

VATO A WEBINAR

FAIRFAX COUNTY DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION OVERVIEW



PRESENTED BY: DAVE GEORGE | FOR: VATO A APRIL 27TH 2023

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CURRENT STATE OF DIGITAL EQUITY



The [National Digital Inclusion Alliance \(NDIA\)](#) defines digital equity as “a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.”





BENEFITS OF DIGITAL EQUITY



Education



Societal Growth



Healthcare Outcomes



Economic Development



Safety and Security



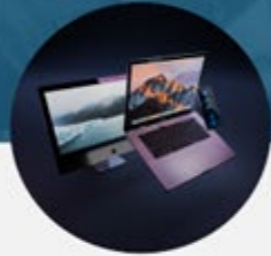
SMART BROADBAND QUAD -"A" APPROACH TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Inadequate access to high-speed broadband disadvantages those living in communities in critical ways. Those challenges include:



ACCESS

Broadband infrastructure availability can be a limit on the possibility of area residents accessing the digital highway.



AVAILABILITY

When a device such as a computer, laptop, or tablet is not available for in-home use, users will often default to using smart phones for broadband access. This prevents full participation in the digital environment.



AFFORDABILITY

The cost of broadband is an earnest consideration for most households living below, at, or near the poverty level. This gap can be addressed using federal subsidies.



ADOPTION

Combining the lack of experience with digital technologies (excluding smart phones) and limited available resources for training, some residents continue to be slow technology adopters.



ACCESS

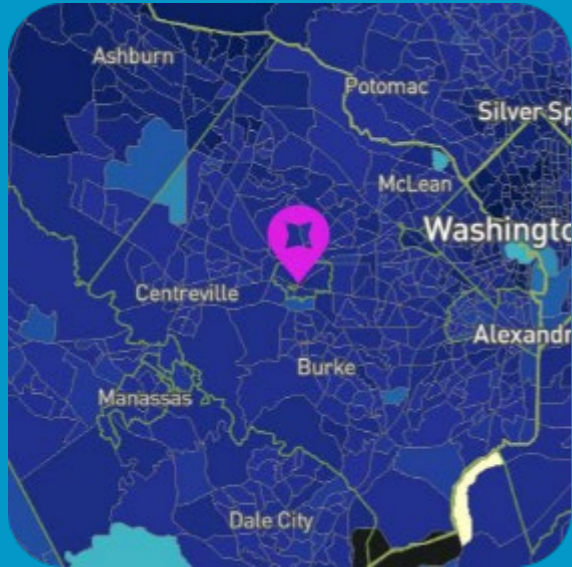


FIGURE 1: FCC FORM 477 DATA

Smart Broadband discovered that access to broadband service presents a small Digital Equity Gap in the County. As can be seen in **Figure 1**.

Fairfax County has coverage from multiple broadband providers offering gigabit download service tiers. Mobile broadband coverage in the county is also ubiquitous as shown in **Figure 2**.

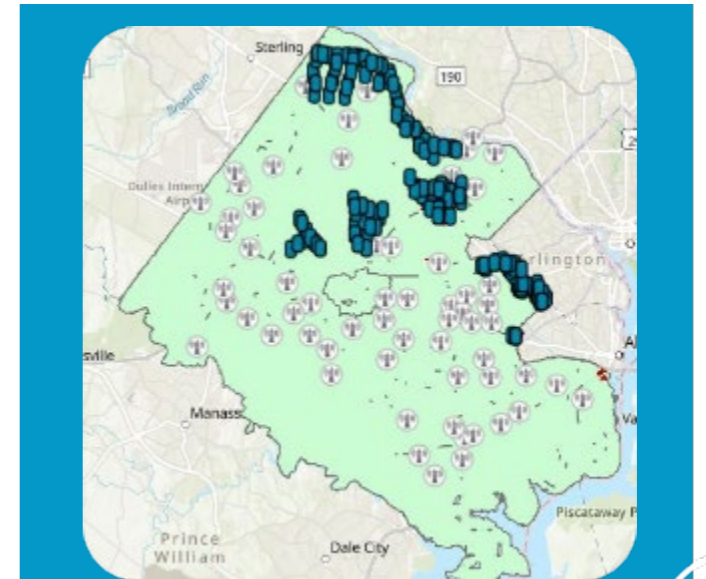
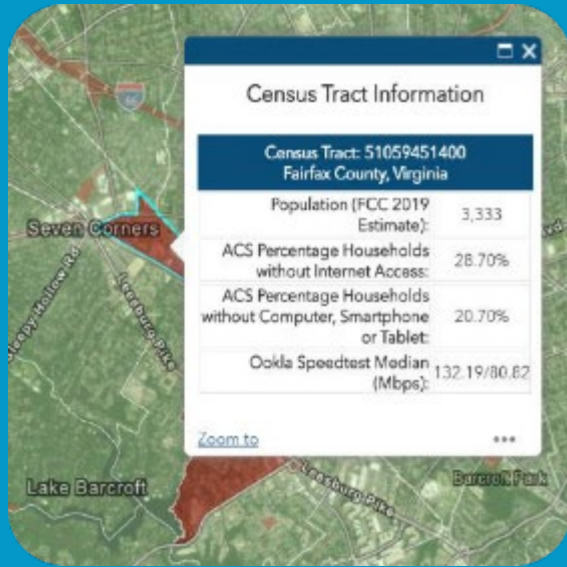


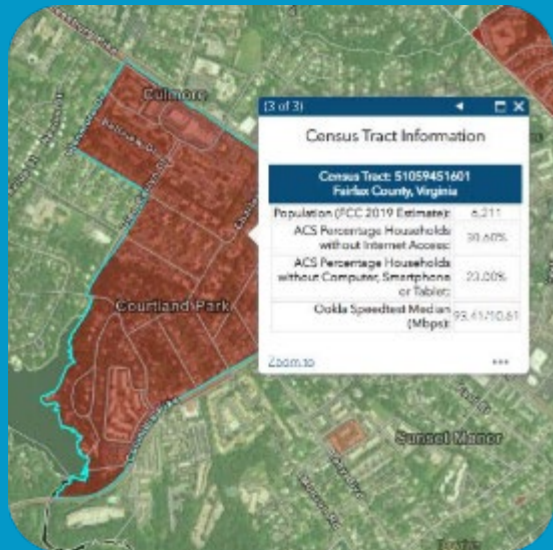
FIGURE 2: ALL CARRIER MOBILE COVERAGE MAP



AVAILABILITY



SEVEN CORNERS - 21% OF HOMES DO NOT HAVE A DEVICE



COURTLAND PARK - 23% OF HOMES DO NOT HAVE A DEVICE

Computers, full screen tablets, and laptops are critical to full participation in the digital economy. The digital environment content is not created and curated for a full experience on mobile devices.



AFFORDABILITY

The recently completed American Community Survey (ACS) included updated poverty data and shows that there are four census tracts in Fairfax County that have a greater than 20% poverty rate: Seven Corners, Courtland Park, Mt. Vernon Woods, and Mosby Woods. These are shown in purple cross hatch in **Figure 5**. This also has a noticeable effect on people with disabilities.



FIGURE 5: ACS HIGH POVERTY CENSUS TRACT



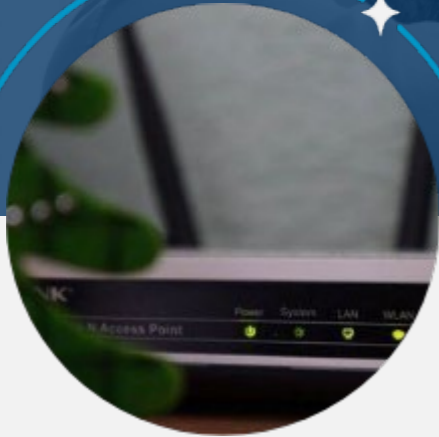
ADOPTION



As time progresses, fewer people actively choose digital non-participation. Of those that do choose not to participate digitally, their objection to participation can usually be boiled down to a lack of a perceived need.

Digital literacy education is critical to helping this population learn to participate digitally, in a meaningful manner.





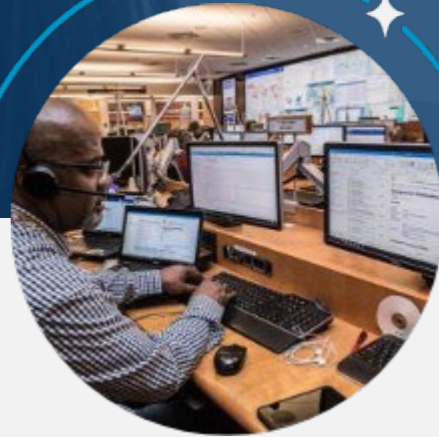
SHORT TERM

- ▶ Deploy speedtest server



MEDIUM TERM

- ▶ ACP assistance program
- ▶ Device program for qualifying households
- ▶ Wiring modernization for county affordable housing
- ▶ Wi-Fi modernization project at county owned facilities



LONG TERM

- ▶ Program office to oversee the implementation of projects identified in the gap analysis.
- ▶ Building and provisioning of a municipality owned network to connect all public facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS



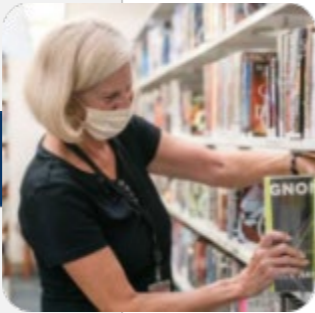
FAIRFAX COUNTY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



“

- In multiple cases the MiFi's did not provide enough bandwidth to students due to cellular coverage or multiple users on MiFi network.
- Affordable Connectivity Program too complicated on-boarding process for individuals.

TRACY JEWELL, FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM



“

- The biggest challenge to broadband access for library systems is having adequate Wifi bandwidth.
- Public Library has observed that households with household incomes of less than 35k do not have access to broadband services.

TED KAVISCH, FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



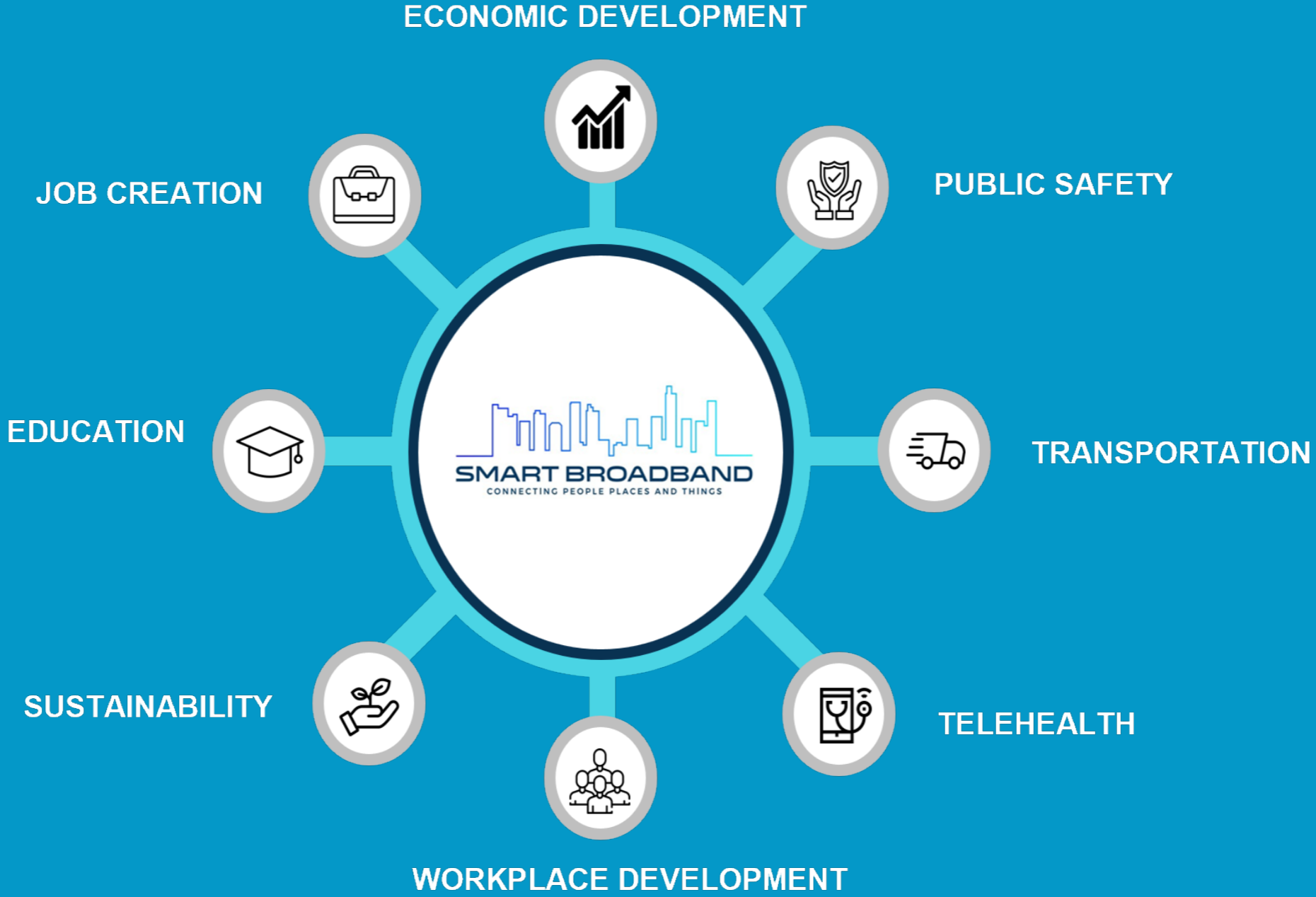
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- Standardize in-building for future connectivity for affordable housing units.
- Golden Gazette is a publication that could potentially be used for community outreach for digital equity programs

MARGARET JOHNSON, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION IMPACT



SMART BROADBAND VIEW ON DIGITAL EQUITY

Digital Equity is not a "one and done" endeavor. It is an ongoing, iterative process where the Digital Equity Gaps are identified, solutions implemented, results tracked, and the next iteration of identifying gaps commences.

This type of iterative process lends itself to being implemented and executed by a consortium of community stakeholders – a Digital Equity Coalition - rather than one single entity. In fact, the most successful municipalities partner with local nonprofit agencies, local for profit companies, and local community equity champions to ensure that the needs of the local community are identified and rectified.

*"Digital Equity and Inclusion is not a **one and done** endeavor"*



MEET THE TEAM

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Kishore Kochi



Principal Member

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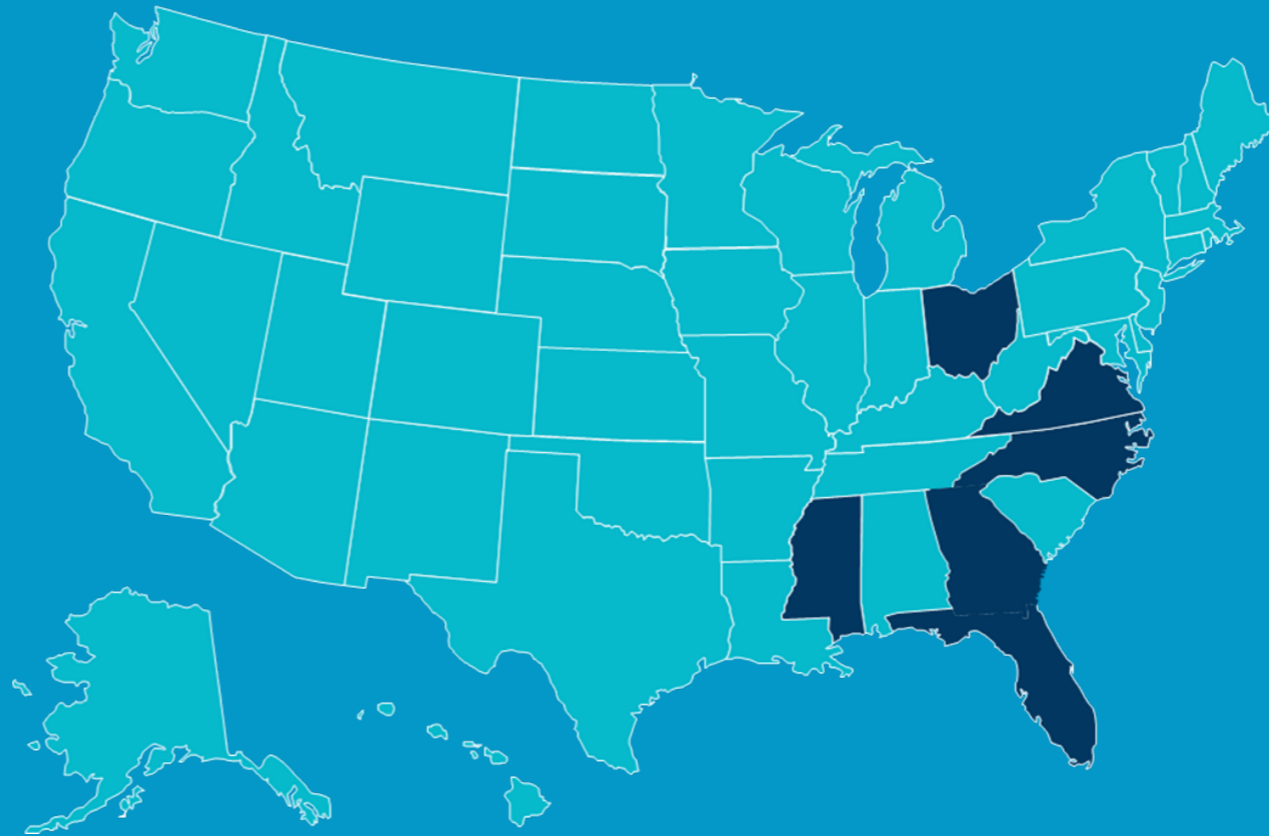


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