Digital Opportunity 101

December 6, 2023

TEXAS BROADBAND
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

ILSR INSTITUTE FOR
Local Self-Reliance

HR&A

Agenda

- Welcome Message: Broadband Development Office
- Introduction to Digital Opportunity 101
- The Digital Divide
- Primary Barriers in Texas
- BEAD and DEA; DEA and Digital Opportunity
- Engagement with The Texas Digital Opportunity Plan (TDOP)
- Q&A

Introduction to Digital Opportunity 101

This webinar is designed to provide an overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with bridging the digital divide, and gain an understanding of how to navigate the various programs that support these efforts.
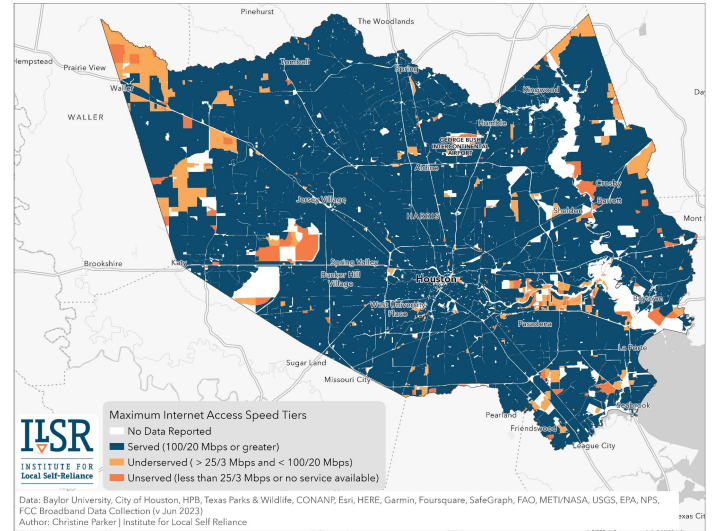
Introduction to Digital Opportunity 101

We will also discuss the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan (TDOP), which will serve as a roadmap for expanding the use of reliable and affordable broadband, device deployment programs, digital skills training, and cybersecurity awareness for all Texans.

# Digital Divide, Digital Inclusion, and Digital Equity

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THE ISSUE: The **Digital Divide** is the gap between communities that have equitable access and use of digital skills training, the Internet and computers and those that don't.

Percent of Eligible Households Enrolled in the ACP
- 0 - 10 percent
- 10.1 - 20 percent
- 20.1 - 30 percent
- 30.1 - 40 percent
- 40.1 - 50 percent
- 50.1 - 60 percent
- 60.1 - 70 percent
- 70.1 - 80 percent
- 80.1 - 90 percent
- 90.1 - 100+ percent

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Data: Baylor University, City of Houston, HPB, Texas Parks & Wildlife, CONANP, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, FCC Broadband Data Collection (v Jun 2023)
Author: Christine Parker | Institute for Local Self Reliance

Digital Divide, Digital Inclusion, and Digital Equity

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THE WORK: Digital Inclusion requires intentional strategies and investments to reduce and eliminate historical, institutional and structural barriers to access and use technology.

Maximum Internet Access Speed Tiers
- No Data Reported
- Served (100/20 Mbps or greater)
- Underserved (> 25/3 Mbps and < 100/20 Mbps)
- Unserved (less than 25/3 Mbps or no service available)

Data: Baylor University, City of Houston, HPB, Texas Parks & Wildlife, CONANP, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Foursquare, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, FCC Broadband Data Collection (v Jun 2023)
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Digital Divide, Digital Inclusion, and Digital Equity

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THE GOAL: Digital Opportunity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.
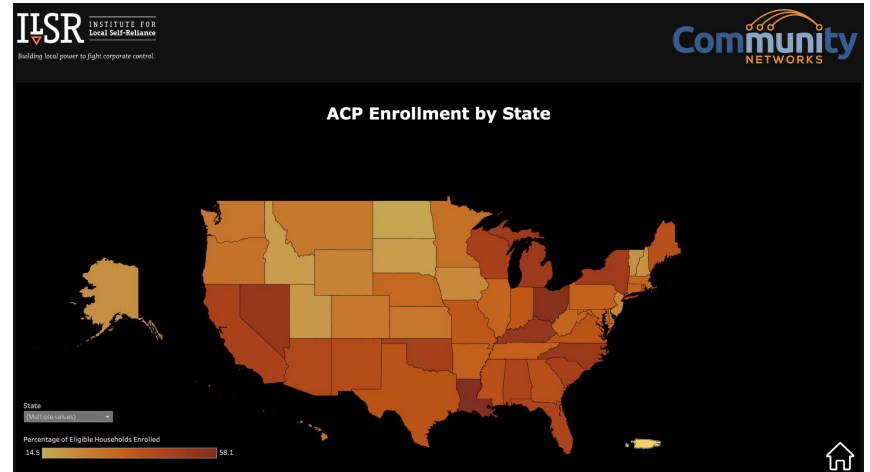
Texas Digital Opportunity Plan Survey Findings

This chart summarizes the primary barriers of communities in Texas:

Demographic	Primary Barriers to Internet Access
Aging	Inadequate internet speeds
Veterans	Internet availability and adequacy
Individuals with Disabilities	Cost and digital literacy
Limited English Proficiency	Cost, lack of technical support, device access, awareness, literacy, cybersecurity
Racial & Ethnic Minorities	Cost, digital skills, cybersecurity awareness
Low-Income Households	Cost, device access, digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness
Immigrants	Cost
Tribal Communities	Internet availability, reliability, lack of technical support, broadband adoption
Unhoused Individuals	Reliance on smartphones and mobile plans
Rural Communities	Affordability, inadequate internet speeds
Urban Communities	Affordability

Federal Funding Programs

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The **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)** program:

- Once NTIA is satisfied with the Initial Proposal 1 and 2, Texas will begin the next step in the process which is the BEAD challenge process and subgrantee selection process.
- This is hopeful to start this process in the spring of 2024. Any leftover funds will be used to support Digital Opportunity Programs beginning with what's outlined in the TDOP. The BDO does not expect leftover funds from the BEAD subgrantee process.
- Below is a proposed NTIA timeline, and this will likely differ from the BDO's timeline.
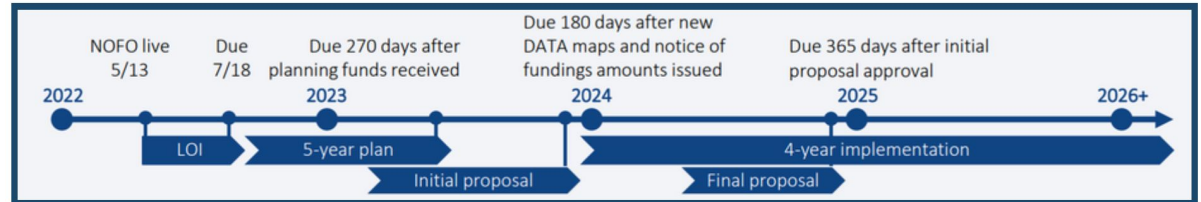
Federal Funding Programs

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- The **Digital Equity Act (DEA)**: This act provides funding for digital literacy programs, device deployment programs, and cybersecurity awareness programs.
  - The **Texas Digital Opportunity Plan**, which is the core of today's webinar, is funded through the Digital Equity Act.
  - Funding for a state funding program and a nationwide competitive grant that will open up to support projects that address skills, access, and affordability gaps for historically marginalized communities.
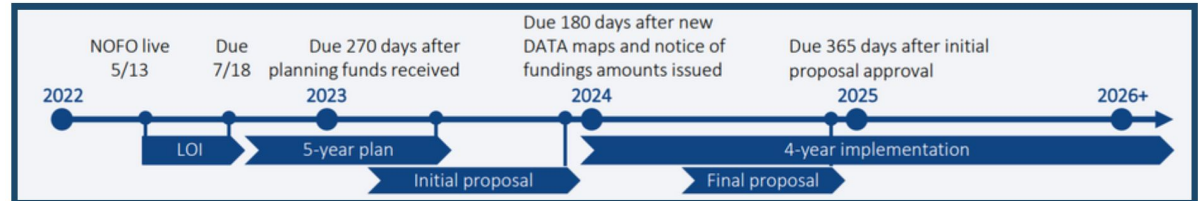
Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and Other Federal Funding

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The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provides a temporary monthly subsidy to help low-income households pay for broadband Internet access. **ACP Dashboard**

A Community Guide to Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities by ILSR

Common Sense Media has released an easy-to-read, comprehensive guide to federal broadband funding opportunities.

The Texas Digital Opportunity Plan (TDOP)

Texas Digital Opportunity Plan Goals

The **Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO)** has set **five** goals that align with NTIA's measurable objective categories:

NTIA Measurable Objectives	Texas Goals
Broadband Availability and Affordability	Expand adoption of reliable, affordable broadband internet service at home for all Texans.
Device Availability and Affordability and Technical Support	All Texans have access to affordable computers and other internet-enabled devices in their home, with corresponding technical support services.
Digital Literacy	All Texans have a broad foundation of digital literacy skills and access to a continuum of digital skills development programs.
Online Privacy and Cybersecurity	All Texans feel safe online and are familiar with cybersecurity and online privacy measures.
Online Accessibility and Inclusivity of Public Resources	Improve Texans' ability to access public resources and services online.

Strategies to Address Needs

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BDO anticipates funding the following **four primary strategies** to address these needs and other barriers identified in the Digital Opportunity Plan and to realize its goals.

1. Partner with and Fund Statewide Organizations
2. Fund Local Partners
3. Promote Internet Adoption
4. Maintain a Living Digital Opportunity Plan

The BDO is accepting public comments through Jan. 5, 2024

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What is the purpose of public comment?

NTIA requires states to hold public comment periods to engage residents and organizations to share their integral feedback on digital opportunity plans.

- Help refine and improve upon the plan.
- Suggest changes you'd like to see in the document.
- Share where your organization could be helpful in implementation.
- Provide additional information that the plan may not capture.
- Correct the record if needed.

TDOP Engagement & Participation

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- The public comment process is **open to all Texans**, and the BDO encourages residents, local governments, community-based organizations and others to provide feedback.
- The BDO is especially interested in hearing from individuals and organizations that represent Covered Populations, which include older adults, veterans, English language learners, individuals living with disabilities, individuals who primarily live in rural areas, racial and ethnic minorities, and those living at or below the federal poverty level.
    - Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will track progress
    - Implementation strategies are potential thoughts on how to implement the State DE Capacity Grant funding

TDOP Engagement & Participation

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- The BDO has created a toolkit containing materials and action items that you can use to get the word out about the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan Public Comment Period
- Download and review a draft of the TDOP at **www.broadbandfortexas.com/tdop** and to explore the NTIA funding program directory at **https://internetforall.gov/programs**

Q&A Session

Please submit your questions in the chat box

After this event concludes, please visit **www.broadbandfortexas.com/tdop** to download the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan, and submit your public comments.

Thank You

If you have any questions about the draft TDOP public comment process, please email **digital.opportunity@cpa.texas.gov**.

Please link to this **online form** to read the TDOP and provide comments.

The BDO is accepting public comments through **Jan. 5, 2024**