below.

#### **Public Comments Regarding Covered Populations**

The Office received two comments related to covered populations. One comment suggested foster youth be added to the definition. Another comment emphasized the digital adoption and use needs of the disabled population and encouraged the Office to reach out to local or state organizations that serve disabled individuals.

#### **Office Response**

The definition of covered populations is defined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity NOFO NTIA-DE-PLAN-2022. Regarding the disabled population, the Digital Adoption and Use Plan and its implementation address all covered populations, including persons with disabilities.

#### **Public Comment Regarding the Vision and Implementation**

The Office received one comment regarding the plan’s vision and overall implementation. The comment encouraged the Office to consider DAU activities within the broader work of ensuring everyone has opportunities based on their needs. The comment also suggested that the Office allow communities most impacted by the digital divide to lead on DAU efforts; to create and sustain health digital adoption ecosystems; to bridge short-term impact with long-term sustainability; and to emphasize network resilience, well-defined metrics for success, and clear accountability mechanisms and transparent reporting during implementation.

#### **Office Response**

The Digital Adoption and Use Plan is intended to be a long-term Plan working in conjunction with the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband and the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan. These plans were created to encourage sustainability and resiliency to provide access to high-speed, reliable, broadband Internet service and digital literacy to all Floridians.

#### **Public Comment Regarding Digital Devices**

The Office received one comment regarding digital devices. The comment encourages the Office to emphasize large screen devices over smartphones and consider the importance of device ownership and consider long-term sustainability. In addition, the comment expresses desire for refurbishment to be considered along state workforce initiatives. It asks the Office to consider other important elements of device usage other than access to the device itself, such as a stronger emphasis on tech support for devices.

**Office Response**

The Office plans to prioritize tablets, notebooks and desktop computers over smartphones. Throughout Plan implementation, the Office will comply with state and federal procurement rules and regulations which requires fair and open competition. Additionally, the Office will work with community partners so that more residents can meaningfully use and interact with high-speed Internet and devices by increasing both digital literacy programming and the availability of digital navigators, who serve as trusted digital guides in local communities (e.g., through ongoing assistance with affordable Internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support).

**Public Comment Regarding the Affordable Connectivity Program**

The Office received one comment regarding the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The comment encourages state leaders to convene a statewide ACP cohort to encourage ACP adoption. The comment also expresses desire for the Office to take a stronger approach in promoting ACP.

**Office Response**

All broadband deployment agreements with providers require wide dissemination of the availability of the Affordable Connectivity Program or other affordable broadband service plan options and resources.

**Public Comment Regarding Digital Literacy**

The Office received one comment related to digital literacy. The comment encourages the Office to include the commenter's workforce development program as the common, research-based solution for the "advancing digital literacy" and "meaningful use" measurable objectives of the plan. In addition, it provides suggested language to include the commenter's workforce development program and provides examples of the program's capabilities in helping achieve the goals of the plan.

**Office Response**

Throughout Plan implementation, the Office will comply with state and federal procurement rules and regulations which requires fair and open competition. The Office of Broadband engaged and will continue to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders, including workforce agencies, labor or community-based organizations, and institutions of higher learning. Each new planning and implementation phase will be informed by more accurate mapping; local assistance to identify assets and address barriers; interdepartmental coordination; and workforce planning.

**Note:** The Office received one comment promotional in nature. It does not require FloridaCommerce consideration. Therefore, it is included in the total but does not have a corresponding Office response.

## 7.4 Appendix D: Record of Public Comments and Actions Taken

Date	Record of Public Comments and Actions Taken
1/3/2024	Wants foster youth added to definition of covered populations.
1/3/2024	Gives a number of suggestions for vision requirement, encourages Office to consider DAU activities within the broader work of ensuring everyone has opportunities based on their needs, encourages Office to envision state transformed by DAU, encourages Office to allow communities most impacted by digital divide to lead on DAU efforts, encourages Office to plan for DAU by creating and sustaining health digital adoption ecosystems, encourages office to advance digital safety and privacy, emphasizes that technology should open new opportunities for people, encourages Office to bridge short-term impact with long term sustainability, emphasizes network resilience, emphasizes well-defined metrics for success, advocates for clear accountability mechanisms and transparent reporting, provides a checklist for evaluating DAU vision, gives some background information on challenges faced by covered populations.
1/5/2024	Encourages Office to emphasize large screen device ownership over smartphones, wants Office to establish a robust supply of free and affordable devices with an ecosystem approach, wants Office to look beyond the five-year federal obligation and consider long term sustainability, wants Office to consider quality of devices, wants Office to consider the role of refurbishers, wants refurbishment to be considered alongside other state workforce initiatives, encourages Office to consider providing support to entities working directly with covered populations through DAU program, encourages private ownership of devices rather than public access/loaning, reminds Office to consider other important elements of device usage other than the device itself, wants a stronger emphasis on tech support for devices, encourages Office to connect device supply with deployment.
1/5/2024	Notes that percentage of disabled adults using the Internet is lower than those without disabilities, wants state to address the disabled population statewide, notes that none of the programs or agencies listed work with disabled individuals, comments that number of disabled individuals who attended or participated in events and webinars is not counted, the number of staff or administrators representing organizations serving the disabled was also not counted, encourages Office to reach out to local or state organizations that serve disabled individuals.
1/5/2024	Notes the company's previous work with the Office in BOP and CPF, notes the company's work promoting an Internet use program, puts forth some potential challenges to digital adoption, emphasizes the importance of digital navigators and digital skills programs, mentions some of the company's initiatives in the space.
1/6/2024	Encourages state leaders convene a state-wide ACP cohort to encourage ACP adoption, wants Office to take a larger approach in promoting ACP.
1/6/2024	Encourages office to include the company as the common, research-based solution for the "advancing digital literacy" and "meaningful use" measurable objectives of the plan, provides suggested language to include the company, provides examples of the company's capabilities in helping achieve the goals of the plan.