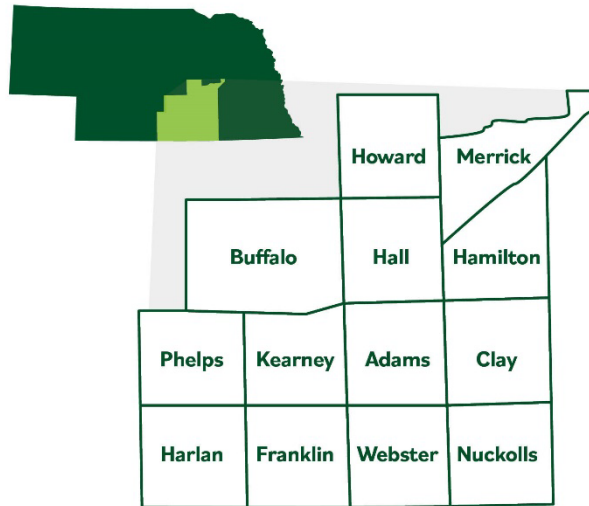


South Central Economic
Development District Inc.

South Central Region Digital Equity Plan



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Executive Summary

Overview

Digital access is an essential tool for residents as it assists communities in improving and expanding available resources while embracing technological advancements for their community. Economic development will prosper by building and sustaining community partnerships focused on growing digital equity and inclusion throughout the region as it reaches every aspect of life including education, healthcare, industry, and agriculture. Developing partnerships and advocating for all Nebraskans to have access to affordable, quality broadband, an appropriate device, and the skills to use technologies at home, school, the farm or ranch, businesses, healthcare, and government is essential to economic growth. Through the \$100 billion in expansion funding and \$2.72 billion in funding for digital equity distribution planned Nationally, the South Central Economic Development District's (SCEDD) region will see the largest investment towards closing the digital divide.

In January 2023, the South Central Nebraska Digital Equity Planning Committee was created through a partnership with the Nebraska Information & Technology Commission and SCEDD. Regional stakeholders representing the populations of rural, aging, ethnic and racial minorities, language barriers, low to moderate income, veteran and disabilities were invited to discuss the needs of their represented communities. The participating stakeholders represent community organizations and industries, including educational institutions, healthcare and service providers, local governments, and economic development organizations. The South Central Region Digital Equity Plan was created with input and guidance from these stakeholders.

The purpose of the South Central Region Digital Equity Plan is to identify barriers to digital equity in the region and implement strategies to remove these barriers. Included in the South Central Region Digital Equity Plan is an asset inventory, availability maps, cybersecurity planning guidelines and enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program by county.

Problem Statement

The SCEDD Region has seen growth in service and access to broadband in larger cities across the 13-county region, but minimal growth in broadband to rural areas outside of city limits. The work to ensure each household has access to affordable, quality broadband has revealed new challenges that must be addressed to fully connect each resident. The primary concerns for the region after access are - personal device access, digital literacy (specifically cybersecurity and online safety) and access to public resources to assist in the transition to a digital society. The South Central Region Digital Equity Plan provides an in-depth look at the challenges ahead for the region and strategies to address these concerns.

Regional Working Vision

The SCEDD Region will see an increase economic development through community partnerships focused on growing digital equity and inclusion throughout the region by ensuring that South Central Nebraskans have access to affordable, quality broadband, an appropriate device, and the skills to use technologies at home, school, the farm or ranch, businesses, healthcare, and government.

Key Priorities

Through the pursuit of Digital Equity Capacity Grants and Digital Equity Competitive Grants, residents, governments and community anchor institutions (CAIs) can actively work to bridge the digital divide. Based on these key priorities, the South Central Region Digital Equity Planning committee developed specific goals and strategies.

- 1) Rural access to digital literacy and technical support
- 2) Cybersecurity for all populations, which is promoted outside of work and school
- 3) Affordability of internet access
- 4) Digital literacy programs offered to an expanded number of cultures, languages, and abilities
- 5) Increased public resources to provide and sustain digital services through
 - a. Sharing of resources among communities in the region
 - b. Increased accessibility to online trainings
- 6) Increased promotion and awareness of public, digital resources
- 7) Capitalize on existing partnerships for sustainable programming
- 8) Identify an entity(ies) to pursue available funding and address these issues while convening stakeholders to implement solutions

Conclusion

Future disbursement of Digital Equity Capacity Grants and Digital Equity Competitive Grants ensures the SCEDD regional communities and CAIs can be supported and work continued to bridge the digital divide. Based on these opportunities, the SCEDD Region's Digital Equity Plan includes recommendations to achieve specific goals.

The South Central Region Digital Equity Plan outlines short-term and long-term strategies to address the challenges of the digital divide. In the short-term, end of 2026, the region must prioritize updates to current technology systems offered as public resources across various institutions. Ongoing strategizing with CAIs and local governments is necessary to maximize the use of funds available. Partnerships with community organizations and national nonprofits will increase the number of household devices available and provide navigation through digital literacy and cybersecurity trainings.

The long-term steps, with a goal date of 2030, include identification of permanent funding with support from community members to ensure stability in digital programming implemented in the

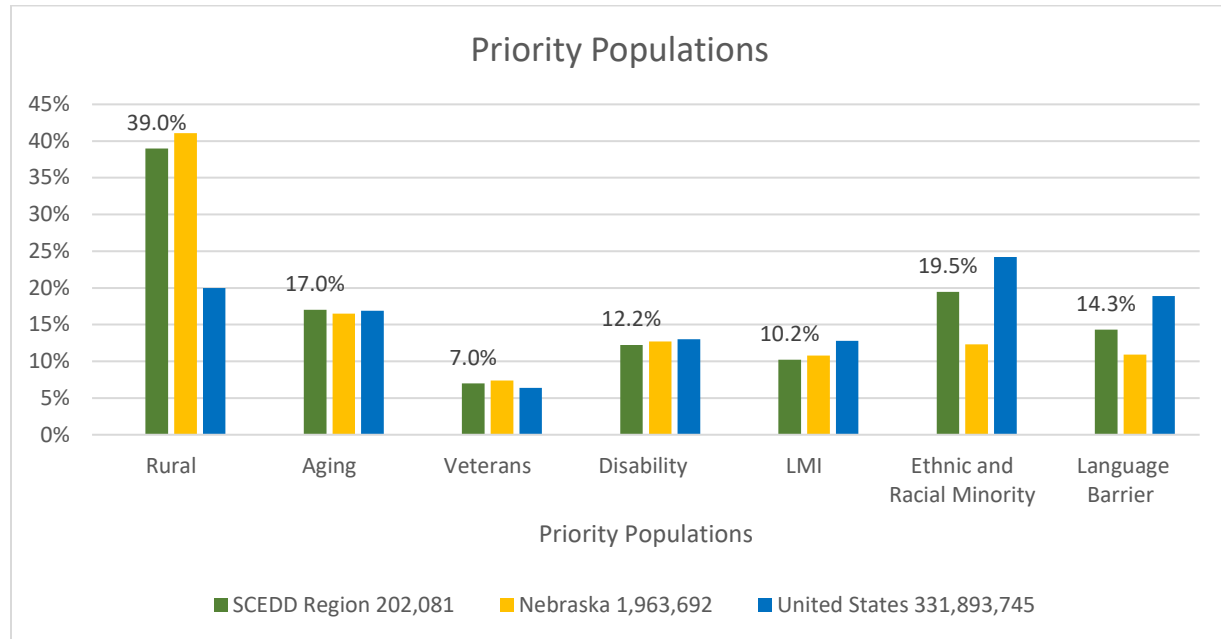
region. The next steps prioritize maintaining growth in digital literacy, economic development, telehealth services, education, and government within each community.

Digital access is necessary to sustain and grow a community. Through the South Central Region Digital Equity Plan, the region will increase economic development through established and new partnerships. With the assistance of federal and state funding, the region can ensure that the SCEDD region will have access to affordable broadband, devices compatible with the new economy, and the knowledge to use both to their fullest capability.

Regional Data and Covered Populations

Overview Data on Region and Covered Populations

The SCEDD Region consists of 13 counties with a population of 202,081¹. The region is made up of mostly rural communities with one urban county, Hall County. Almost 150,000 individuals in the region identify as living in a rural area. The following chart depicts a comparison of the prioritized population groups, by percentage, in the South Central region to the state of Nebraska and the United States.



- 17% of the population is aged 65 years or older with the highest older adult percentage residing in Nuckolls County
- 14% of the population has a language barrier (4% above the statewide average of 10%)
- 19% identify as an Ethnic or Racial Minority, with these populations predominantly located in Hall County, specifically Grand Island, NE
- 10% of the region resides in a household that is considered Low-to-Moderate Income. Franklin, Hall, Adams, Webster, and Buffalo Counties have the highest LMI populations each with more than 10% of the population below the poverty line
- 12% of the population has some type of disability which is consistent across the region

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2021). *Selected population profiles American Community Survey 1-year estimate*. Retrieved from <https://api.census.gov/data/2021/acs/acs1/spp>

Each population prioritized by the National Technology Information Administration (NTIA) is represented in the region, but the main issue for the majority of the population is the distance from available and potentially new resources. Upon completing the asset inventory, the South Central Digital Equity Planning Committee identified five populations most in need of resources through the Digital Equity Act:

- Low-to-Moderate Income
- Aging Individuals
- Individuals with a Disability
- Individuals with a Language Barrier
- Rural Population

2021 Poverty and Median Household Income Estimates - Counties, States, and National							
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)							
Geographic	All Ages		Age 0-17		Age 5-17 in Families		Median House
Name	Poverty Estimate, All Ages	Poverty Percent, All Ages	Poverty Estimate, Age 0-17	Poverty Percent, Age 0-17	Poverty Estimate, Age 5-17 in Families	Poverty Percent, Age 5-17 in Families	Median Household Income
Nebraska	201,627	10.5	57,279	12.1	38,634	11.1	66,949
Adams County	3,501	11.7	855	12.0	567	10.9	57,136
Buffalo County	5,163	10.7	1,252	11.1	880	10.7	65,721
Clay County	595	9.9	175	11.8	117	10.5	64,315
Franklin County	375	13.0	116	18.9	80	18.7	54,192
Hall County	7,341	12.0	2,518	15.1	1,673	13.7	60,751
Hamilton County	618	6.7	173	7.8	121	7.4	73,024
Harlan County	296	9.7	87	13.2	61	12.2	58,928
Howard County	525	8.1	174	11.0	123	10.3	70,906
Kearney County	509	7.7	151	9.1	107	8.6	72,694
Merrick County	678	9.0	189	11.6	132	10.9	64,309
Nuckolls County	398	9.9	102	12.6	71	12.0	59,602
Phelps County	768	8.8	235	10.9	174	11.0	66,986

2

While only making up 10% of the overall SCEDD Region population, low-to-moderate income households have a larger impact on a county level. Adams, Buffalo, Franklin, Hall, and Webster Counties have the highest percent of the population of low income households. While Adams, Buffalo, and Hall Counties have large municipalities, Franklin and Webster do not have the

² Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Dec. 2022

increased population or additional resources available in the previous three. Each county has unique challenges, but the combination of rural and low to moderate income presents the remaining ten counties with additional challenges that require unique consideration.

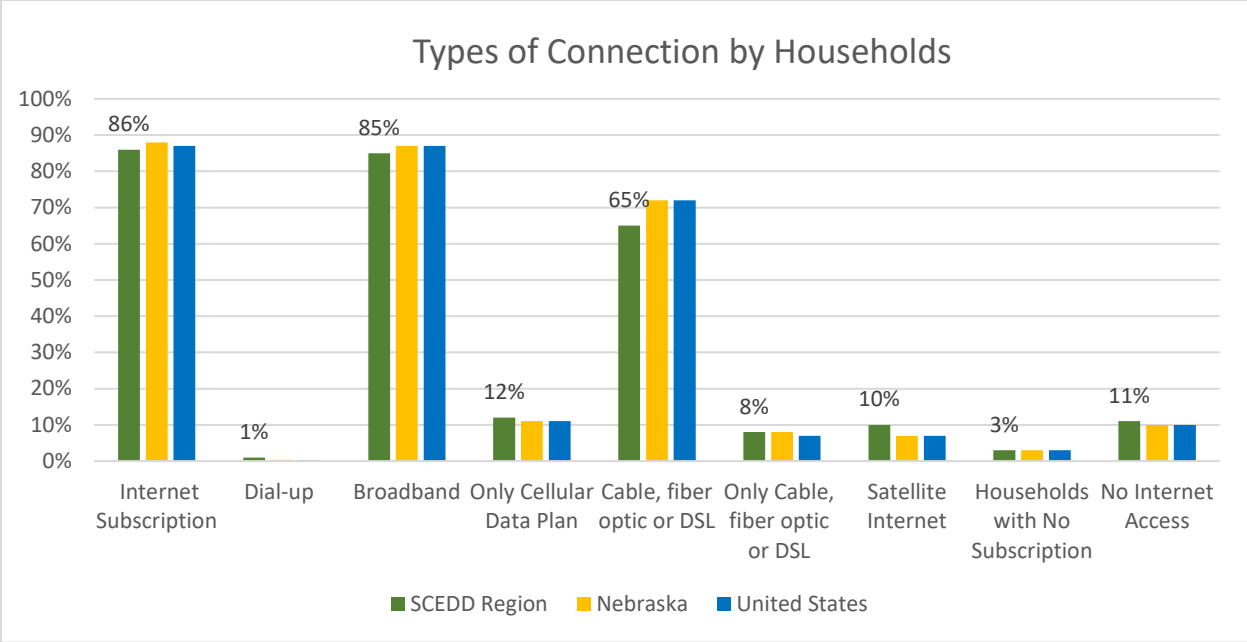
Broadband Availability and Overview

Limited access to service is the main barrier to digital equity in the SCEDD Region. Eleven percent or 8,945 households in the region do not have access to internet speeds of 25Mbps/3Mbps, which is considered unserved by FCC standards. The need for broadband infrastructure varies, when evaluating each of the 13-counties, as the disparity grows in the least populated counties in the region. For example, the four counties located on the southern border of the SCEDD Region, Harlan, Franklin, Webster, and Nuckolls counties, are less likely to have broadband infrastructure. Nuckolls County has a population of 1,720 households with 20% of the population not having access to an internet connection³. The Committee gives preference to fiber optic deployment to ensure the region's transition to a digitally driven economy through the future-proof infrastructure of broadband fiber optic. The Committee and SCEDD support the process of hanging fiber optic from the existing electrical pole infrastructure to expedite deployment and minimizing costs of expansion.

The region is made up of all eight priority populations, yet, the main barrier of digital equity for each population is the lack of access to high speed internet. Since 2018, the SCEDD Region has received over \$17 million⁴ in grants from Nebraska Universal Service Fund and federal programs with an additional \$3.067 million from the 2021 and 2022 rounds of the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program and Capital Project Fund. Despite the amount of funding invested in the area, 11% of households still do not have access to speeds of 25Mbps/3Mbps. The current cost to build out broadband infrastructure is a heavy burden on the communities and internet service providers in the region and yet a crucial task to ensure each person can fully participate in a modern society.

³ Source: ACS 5-year 2021 Table B28002

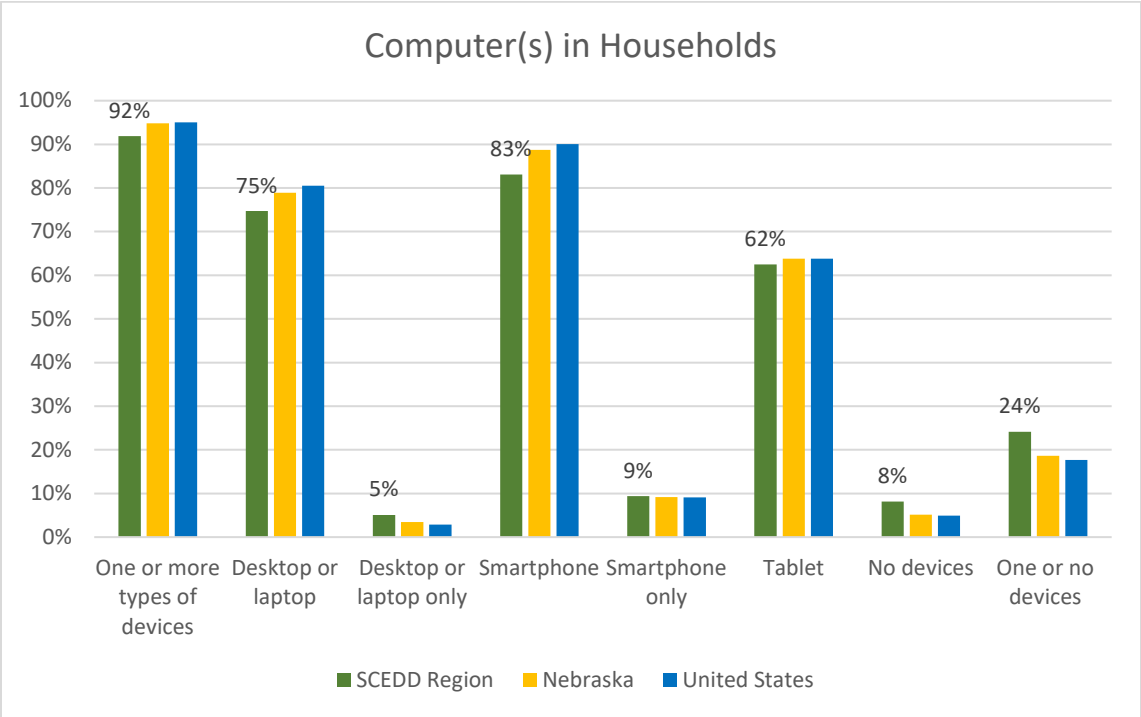
⁴ Cumulative funding from NUSF and USDA



The ACS 2021 data shows the SCEDD region is comparable to Nebraska and the United States in terms of internet subscriptions. However, there are various types of internet access including the 1% of the SCEDD region that relies on Dial-up as their main source of connection. A noticeable variance is 65% of the SCEDD Region with cable, fiber optics, or DSL compared to Nebraska and the Nation’s 72%. However, satellite use is higher than State and National use at 10%. Most concerning is 11% of the SCEDD Region that does not have access to internet compared to the 10% in Nebraska and 10% Nationally.

Device Availability and Affordability

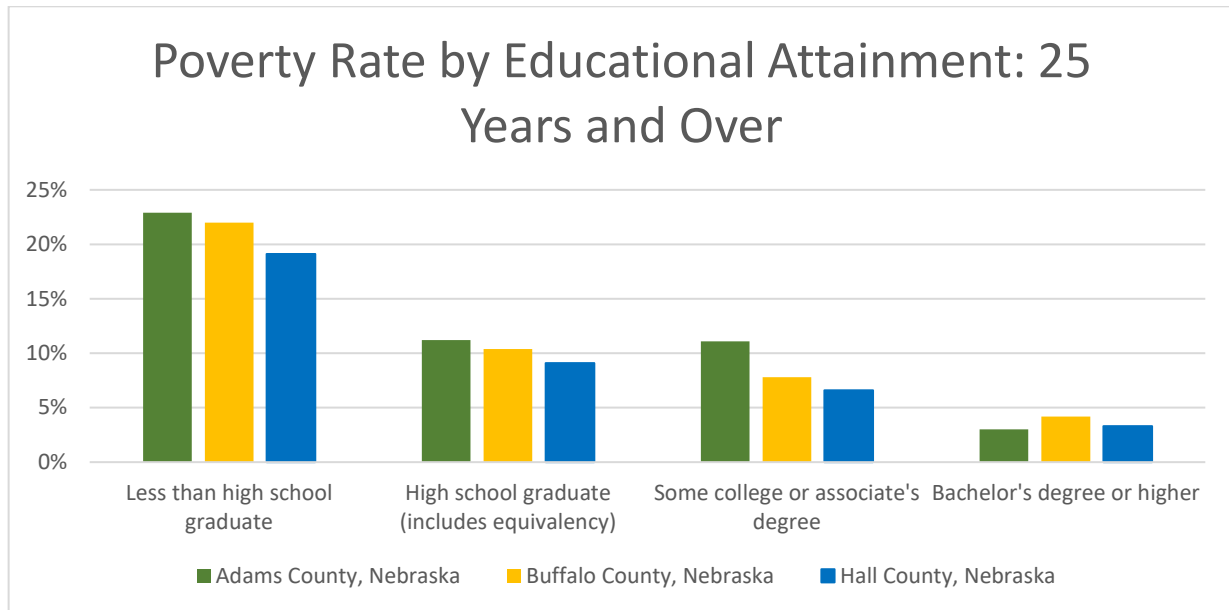
Despite advancements in technology and device availability, both continue to be an ongoing challenge for South Central Nebraskans. There are limited storefronts located in the region to purchase a device in-person. The 10% of the population who are low-to-moderate income, may not be able to purchase a new, never used device. Yet, if they do not live close to the cities of Grand Island, Hastings, or Kearney, known as the Tri-Cities, there are no options to purchase a used or refurbished device in person. The option of purchasing a device through a regional internet service provider is extremely limited for low-to-moderate income households, as only one provider is enrolled in the \$100 per device portion of the Affordable Connectivity Program.



The ACS 2021 data shows the SCEDD region is comparable to Nebraska and the United States in having one or more types of computing devices, a smartphone only, or a tablet only. The SCEDD region has a slightly higher percent of households with no device, at 8%, compared to 5.2% in Nebraska, and 5% Nationally. The SCEDD region has 5% with only a desktop or laptop, compared to 3.5% in Nebraska, and 2.9% Nationally. Households with one device or no device make up 24% of the SCEDD region compared to Nebraska’s 18.6% and 17.7% Nationally. Reliance on one device or no personal device at all, aggressively limits the ability to fully connect online. The issue of device access and affordability becomes an even larger barrier for individuals with a disability. This particular population requires specialized technology to assist their disability such as light control, sound control, specialized keyboards and accessories, etc. The specialization of the device is not available at standard retail store locations and the cost for each modification makes the devices more cost prohibitive.

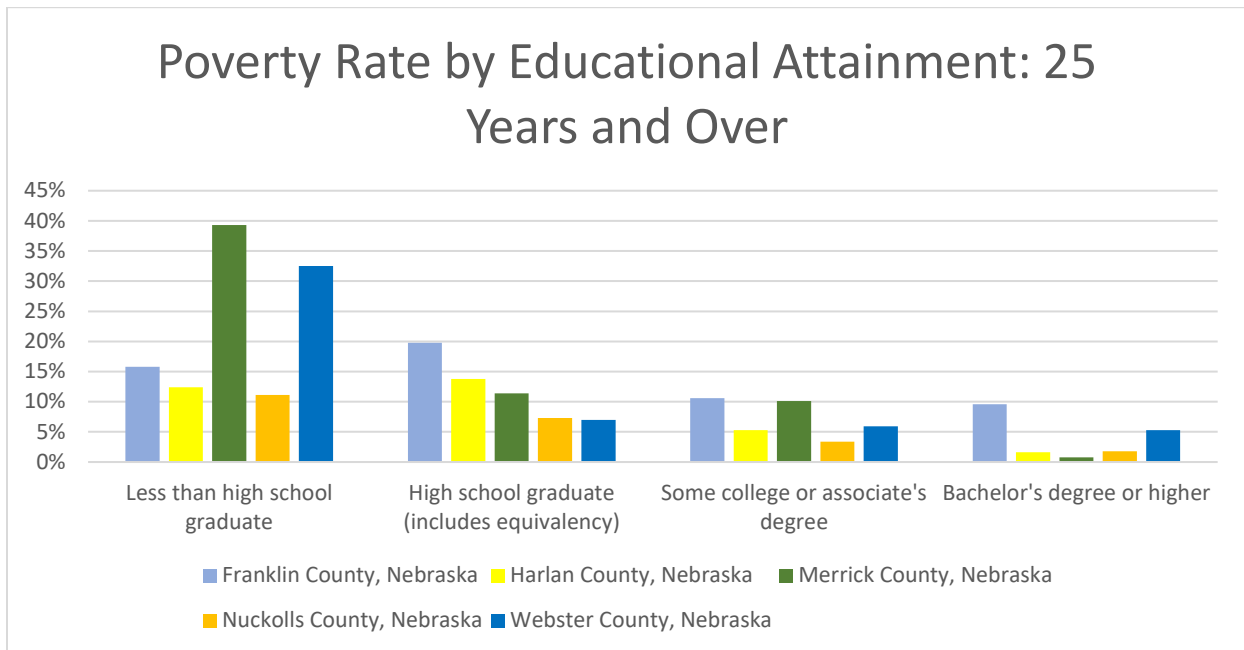
Digital Literacy

Limited access to resources and training materials prevent the region from achieving improved digital skills. For low-to-moderate income counties and rural counties, access to digital literacy courses becomes scarce. While educational institutions and many workplaces provide in-house training, these trainings are limited and the lack of resources has a high impact on the community.



Represented above are the three counties in the region with large municipalities. While these three counties have additional resources, they are concentrated to the cities of Hastings, Kearney, and Grand Island. All three counties have a university or community college in the municipalities, explaining the higher number of individuals with some college or associates degree and bachelor's degree or higher. The additional resources provide assistance towards workforce development and job trainings which helps decrease the percentage of 25 year olds and over below or at the poverty line, even without a high school degree or equivalent.

The chart below shows five rural counties with the region’s highest percentages of individuals at or below the poverty line. Franklin, Harlan, Nuckolls, and Webster County are all located on the southern border of the state and the furthest from Interstate 80. These four counties have limited resources to assist with workforce development and job trainings. The lack of these resources has a huge impact on 25 year olds and over without a high school degree or equivalent and individuals with a high school degree or equivalent.



In the region, there are seven in-person trainings for digital literacy hosted at libraries or YMCAs. Of the seven trainings, six are in the most populated areas known as the Tri-Cities (Hastings, Kearney, and Grand Island). The majority of local libraries in rural communities do not have the resources or the capacity to provide consistent digital literacy trainings:

- 22.6% of libraries in the region are closed both Saturday and Sunday
- 48.4% of the libraries close before 5pm on the one weekend day they are open

The typical rural libraries’ operating schedules may not meet the needs of all community members. Providing additional resources to the organizations already established in the community to expand hours and services would improve residents’ access to develop technology skills and workforce development potential. As communities attract new residents and businesses, it is important that each community has resources in place to provide digital trainings and support. Having a digitally engaged community is also beneficial to potential businesses. In counties with a predominantly low-to-moderate income population, the implementation of digital resources could result in the increase of investments from businesses and job growth. In counties with higher populations that do not speak English, digital literacy trainings will need to be adapted and provided in a variety of languages, removing the language barrier from the hiring process. While funding is available, communities should take advantage of the opportunity to build up digital resources that will be vital in the future.

Privacy and Security

As Nebraskans begin to see an increase in broadband access and digital resources, it is critical to ensure the digital security and safety of Nebraskans. The local governments in the SCEDD region should update the equipment and publicly available resources to reflect the standards for 2023. Updating public resources will assure community members that the government website is secure and a reliable source of information. These public resources would be protected from cybersecurity threats that could endanger community assets such as theft of sensitive information, disruption of services, and financial losses. Local governments can serve as a resource for internet safety by sharing resources and community wide trainings to increase the knowledge of cyber safety. One unique method would be implementing alerts to cybercrimes through the local Emergency Messaging Services, if established. Through sharing of information and resources, CAIs and local government can identify the best way to protect their information and their community members while ensuring the public is served without interruption.

Online Accessibility and Inclusivity

With the expansion of quality and affordable internet access, more individuals will be given the opportunity to fully participate in the digital economy. The resources to assist individuals in learning techniques, skills, and security prevention methods are often not available to individuals with specific needs. The SCEDD region is seeing an increase of households that speak limited English or have a language barrier and individuals who have a disability that prevents them from fully participating online. The U.S. Census from 2013 estimated 2.9% of households spoke limited English in the thirteen counties. According to U.S. Census data from 2021, 3.6% of these households spoke limited English. Hall County experienced a growth of 1.3% households during this time frame with over 50 languages spoken in Grand Island Public Schools. Meanwhile, 12% of the SCEDD Region population experience some type of disability that may prevent them from using the resources already established in their community or to fully engage online. The Disability Employment Center estimates 28%⁵ of the 110,000 individuals with disabilities in Nebraska are actively looking for work as of 2021. Updating information to be inclusive and accessible is crucial to creating a fully engaged state and local workforce.

⁵ <https://aoddisabilityemploymentcenter.com/state/Nebraska/>

Asset Inventory

Community Assets – Refer to Appendix

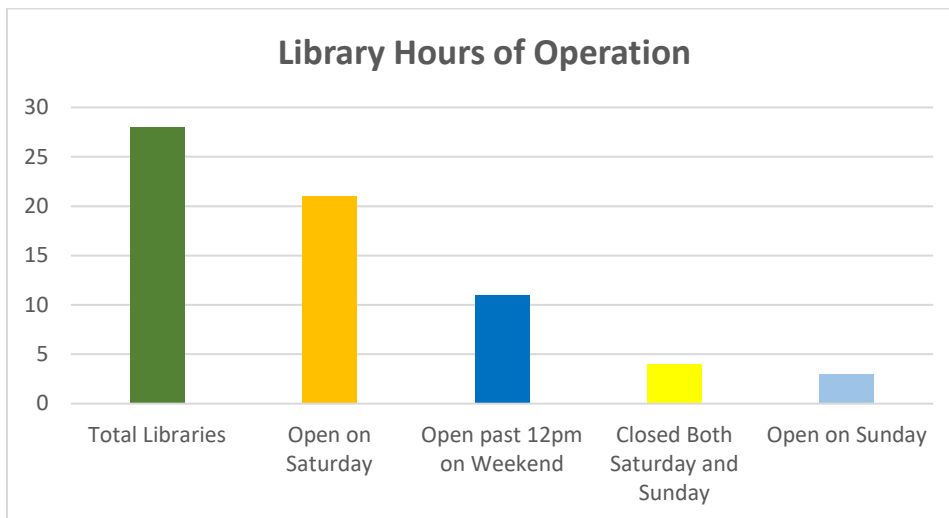
Libraries

Libraries are a necessary resource for the SCEDD Region. The local library serves as a community anchor institution by providing entertainment, resources to expand education and learning, a shared community space, and so much more. However, for the communities with populations of 5,000 or less, the local library has struggled to maintain capacity and funding in an ever-evolving digital world. The SCEDD region has 31 libraries to serve 84 communities. Twenty-eight of the 31 libraries provided responses to the Nebraska Library Commission Technology Survey from 2021. Each library provides public internet access and public devices. The quality of these resources varies from each community:

- 9 libraries receive internet through a fiber optic connection
- 19 rely on fixed wireless, cable, or DSL connections
- 3 libraries did not provide a response

Amanda Shelton, Librarian at Franklin Public Library, described their experience with public internet before a fiber optic connection as “painfully slow and required the staff to ask patrons to not use the internet while completing their work”. Before fiber optic, Franklin Public Library relied on fixed wireless for internet connection.

Libraries are also experiencing a lack of resources to hire extra staff for expanded hours and to provide resources regarding digital literacy and/or cybersecurity. As of May 2023, 6 libraries in the region are not open at all on the weekends and while there are 21 libraries open on Saturdays, only 11 of them are open past 12pm. The local library needs the resources to support capacity and implement digital literacy programs.



Senior Centers

Senior Centers are an essential piece to the communities represented in the SCEDD region. They provide space for community, programming, and resources to the older adult population. Yet, Senior Centers have not implemented programming to address the digital divide. With 13 Senior Centers in the region, only five participated in a survey that requested information on digital resources provided. All five respondents provide public Wi-Fi and have at least one computer for their patrons to use but do not provide programming or assistance to their patrons on how to navigate the internet and their devices in a safe manner. These locations have the potential to be a great resource for digital equity if given guidance and the personnel resources on how best to prepare and/or assist their patrons with new technology,

Gap Analysis





On March 8, 2023, the South Central Nebraska Digital Equity Planning Committee completed the Gap Analysis at a planning meeting in Hastings, NE. The Committee reviewed each Community Need for each of the 7 respective populations: availability and affordability of fixed and wireless broadband, availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support, digital literacy, awareness and use of online privacy and security, and accessibility and inclusivity of public resources. Using the information from the completed Asset Inventory, each Need was given a score of Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory, or Not present through small group discussion and consensus. The chart below reflects the Committee’s assessments.

Scale: -Satisfactory (S) -Needs -Unsatisfactory (US) -Not Present (-)	Availability & Affordability of Fixed & Wireless Broadband	Availability & Affordability of Consumer Devices & Technical Support	Digital Literacy	Awareness & Use of Online Privacy & Security	Accessibility & Inclusivity of Public Resources
Rural Residents - Mobile	NI	NI	S	NI	US
Rural Residents - Broadband	US	US	US	NI	US
Older Adults (60+) - Mobile	US	NI	NI	NI	NI
Older Adults (60+) - Broadband	US	NI	NI	NI	NI
Ethnic & Racial Minorities - Mobile	S	US	US	-	-
Ethnic & Racial Minorities - Broadband	NI	US	US	-	-
Low-Income Households - Mobile	NI	NI	NI	US	NI
Low-Income Households - Broadband	NI	NI	NI	US	NI
Individuals w/ Language Barriers - Mobile	NI	NI	US	NI	NI
Individuals w/ Language Barriers - Broadband	NI	NI	US	NI	NI
Individuals w/ Disabilities - Mobile	US	NI	US	US	NI
Individuals w/ Disabilities - Broadband	US	NI	US	US	NI
Veterans - Mobile	S	NI	NI	NI	S
Veterans - Broadband	S	NI	S	NI	S

Goals and Strategies

The South Central Nebraska Digital Equity Planning Committee has identified the top four goals for the region. To ensure each goal can be supported with short-term and long-term funding, each goal has been matched with the appropriate funding source from both Federal and State Entities.



Federal Funding Sources

Icon	Federal Program
	IIJA* – Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD): \$210M ⁶
	IIJA* - State Digital Equity Act (DE): \$21M
	IIJA*- Enabling Middle Mile (EMM): \$5M -100M
	USDA** - ReConnect: \$300M

**Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding is managed by the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA)*

*** United States Department of Agriculture*

State Funding Sources

Icon	State Program
	Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP): \$5M
	Affordable Connectivity Program Outreach Grant: \$500K

⁶ ACA Connects, “BEAD Program: A Framework to Allocate Funding for Broadband Availability”, Feb. 2, 2023.

Goal One: Increase the number of households in the SCEDD Region with affordable access to internet service speeds of 100 Mbps/100 Mbps by 9,000 households

	● BEAD	♥ DE	♣ EMM	♠ ReConnect	▲ NBBP
Funding Source	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Timeframe	2025-2027	2023-2028	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategies 1.1: Increase the percent of SCEDD Region households with access to affordable, quality broadband service available

Baseline: 8,945 households without an internet connection⁷

Activities:

1. Define “affordable” as \$50 per month before the Affordable Connectivity Program
2. Prioritize broadband infrastructure for locations outside of municipalities
3. Facilitate workshops to assist public entities and private Internet Service Providers to create working agreements including match funding for grant applications, negotiate shared resources, and identify best practices
4. Capitalize on existing public-private partnerships to assist in broadband infrastructure build out
5. Connect county commissioners and county supervisors with appropriate stakeholders to identify areas with limited broadband access using Nebraska Broadband Mapping Project, Federal Communication Commission Map, and the USDA ReConnect map
6. Identify Broadband Investment Priority Areas (BIPAs) for the region in partnership with community leaders

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 11% decrease in the number of households without access to affordable, quality broadband service
2. Increase in the number of applications for broadband funding approved by the Nebraska Public Service Commission and/or Nebraska Broadband Office
3. Three regional stakeholder meetings to identify and address regional priorities by 2026

⁷ ACS 5-year 2021 Table B28002

Strategy 1.2: Increase the percent of households in the SCEDD Region with a broadband subscription to match the number of households with access to internet service

Baseline: 2,326 households with access to internet, but with no subscription⁸

Activities:

1. Encourage the expansion of broadband infrastructure to provide quality internet connection to households currently designated as unserved or underserved
2. Showcase the importance of home internet through schools, libraries, senior centers, and workforce development for work from home, education, and quality of life opportunities

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 15% decrease in the number households with no broadband subscription by 2028
-

Strategy 1.3: Increase the percent of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Baseline: 7,338 eligible households with 483 households enrolled

Activities:

1. Media campaigns to promote awareness of ACP
2. Collaboration with libraries and senior centers to host enrollment days for ACP
3. Digital Navigator trainings to provide assistance to eligible households in applying and enrolling in ACP

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 10% increase in the number of households enrolled in ACP by 2024 (current federal funding set to expire in 2024)
-

⁸ ACS 5-year 2021 Table B28002

Goal Two: Improve the technology skills of South Central Nebraskans including the further development of a skilled workforce

	● BEAD	♥ DE	♣ EMM	♠ ReConnect	▲ NBBP
Funding Source		✓			
Timeframe	2025-2027	2023-2028	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategy 2.1: Increase the financial and technical support for local libraries to encourage the implementation of digital literacy courses and updated devices

Baseline: Zero libraries with organized digital literacy classes, 4 libraries with resources to provide digital literacy support, average of 7 devices per library for public use⁹ skewed by devices available in the Tri-Cities

Activities:

1. Assist local libraries to identify funding opportunities to pay for:
 - a. The yearly fee for North Star Digital Literacy Programs, or similar program, to track digital skill trainings
 - b. Computers and software, current within 4 years, for public use and ongoing maintenance and tech support
2. Encourage and support local libraries to translate public resources into languages spoken by at least 5% of the population of their community

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 100% of libraries participate in North Star Digital Literacy Programs, or similar program, including a score database
2. 60% of public libraries in region have updated computers and software
3. Digital Literacy trainings offered in English, Spanish, and/or the language proportional to the population of the county
4. 60% of libraries have access to ongoing maintenance and tech support

⁹ Asset Inventory

Strategy 2.2: Increase public resources to allow for digital literacy certification testing such as North Star Digital Literacy Assessment

Baseline: 7 free digital literacy courses offered twice per year

Activities:

1. Encourage community organizations to subscribe to digital literacy training software
2. Encourage higher education facilities to provide more frequent, hands on digital literacy courses to community members and students
3. Update devices at Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) for public use

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Implement tracking of digital literacy skills outside of public education
 2. Average of 50% passing rate using the standardized digital literacy courses
 3. 60% of public libraries have computers and software that are no more than 4 years old
-

Strategy 2.3: Encourage and assist senior centers and community facilities to develop partnerships to provide device access and trainings in digital literacy and cybersecurity

Baseline: No known digital literacy courses offered by senior centers

Activities:

1. Assist senior centers to identify funding opportunities to pay for:
 - a. Yearly fee for North Star Digital Literacy programs to track skill trainings
 - b. Computers and software, current within 4 years, for public use
2. Facilitate collaboration with libraries and schools to encourage populations of 65+ to participate in digital literacy trainings

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 50% of senior centers participate in North Star Digital Literacy Programs including the tracking component
 2. 60% of senior centers have at least 2 computers and software that are no more than 4 years old for public use
 3. Increase in digital literacy trainings focused on older populations
-

Strategy 2.4: Encourage educational institutions to provide digital literacy classes and “take home” resources to expand digital skills and familiarity with devices in the household

Baseline: 6 digital literacy courses offered annually by Central Community College in the Tri-Cities

Activities:

1. Encourage higher education facilities to provide more frequent, hands on digital literacy courses to community members and students
2. Assist educational institutions to find funding and incorporate support for new after school programs that support digital literacy and technical skills
3. Encourage existing, technology education organizations to expand to the region and in rural communities

Key Performance Indicators:

1. One digital literacy class offered annually per county
 2. One school district per county adopts an after school digital literacy program for grades 5-12
-

Strategy 2.5: Increase the use of telehealth services in rural communities

Baseline: Approximately 9,000 medical appointments are completed online¹⁰, representing approximately 30%

Activities:

1. Support healthcare organizations in their search for grant funding to update telehealth equipment
2. Encourage community leaders to provide public Wi-Fi and private spaces for telehealth appointments
3. Support CAIs, such as senior centers and libraries, to:
 - a. promote the benefits of telehealth services
 - b. provide trainings on how to effectively use telehealth services

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Establish 3 private rooms, outside of the Tri-Cities, located in a CAI for community member telehealth services
 2. 10% increase in telehealth appointments from 30% to 40% or more for patients residing in rural communities
 3. Establish 5 digital literacy courses targeting telehealth services with 3 courses hosted outside of the Tri-Cities
-

¹⁰ https://journalstar.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/health-matters/pandemic-sent-nebraska-patients-providers-from-exam-room-to-computer-platform-whats-next-for-telehealth/article_0394e33f-f432-5f66-910a-5383f6308ef5.html

Strategy 2.6: Decrease the percentage of households in SCEDD Region with *no internet connected devices*

Baseline: 6,445 households in the SCEDD Region have no internet connected device¹¹

Activities:

1. Capitalize on existing partnerships with CAIs to host device distribution drives
2. Encourage new partnerships between CAIs and national nonprofits focused on providing affordable devices
3. Work with private internet service providers to enroll in the ACP device stipend (currently \$100)
4. Encourage the development of new partnerships to increase the number of entities offering device trade-in and repair in rural areas

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 5% increase in ownership of internet connected devices¹² by 2026
 2. 6 device distribution drives across 13 counties by 2026
 3. 50% of ISPs in the region enrolled in the ACP stipend program by 2026
 4. 3% increase in repair shops and/or mobile services by 2026
-

Strategy 2.7: Decrease the percent of households in SCEDD Region with a *smartphone only*

Baseline: 7,850 households have only a smartphone as an internet connected device¹³

Activities:

1. Capitalize on existing partnerships with CAIs to host device drives
2. Connect CAIs with national nonprofits focused on providing affordable devices
3. Work with private internet service providers to enroll in the ACP stipend for a device
4. Explore and advocate for more individuals, groups, or companies to offer device trade ins and repairs in rural areas

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 5%¹⁴ decrease in number of households owning just a smartphone
2. 6 device distribution drives across 13 counties by 2026
3. 50% of ISPs in the region enrolled in ACP stipend for a device by 2026
4. 3% increase in repair shops and/or mobile services by 2026






¹¹ ACS 5 year 2021 Table B28001

¹² 92% ownership rate ACS 2021

¹³ ACS 5 year 2021 Table B28001

¹⁴ 8.7% ACS 2021

Goal Three: Increase the knowledge of South Central Nebraskans regarding cybersecurity and internet safety

	 BEAD	 DE	 EMM	 ReConnect	 NBBP
Funding Source	✓	✓		✓	
Timeframe	2025-2027	2022-2024	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategy 3.1: Create or update county and local governments’ cybersecurity plans

Baseline: No county or local government in the region have a known cybersecurity plan

Activities:

1. Support local governments through grant applications to create or update government cybersecurity plans and equipment

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 13 county and/or local government cybersecurity plans updated by the end of 2024
-

Strategy 3.2: Update county and/or local government websites and print materials to include curriculum focused on cybersecurity, internet safety, and compliance with State/Federal regulations

Baseline: No known county or local government website provides resources online for cybersecurity and internet protection

Activities:

1. Support county and/or local government as they
 - a. Update public resources to be user friendly and in compliance with current standards
 - b. Provide up-to-date information on current cybersecurity threats and safety concerns for all populations
2. Encourage collaboration between county, local, and state governments to share information, public resources, and strategies to protect community members

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 13 county or local government websites updated with information on cybersecurity and protection
-

Strategy 3.3: Develop public awareness initiatives on cybersecurity risks and common scams

Baseline: No known public awareness initiatives completed by local governments or CAIs

Activities:

1. Public media campaign notifying public of updated resources and information regarding protection against cybercrimes
2. Encourage CAIs, including schools, libraries, senior centers, etc., to share information about potential threats and ways to protect against cybercrimes on public computers
3. Encourage CAIs to develop curriculum specifically for cybersecurity and scam prevention

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Implementation of standardized notification system for cybercrimes
2. 5% decrease in cybercrimes across the 13 counties
3. Establishment of 5 cybersecurity trainings for community members with 3 hosted in rural communities

Goal Four: Improve online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services

	● BEAD	♥ DE	♣ EMM	♠ ReConnect	▲ NBBP
Funding Source		✓			
Timeframe	2025-2027	2022-2024	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategy 4.1: Increase awareness of online public resources available through CAIs and county or local governments

Baseline: Promotion of online public resources primarily conducted by CAIs through social media resulting in limited promotion of available resources

Activities:

1. Media campaigns to promote resources currently available in libraries and community centers not limited to social media campaigns

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 5% increase in the number of attendees/users of resources per month

Strategy 4.2: Update resources in public libraries and local government to include multiple languages as reflected by proportion of population as outlined in the Nebraska Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy

Baseline: 83 out of 84 community websites do not provide resources online in languages other than English

Activities:

1. Identify up to 5 languages used within each county as reflected by proportion of population as outlined in Nebraska’s LEP Policy
2. Assist libraries and local government in identifying grant funding to translate resources and/or provide a translator for the top language aside from English

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 13 counties’ resources translated into languages proportional to the population for their county
 2. Identification of translation support resource providers for 13 county region
-

Strategy 4.3: Update digital and technical resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities or special needs

Baseline: No known CAIs provide digital and technical information or resources for individuals with disabilities or special needs

Activities:

1. Assist CAIs in pursuit of funding to make public resources physically accessible
2. Assist libraries in pursuit of funding to provide devices to accommodate hard of hearing individuals, visually impaired individuals, individuals prone to seizures caused by bright lights and loud noises, and other disabilities and special needs identified by the library

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 100% of CAI buildings and digital resources physically accessible by 2030
 2. 15% increase in digital and technical resources available to individuals with disabilities or special needs
-

Strategy 4.4: Update local government websites to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines

Baseline: Of 84 communities, 46 have websites and 31 are compliant with ADA guidelines; 38 do not have a website

Activities:













1. Create a check list to meet the requirements of the ADA guidelines
2. Identify and assist local governments in need of website creation
3. Identify and assist local government websites that need to be updated
4. Encourage county and local governments to establish a plan to maintain website ADA compliance






Key Performance Indicators:

1. 50% of communities have websites meeting the ADA guidelines by 2025
-

Funding Strategy Table

The purpose of the Funding Strategy Table is to align federal and/or state programs to proposed strategies. Aligning the goals, strategies, and activities with funding opportunities addresses challenges with adoption rates and affordability options while providing support through the implementation process. The following funding opportunities are subject to change as more information becomes available.

South Central Nebraska Digital Equity Plan	
Programs	Strategy
	Strategy 1.1: Increase the percent of SCEDD Region households with access to affordable, quality broadband service available
	Strategy 1.2: Increase the percent of households in the SCEDD Region with a broadband subscription to match the number of households with access to internet service
	Strategy 1.3: Increase the percent of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
	Strategy 2.1: Increase the financial and technical support for local libraries to encourage the implementation of digital literacy courses and updated devices
	Strategy 2.2: Increase public resources to allow for digital literacy certification testing such as North Star Digital Literacy Assessment
	Strategy 2.3: Encourage and assist senior centers and community facilities to develop partnerships to provide digital literacy trainings, cybersecurity trainings, and device access
	Strategy 2.4: Encourage educational institutions to provide digital literacy classes and “take home” resources to expand digital skills and familiarity with devices in the household
	Strategy 2.5: Increase the use of telehealth services in rural communities
	Strategy 2.6: Decrease the percentage of households in South Central Nebraska with no internet connected devices
	Strategy 2.7: Decrease the percentage of households in South Central Nebraska with a smartphone only
	Strategy 3.1: Create or update county and local governments’ cybersecurity plans
	Strategy 3.2: Update county and/or local government websites and print materials to include curriculum focused on cybersecurity, internet safety, and compliance with State/Federal regulations

	Strategy 3.3: Develop public awareness to security risks and common scams
	Strategy 4.1: Increase awareness of public resources currently available through CAIs and county or local governments
	Strategy 4.2: Update resources in public libraries and local government to include multiple languages reflected by proportion of population as outlines in the Nebraska Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy
	Strategy 4.3: Updates resources to include translations and methods of learning for individuals with disabilities
	Strategy 4.4: Update local government websites to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Implementation Timeline

For this plan to be successful the key will be prioritizing and implementing the goals through a feasible and achievable timeline. Listed are various performance metrics paired with each goal to ensure each goal is completed. Completion date of short-term targets is anticipated by end of 2026 and long-term targets by end of 2030.

	Strategy	Short-term Targets	Long-Term Targets
Goal One	Increase the percent of SCEDD Region households with access to affordable, quality broadband service	5% increase in households with access to broadband service	11% increase in households with access to broadband service
	Increase the percent of households in the SCEDD Region with a broadband subscription to match the number of households with access to internet service	10% increase in broadband subscriptions	15% increase in broadband subscriptions
	Increase the number of households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)	10% increase in ACP enrollment	50% increase in ACP enrollment
Goal Two	Increase the financial and technical support for local libraries to encourage the implementation of digital literacy courses and updated devices	60% of public libraries have updated computers and software	100% of public libraries have revolving funding to support digital updates
	Increase public resources to allow for digital literacy certification testing such as North Star Digital Literacy Assessment	40% of libraries participating in digital literacy score tracker software	100% of libraries participating in digital literacy score tracker software
	Encourage and assist senior centers and community facilities to develop partnerships to provide digital literacy trainings, cybersecurity trainings, and device access	60% of senior centers or community centers have at least 2 computers and software for public use	100% of senior centers or community centers have at least 2 computers and software for public use
	Encourage educational institutions to provide digital literacy classes and “take home” resources to expand digital skills and familiarity with devices in the household	1 digital literacy class taught annually per county	1 after school program for grades 5-12 adopted by one school district per county

	Increase the use of telehealth services in rural communities	Establishment of 3 private rooms located in CAI for telehealth appointments	10% increase in telehealth appointments
	Decrease the percentage of households with no internet connected device	5% increase in device ownership	10% increase in device ownership
	Decrease the percentage of households with a smartphone only	5% decrease in households owning only a smartphone	1% of households owning only a smartphone
Goal Three	Create or update county and local governments' cybersecurity plans	5% decrease in cybercrimes	15% decrease in cybercrimes
	Update county and/or local government websites and print materials to include curriculum focused on cybersecurity, internet safety, and compliance with State/Federal regulations	5% decrease in cybercrimes	15% decrease in cybercrimes
	Develop public awareness to cybersecurity risks and common scams	5% decrease in cybercrimes	15% decrease in cybercrimes
Goal Four	Increase awareness of online public resources available through CAIs and county or local governments	15% increase in the number of attendees/users per month	20% increase in the number of attendees/users per month
	Update resources in public libraries and local government to include multiple languages reflected by the proportion of populations as outlined in the Nebraska Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy	10% increase of resources in languages other than English	15% increase of resources in languages other than English
	Update digital and technical resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities or special needs	15% increase in digital and technical resources to assist individuals with disabilities or special needs	20% increase in digital and technical resources to assist individuals with disabilities or special needs
	Update local government websites to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines	5% increase in use of local government websites	15% increase in use of local government websites

Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement

The South Central Nebraska Digital Equity Planning Committee was formed by 11 community stakeholders, in addition to SCEDD staff and Lead for America-AmeriCorps Fellow. The Committee first met on January 11, 2023 to complete onboard training and outline expectations. Committee members provided their 7 key priorities to SCEDD staff to begin identifying gaps in the SCEDD region. Committee members provided assistance with the Asset Inventory throughout the month of February including a preliminary version of the Gap Analysis. On March 8, 2023, Committee members reconvened to complete the Gap Analysis and provide input on next steps to implement. The first draft of goals, activities, and strategies was reviewed by the Committee members on April 12 and 19, 2023. With the support of the Committee, the South Central Nebraska Digital Equity Plan was completed on August 15, 2023.

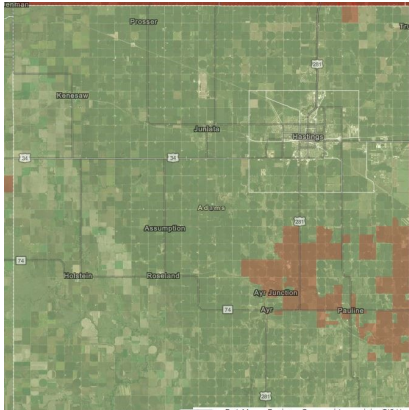
Stakeholder	Organization
RaLynn Jacobsen	South Central Agency on Aging
Parker Klinginsmith	St. Paul Economic Development
Dream Solko	St. Paul Economic Development
Cassy Kvasnicka	Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation
Carlos Barcenas	ichoosepurple (providing services around Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for individuals, groups, and community)
John Poppert	Educational Service Unit 11
Gary Needham	Educational Service Unit 9
Amber Alvidrez	City of Grand Island - Regional Planning
Cory Gearhart	Grand Island Public Schools
Patrick Avila	Merrick Medical Center
Jeff Hofaker	City of Sutton
David Boehle	Howard County Resident, Ag Producer, & Veteran

Appendix

Adams County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

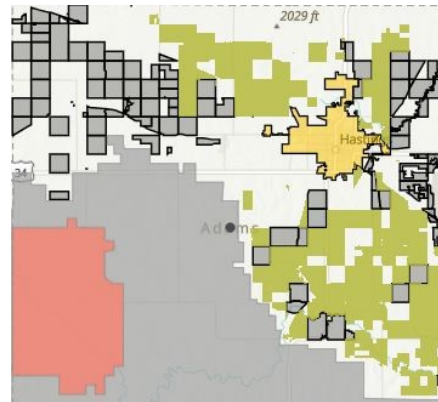
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

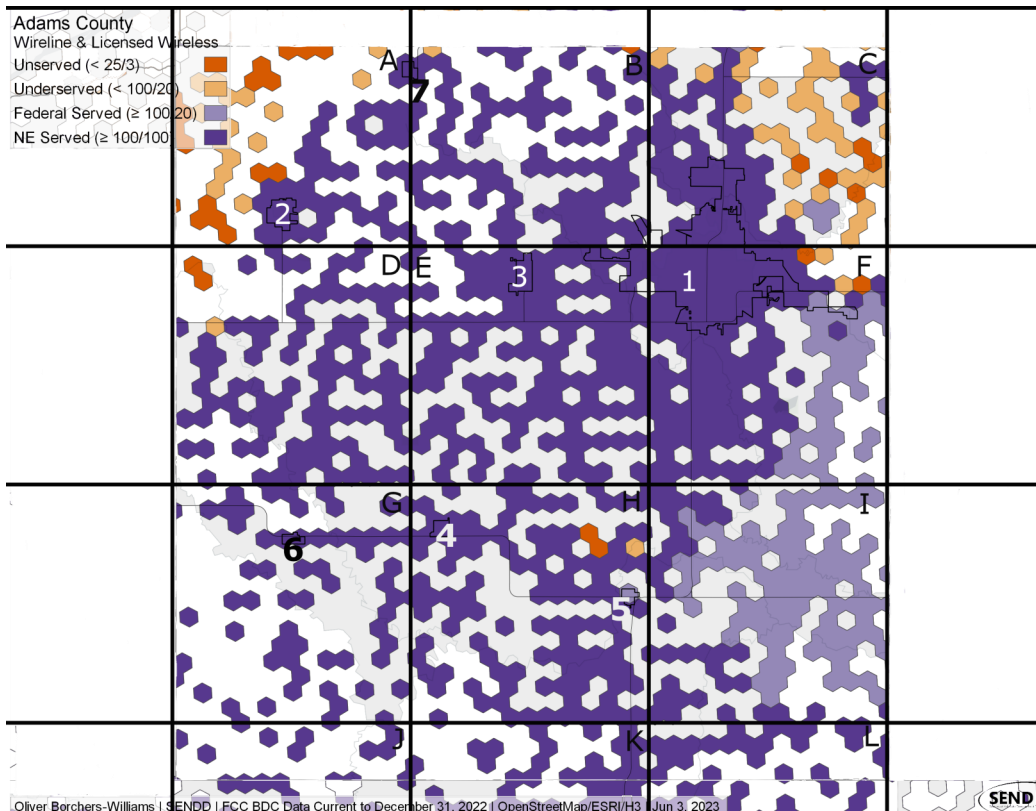


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been advancement in reported speeds in all noted areas.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved. Adams County appears to be Federally Served and State Served. Sections A and C will be covered over time as the service from Kenesaw and Hastings moves out. A concerning note is in Section H where two hexagons stand out as unserved.

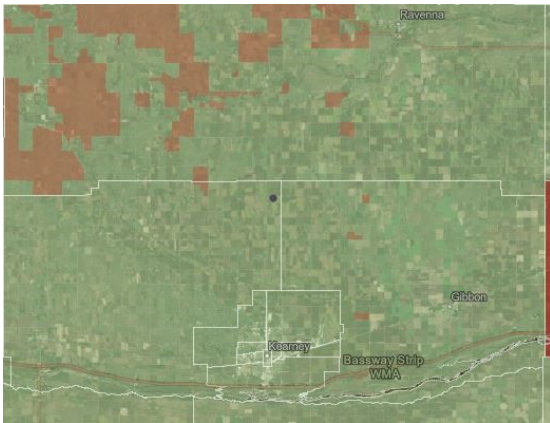
Town & Village Legend

1. Hastings
2. Kenesaw
3. Juniata
4. Roseland
5. Ayr
6. Holstein
7. Prosser

Buffalo County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

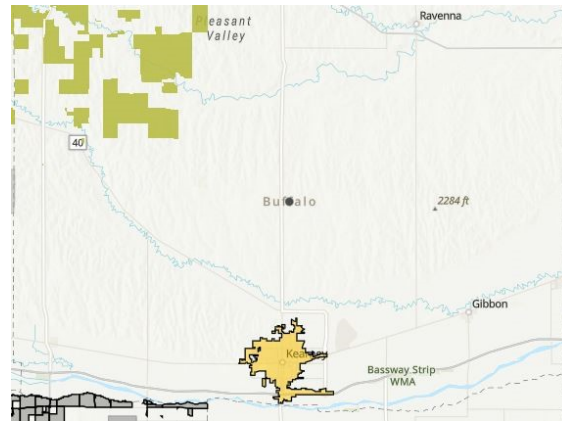
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

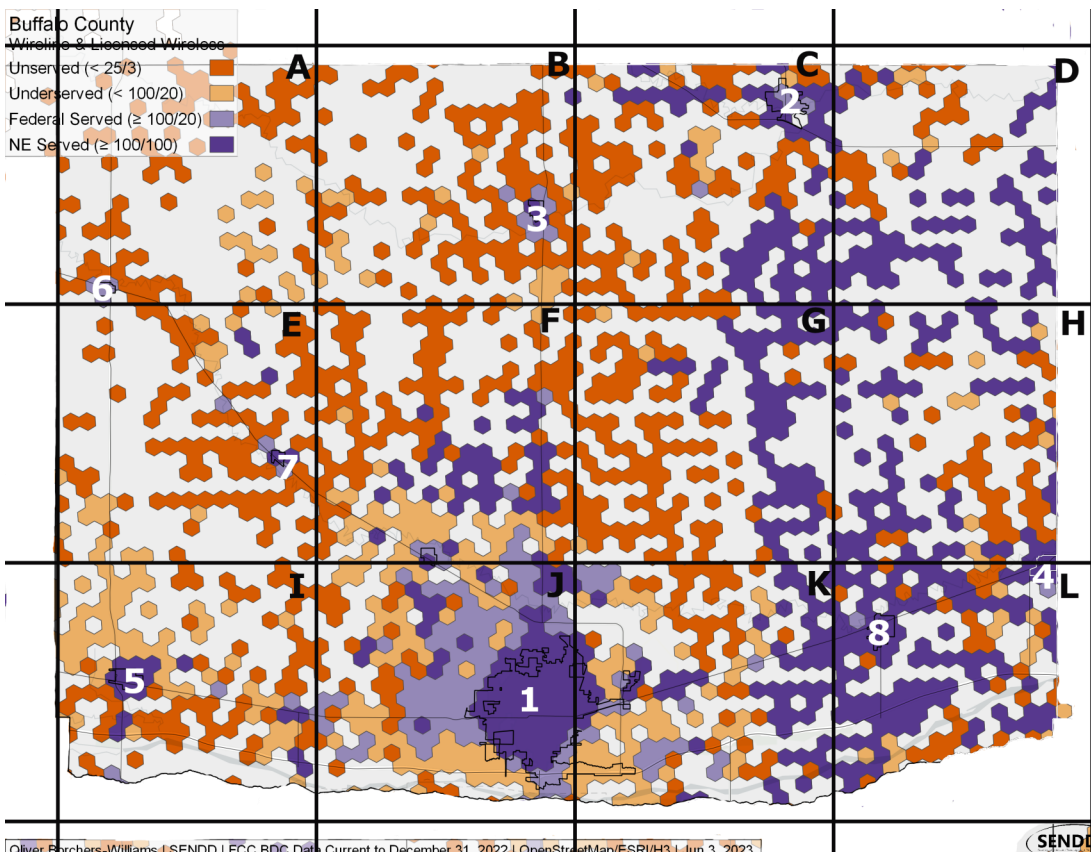


USDA green areas indicate: CAF2 auction winners census block, yet there are still households not receiving internet speeds of 25/3Mbps.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants A, B, E showing the highest need of broadband service. These quadrants are also the least populated for the county. Light orange indicates Underserved with speeds less than 100/20 Mbps.

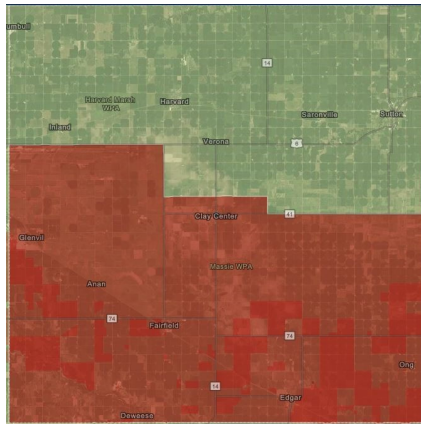
Town & Village Legend

- 1: Kearney
- 2: Ravenna
- 3: Pleasanton
- 4: Shelton
- 5: Elm Creek
- 6: Miller
- 7: Amherst
- 8: Gibbon

Clay County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

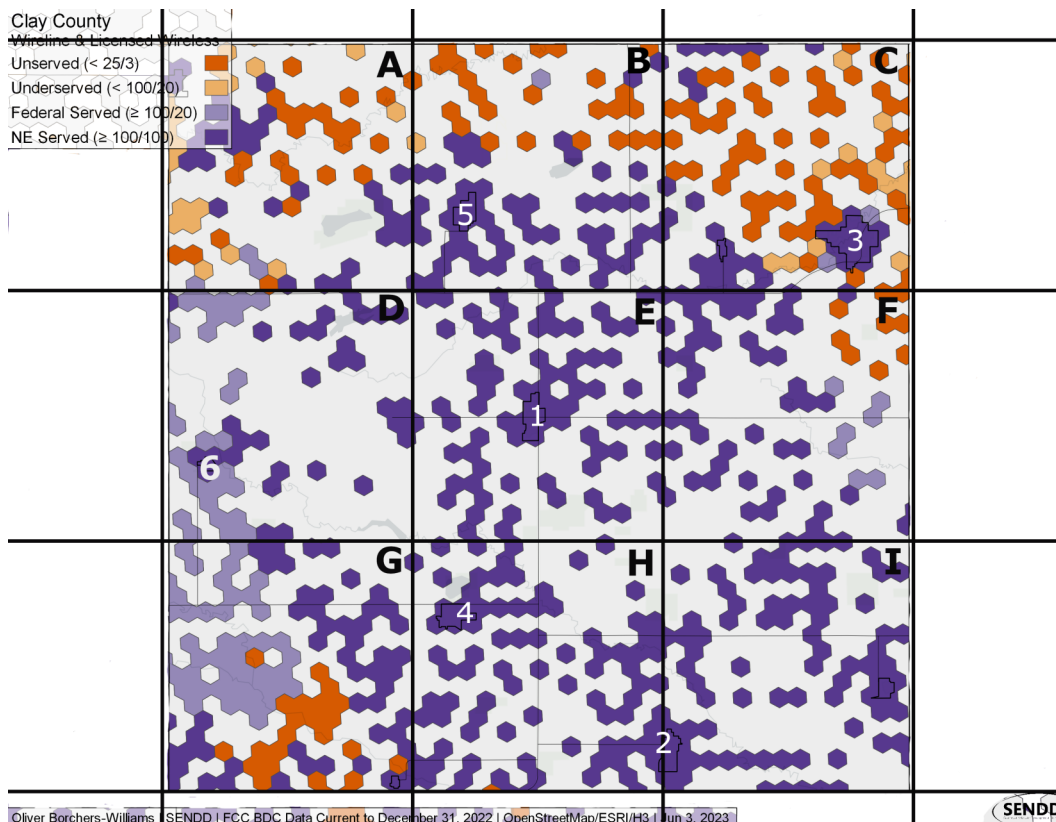


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been advancement in reported speeds in all noted areas.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants A, B, C and G showing the most need for service. Section C has strong service within the city boundaries of Sutton. The remaining area is in need of expansion. Section G has a section of unserved surrounded by served areas. The unserved area has a smaller population and will need support.

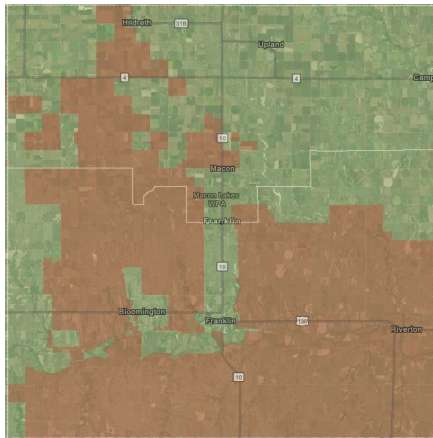
Town & Village Legend

- 1: Clay Center
- 2: Edgar
- 3: Sutton
- 4: Fairfield
- 5: Harvard
- 6: Glenvil

Franklin County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

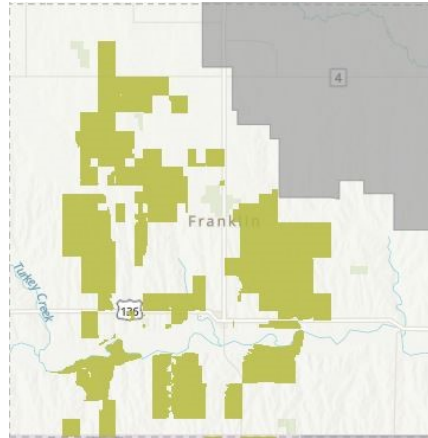
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

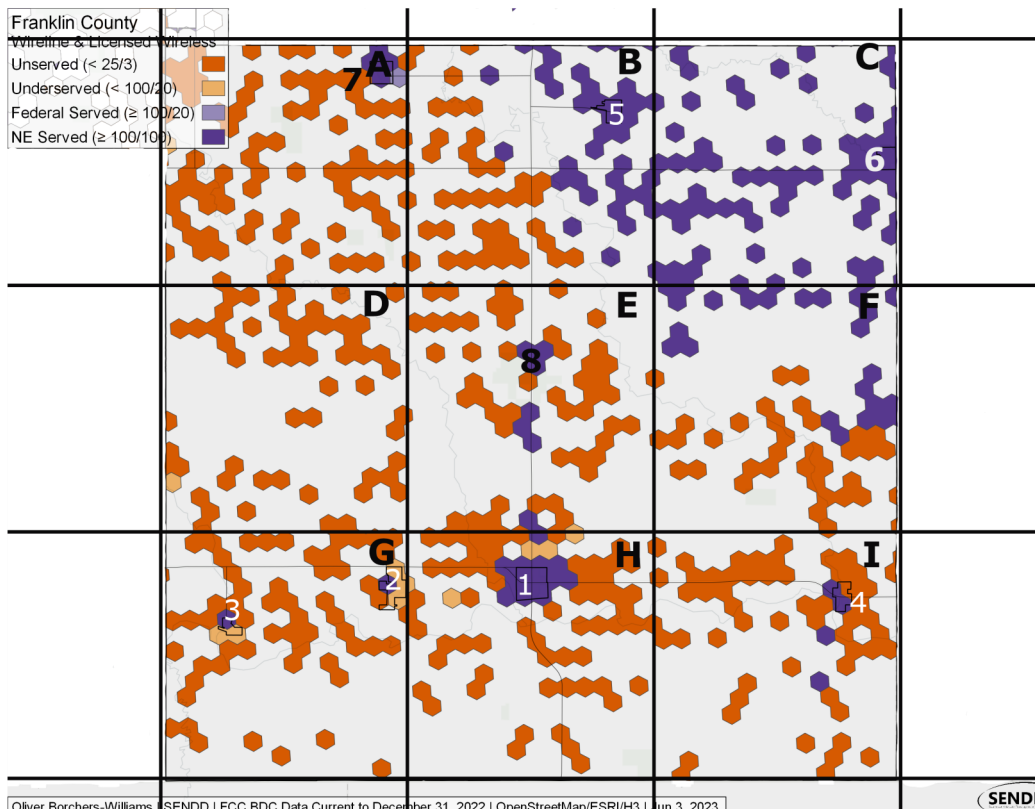


USDA green areas indicate: CAF2 auction winners census block, yet there are still households not receiving internet speeds of 25/3Mbps. Grey areas indicate a Protected Broadband Borrower from a previous expansion project.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Un-served, with quadrants A, D, E, G, H, I showing the highest need of broadband service. Quadrant H has the City of Franklin, population 1000, but immediately outside municipal boundaries the areas are Un-served. Franklin County has a population of 2,873.

Town & Village

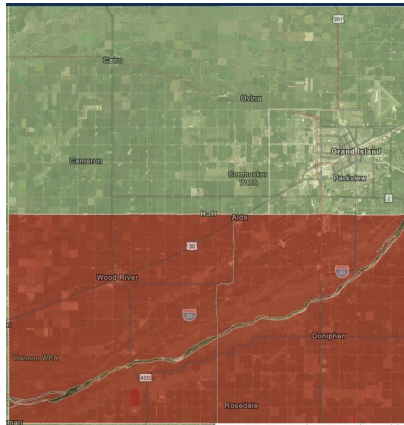
Legend

- 1: Franklin
- 2: Bloomington
- 3: Naponee
- 4: Riverton
- 5: Upland
- 6: Campbell
- 7: Hildreth
- 8: Macon

Hall County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

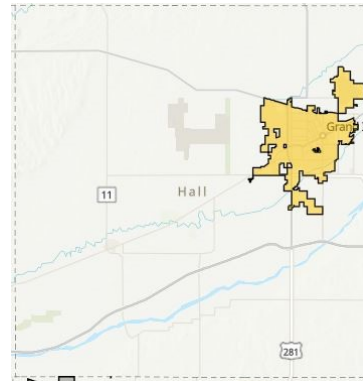
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

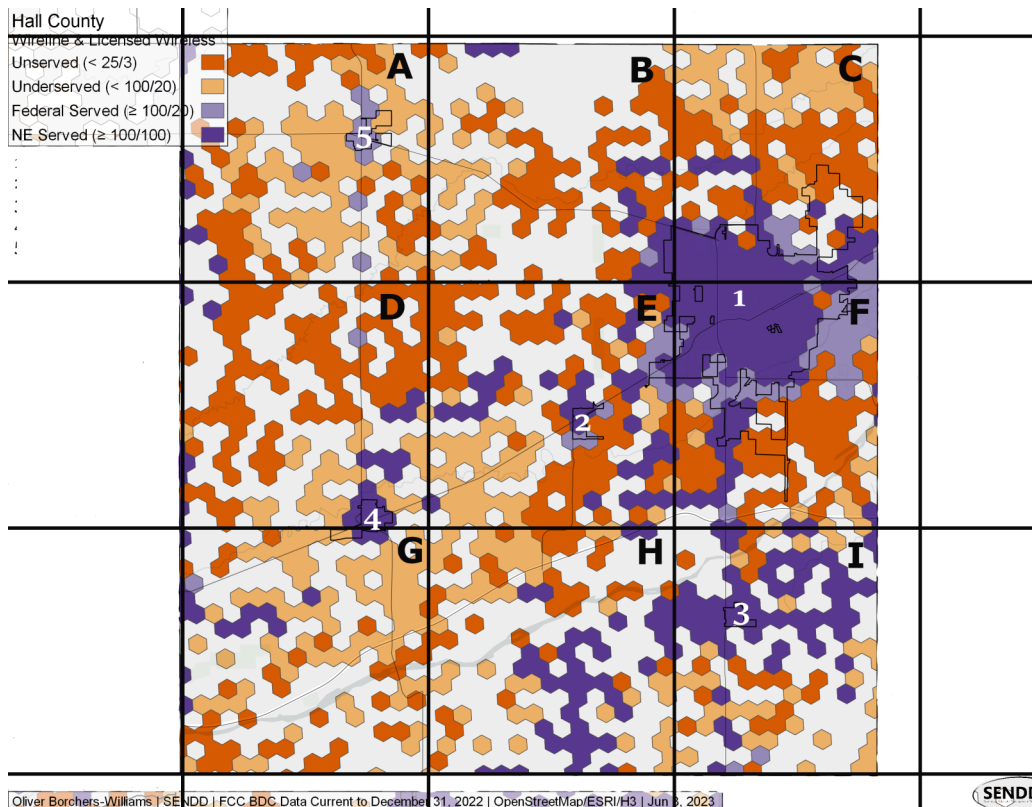


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been advancement in reported speeds in all noted areas.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants D, G, H, I showing the highest need of broadband service and are less densely populated. Quadrant H has the City of Red Cloud, population 1,020, but immediately outside municipal boundaries the areas are Unserved with no Providers planning broadband build-out.

Town & Village Legend

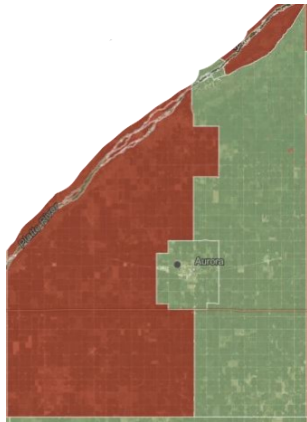
- 1: Grand Island
- 2: Alda
- 3: Doniphan
- 4: Wood River
- 5: Cairo



Hamilton County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

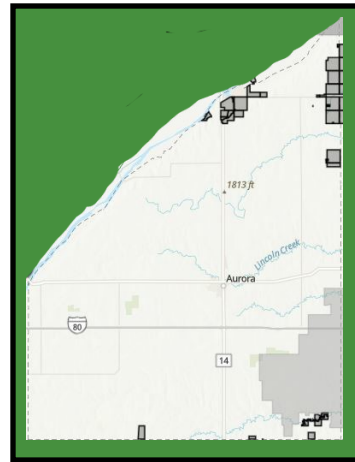
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

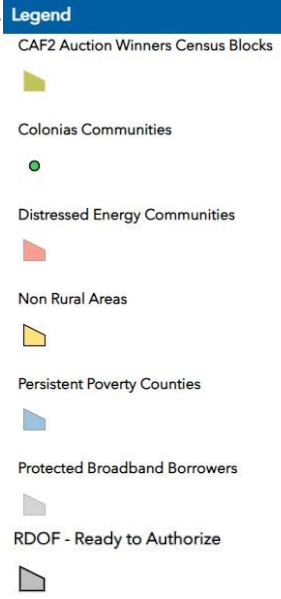
Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA

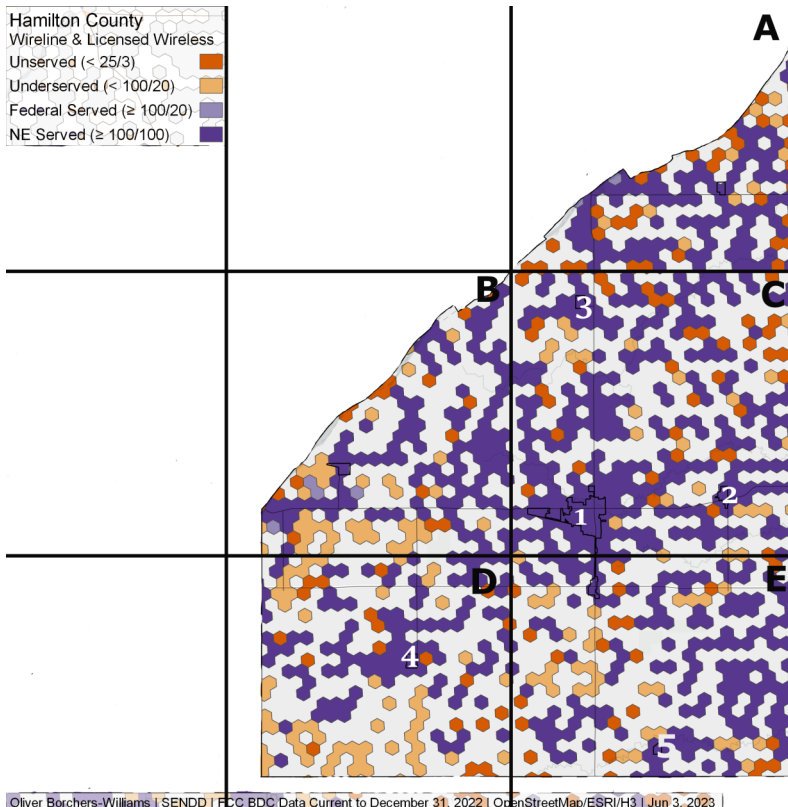


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been advancement in reported speeds in all noted areas.

Rural De-



FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved. Hamilton County is designated as a served county. However, there are locations that are unserved and underserved spread out across the county. These are rural locations that are not close to a municipality or major road that would be covered during a past expansion project but may be eligible with future funding.

Town & Village Legend

- 1: Aurora
- 2: Hampton
- 3: Marquette
- 4: Giltner
- 5: Stockham



Harlan County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

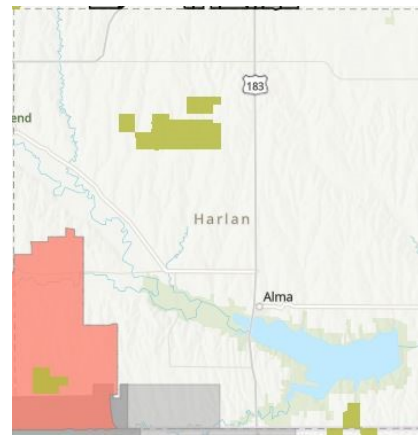
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

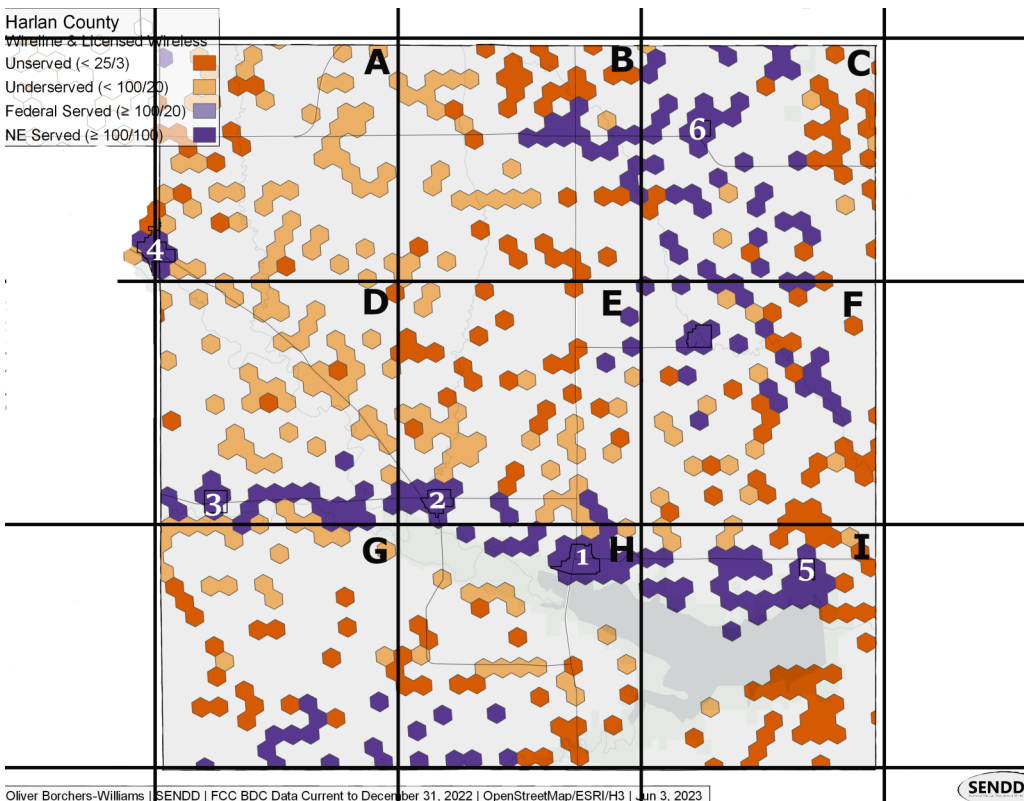


USDA red areas indicate: distressed energy communities of Stamford. Green areas indicate: CAF2 auction winners census block. Despite ISPs build-out, there are still many rural households not receiving internet speeds of 25/3Mbps.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants A, B, D, E, G, I show Unserved and Underserved areas. Based on community interactions, however, the speeds are likely over reported as ISP build-out has limited serviceable locations and speeds. These north quadrants are also the least populated for the county with the large recreational lake in quadrants H & I housing many seasonal homes which have been served with broadband.

Town & Village

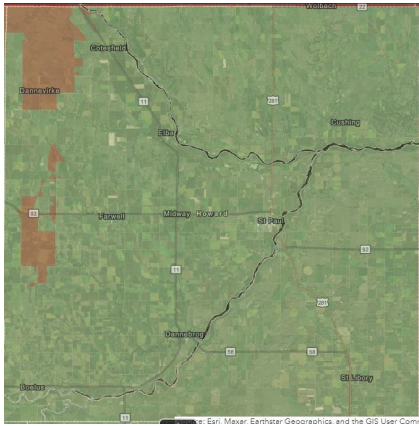
Legend

- 1: Alma
- 2: Orleans
- 3: Stamford
- 4: Oxford
- 5: Republican City
- 6: Ragan
- 7: Huntley

Howard County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

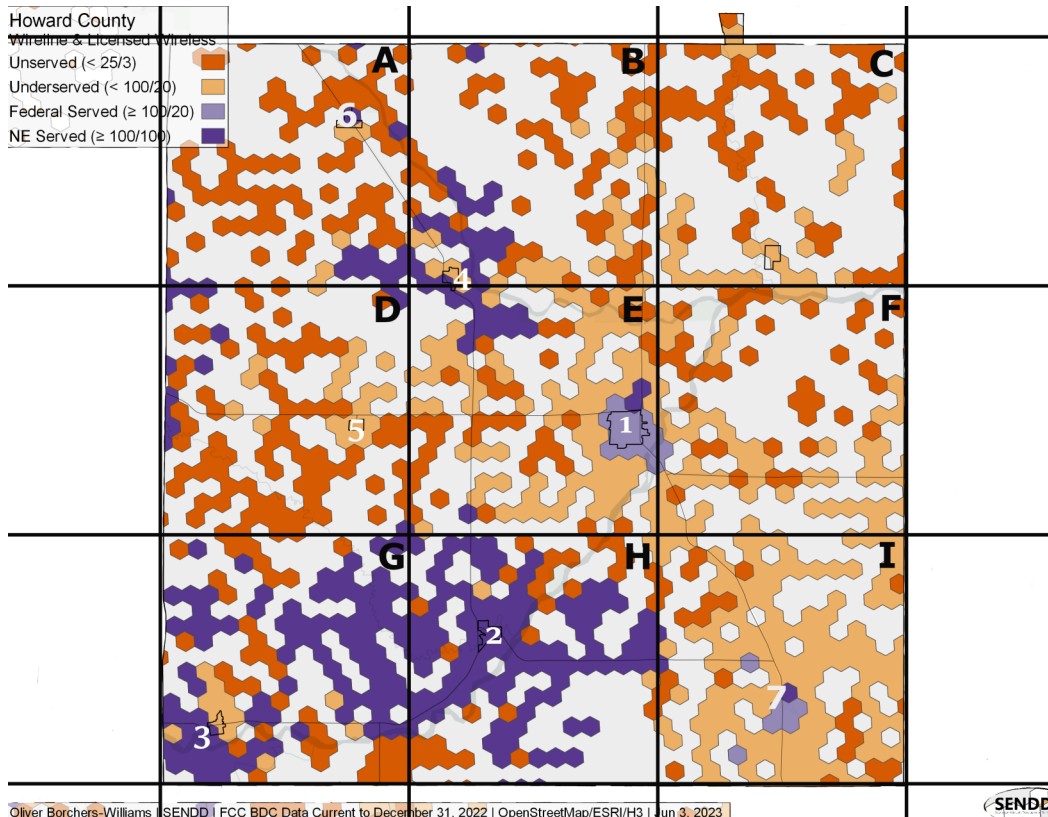


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been ad-

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants A, B, C, and D showing the highest need of broadband service and are less densely populated. Quadrant E has the City of St Paul, population 2,394, but immediately outside municipal boundaries the areas are Unserved with no Providers planning broadband build-out.

Town & Village

Legend

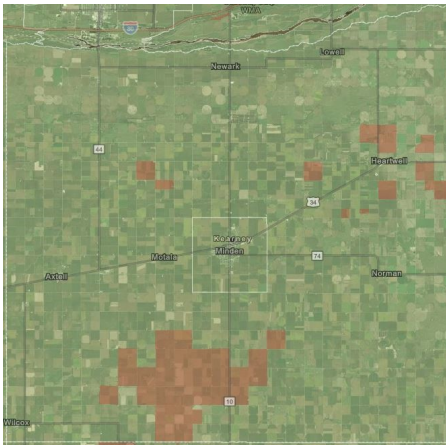
- 1: St Paul
- 2: Dannebrog
- 3: Boelus
- 4: Elba
- 5: Farwell
- 6: Cotesfield
- 7: St. Libory



Kearney County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

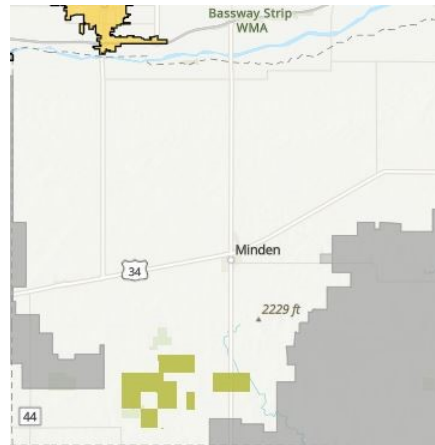
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

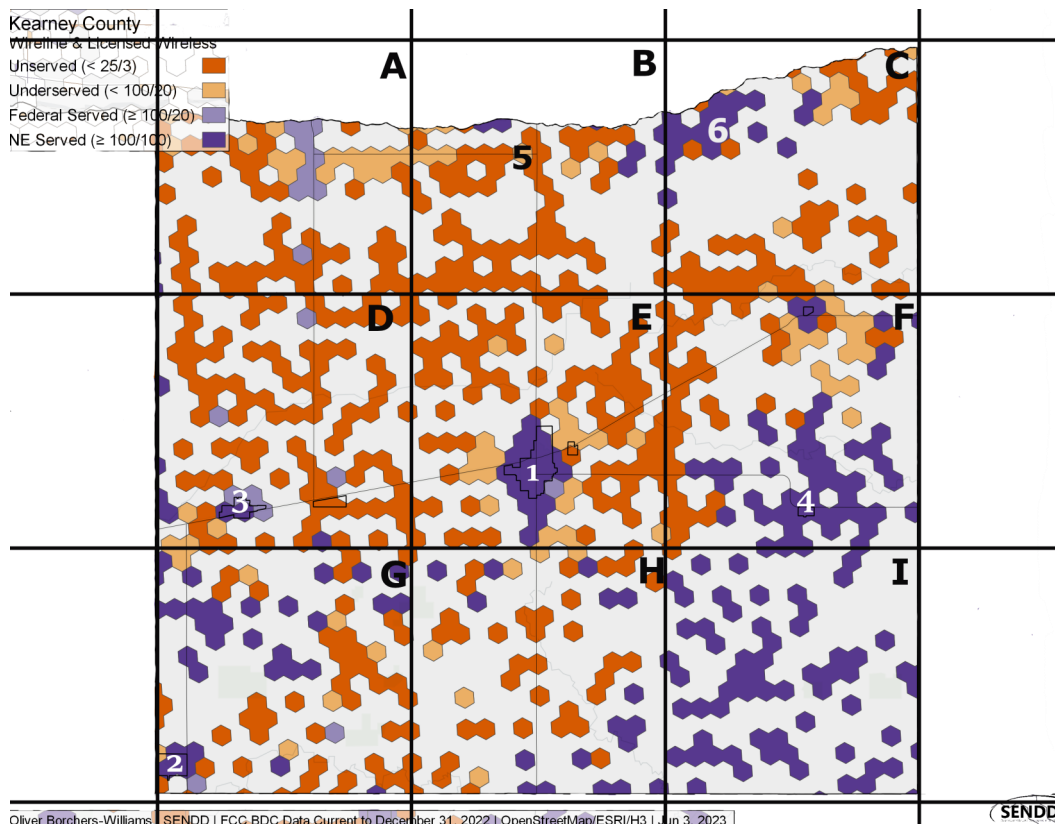


USDA areas indicate: green CAF2 auction winners census block, yet there are still households not receiving internet speeds of 25/3Mbps. The gray area is a Protected Broadband Borrower which the provider has delivered on promised speeds.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Oliver Borchers-Williams | SENDD | FCC BDC Data Current to December 31, 2022 | OpenStreetMap/ESRI/H3 | Jun 3, 2023 |

Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants A, B, parts of C, D, E showing the highest need of broadband service. These quadrants represent large areas that have not had providers submit for buildout projects or grant funding. Quadrant E has the City of Minden, population 2,923, but is surrounded by areas not served.

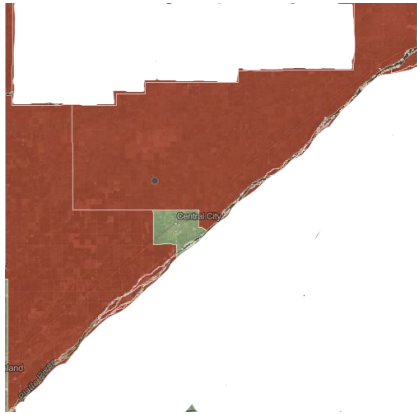
Town & Village Legend

- 1: Minden
- 2: Wilcox
- 3: Axtell
- 4: Norman
- 5: Newark
- 6: Lowell

Merrick County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

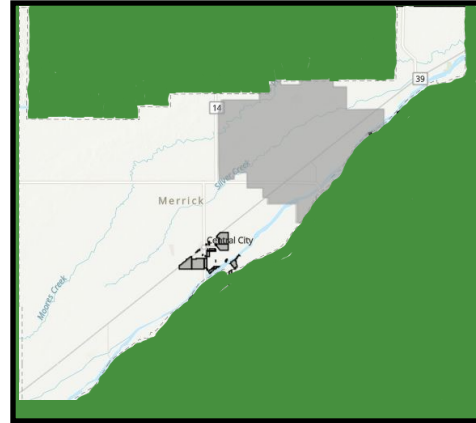
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

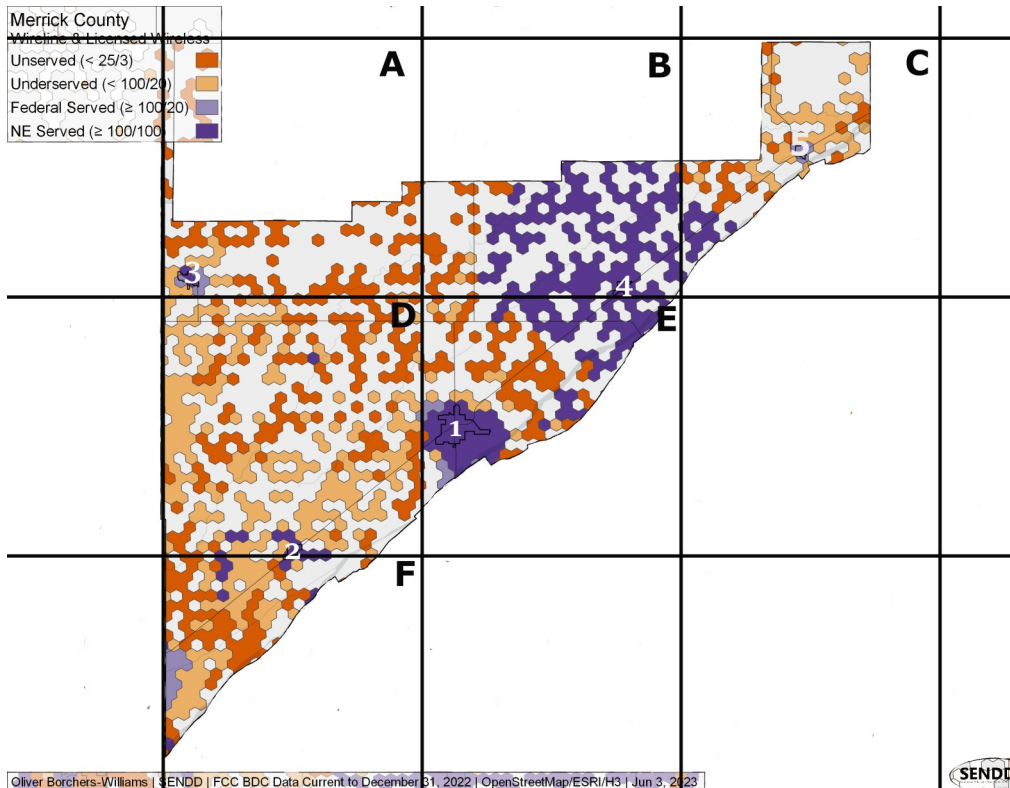


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been advancement in reported speeds in all noted areas.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants A, C, D, F showing the highest need of broadband service and are less densely populated. Quadrant D is outside the City of Central City, population 3,032, but immediately outside municipal boundaries the areas are Unserved with no Providers planning broadband build-out.

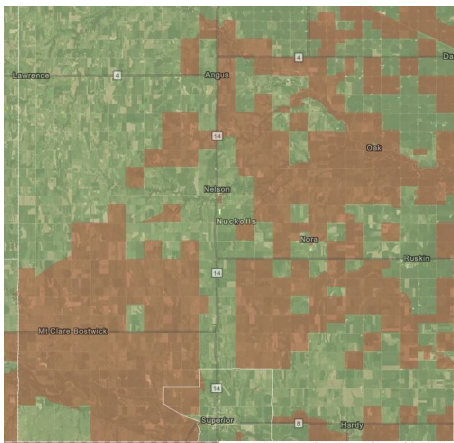
Town & Village Legend

- 1: Central City
- 2: Chapman
- 3: Palmer
- 4: Clarks
- 5: Silver Creek

Nuckolls County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

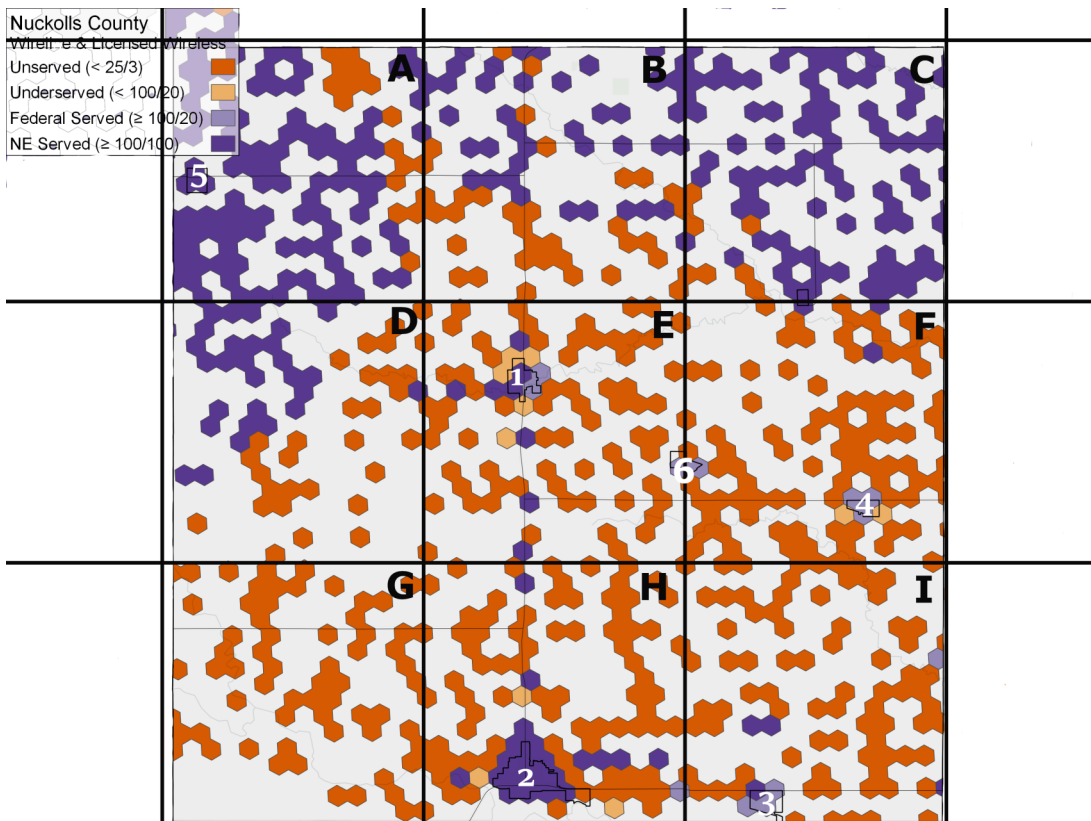


USDA areas indicate: green CAF2 auction winners census block, yet these households are not receiving internet speeds greater than 25/3Mbps. The gray area is a Protected Broadband Borrower which the provider has delivered on speeds.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants F, G, H, I showing the highest need of broadband service. The selected quadrants surround the largest City of Superior, population 1,957, yet remain unserved by any broadband provider.

Town & Village Legend

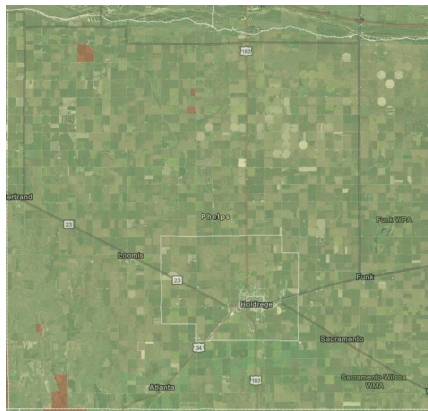
- 1: Nelson
- 2: Superior
- 3: Hardy
- 4: Ruskin
- 5: Lawrence
- 6: Nora
- 7: Oak



Phelps County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

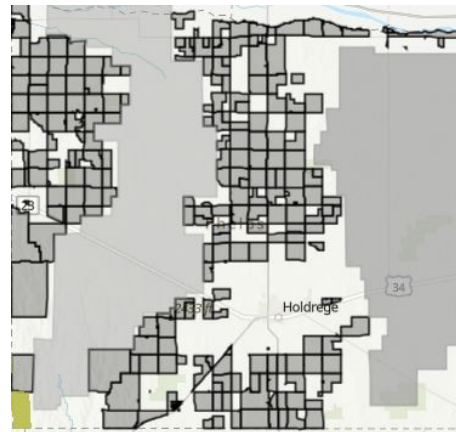
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

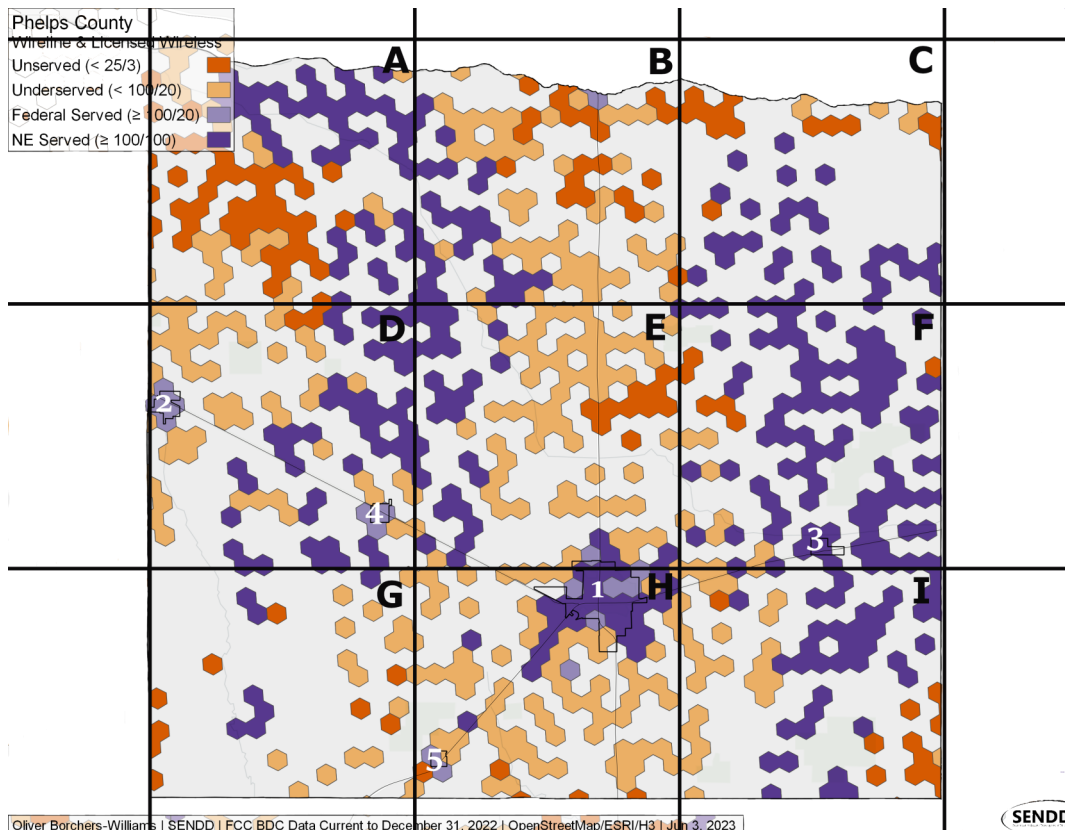


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been advancement in reported speeds in all noted areas.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants A, B, E, H showing the highest need of broadband service and are less densely populated. Quadrant A is along the border of Buffalo County, the river, and vacation homes. The purple shows locations that were prioritized and then stopped in rural communities. Sections B, E, H show a divide between two providers.

Town & Village

Legend

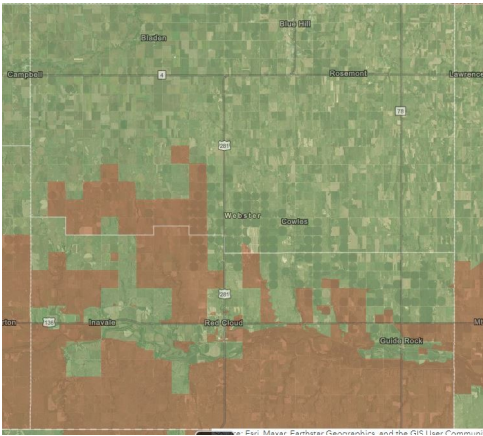
- 1: Holdrege
- 2: Bertrand
- 3: Funk
- 4: Loomis
- 5: Atlanta



Webster County, Nebraska

Indicators of Broadband Need Map

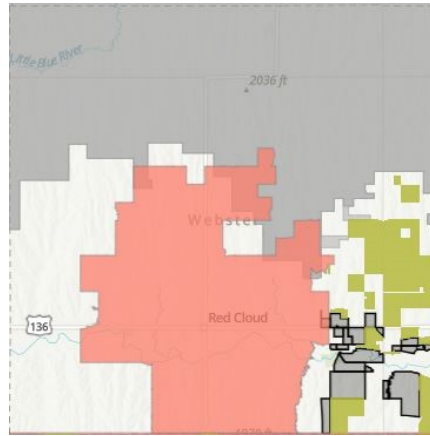
NTIA, as of June 15, 2023



NITA Red areas indicate: ACS Survey—25% or more of Households Report No Internet Access, and No Computer, Smartphone or Tablet; and FCC Form 477—No Provider Reports Consumer Fixed Broadband Services at 25/3Mbps.

Broadband Technical Assistance Map

USDA Rural Development, as of June 16, 2023

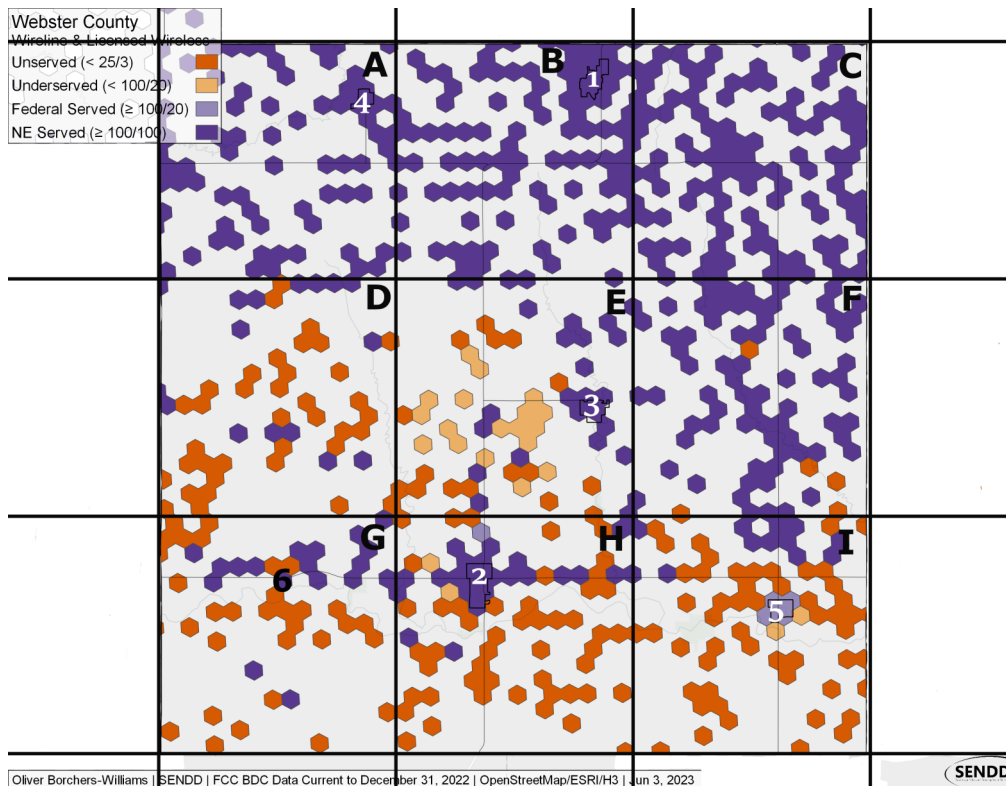


USDA areas indicate: red area of the Red Cloud area is a Distressed Energy Community. Green areas are CAF2 auction winners census block, and gray outlined RDOF, yet there has not been advancement in reported speeds in all noted areas.

Legend

- CAF2 Auction Winners Census Blocks
- Colonias Communities
- Distressed Energy Communities
- Non Rural Areas
- Persistent Poverty Counties
- Protected Broadband Borrowers
- RDOF - Ready to Authorize

FCC BDC Data Map, Nebraska Serviceable Locations



Dark orange areas indicate Unserved, with quadrants D, G, H, I showing the highest need of broadband service and are less densely populated. Quadrant H has the City of Red Cloud, population 1,020, but immediately outside municipal boundaries the areas are Unserved with no Providers planning broadband build-out.

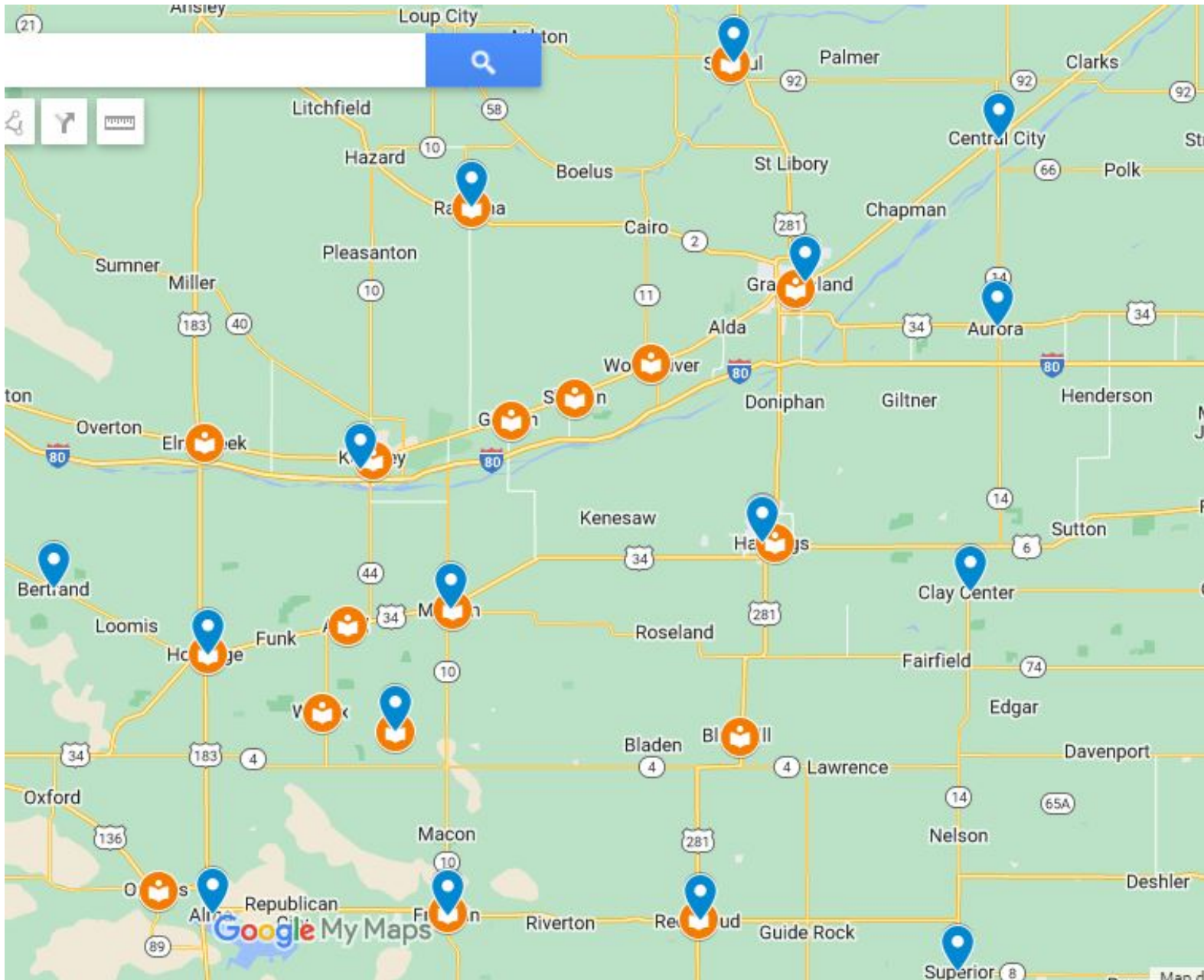
Town & Village Legend

- 1: Blue Hill
- 2: Red Cloud
- 3: Cowles
- 4: Bladen
- 5: Guide Rock
- 6: Inavale

South Central Nebraska Digital Equity Asset Maps

As of February 21, 2023

South Central Nebraska Community Centers Map



Legend:

Public Library



Senior Center



Libraries



Axtell Public Library



Holdrege Area Public Library



Hastings Public Library



Kearney Public Library



Grand Island Public Library -
Nebraska



Orleans Library



Blue Hill Public Library



Elm Creek Public Library



Franklin Public Library



Gibbon Library



Hildreth Public Library



Jensen Memorial Library



Ravenna Public Library



Auld Public Library



St Paul Community Library



Shelton Township Library



Wilcox Library



Maltman Memorial Library

Senior Centers



Franklin Senior Center



Golden Years Center



Harlan County Senior Center



Minden Senior Center



Peterson Senior Center



Phelps County Senior Center



Ravenna Senior Citizen Center



Young At Heart Senior Center



Senior Citizen Industries



Bombeck Senior Services



The Golden Friendship Center



Clay County Senior Services



Hamilton County Senior
Services



Howard County Senior Services



Merrick County Senior Services



Nuckolls County Senior
Services



Webster County Senior
Services

Broadband Infrastructure



South Central Public Power



Glenwood Communications



Pinpoint



Great Plains Communications



Hamilton Telecommunications



NCTC-Nebraska Central Telephone Company



Spectrum Store



Spectrum Store



Spectrum Store



Kinetic bKiny Windstream Retail Store



ALLO Fiber Hastings



ALLO Fiber Kearney



ALLO Fiber Grand Island



Cricket Wireless Authorized Retailer



Viaero Wireless



Viaero Wireless



Viaero Wireless



Viaero Wireless



UScellular



AT&T Store



T-Mobile



Verizon



Verizon



Wireless World - Verizon Authorized Retailer



Prairie Hills Wireless LLC



OfficeMax



Best Buy

Technical Support



holdrege computer



Geeks On Site



Shatter Masters



Computer Concepts, Inc.

Device Access



Computer Hardware Kearney - Apple Premier Partner/Lenovo Business Partner



Computer Hardware Grand Island -Apple Sales and Service Provider



Computer Hardware Hastings - Apple Premier Partner/ Lenovo Business Partner



Walmart Supercenter



Walmart Supercenter



Walmart Supercenter



OfficeMax

SCEDD Region Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

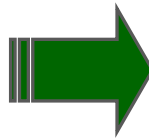
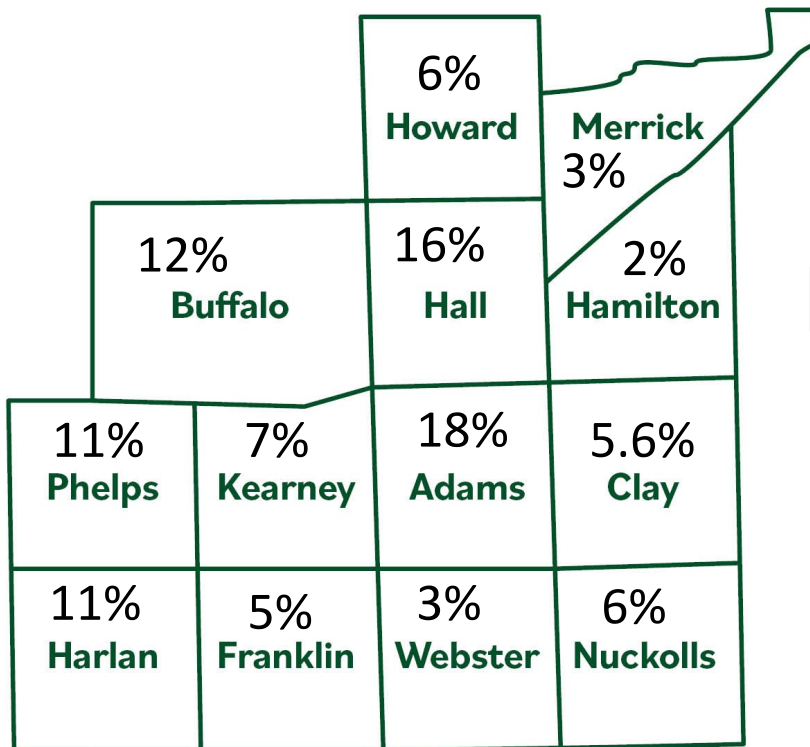
Change in Enrollment

November 2022 to April 2023



Enrollment by Eligible Households—November 2022

Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation ACP Visualization Map, Nov. 2022



Enrollment by Eligible Households April 2023

Benton Institute ACP Enrollment Performance Tool, April 2023. Two media and radio campaigns conducted by SCEDD in Grand Island and Hastings area.

