

TEAM KENTUCKY[®]

EDUCATION AND
LABOR CABINET

Digital Equity Summit

February 26, 2024

Agenda

- Explore the Digital Equity Act
- Digital inequity
- Vision, mission and impact
- Address the needs of covered populations
- Highlight progress
- Share our key objectives
- Show landscape of digital equity data
- Develop digital skills
- Statewide Summit

Foundation of Digital Equity

THE DIGITAL EQUITY ACT



PROVIDES DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

IMPROVES ONLINE ACCESSIBILITY OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

EMPOWERS RURAL COMMUNITIES TO MEASURE AND ADDRESS THEIR OWN BROADBAND NEEDS

#DIGITALEQUITYNOW

UPDATE: The Digital Equity Act has been included, with \$2.75 billion in proposed funding, in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act!

Find out the latest on the NDIA blog.

Digital Inequity



Kentucky's Digital Equity Vision

Vision: By 2034, Kentucky will be a place where every resident, regardless of their background or location, has equal access to affordable high-speed internet, reliable devices, and comprehensive training to pursue economic and personal opportunities.

Mission: Kentucky will work to remove barriers to digital adoption by creating opportunities through technology, affordable high-speed internet, and digital skills development for all people and businesses.

Impact: Kentucky's vision and will lead to increased economic opportunity, educational outcomes, health outcomes, civil and social engagement, and efficient delivery of essential services for all Kentuckians.

Address the Needs of Covered Population

- Identify devices needed; smart phones, laptops, iPads, etc.
- Identify affordability issues regarding devices and the internet
- Create the training and support needed to take full advantage of these devices for personal and professional activities
- Establish digital literacy
- Develop digital skills

Covered Populations

The term is defined in the Digital Equity Act of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law as:

- Individuals who live in low-income households
- Aging individuals
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with a language barrier
- Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area

Source: *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 2021*

Progress Update

What We Have Done

- Established a core planning team
- Hired staff
- Determined where the covered populations are in Kentucky
- Identified research partners and collaborators
- Launched our website – digitalequity.ky.gov
- Created a stakeholder outreach and engagement plan
- Conducted focus groups with trusted community partners across the Commonwealth
- Completed a residential survey
- Submitted the State Plan

Progress Update

What We Are Doing

- Analyzing digital equity plans
- Meeting with key stakeholder groups
- Doing outreach events
- Developing an asset inventory of digital resources
- Creating a map of those resources to be used
- Establishing objectives and strategies
- Determining SMART activities
- Holding this Summit
- Preparing for the capacity building phase

Kentucky's Digital Equity Plan Objectives

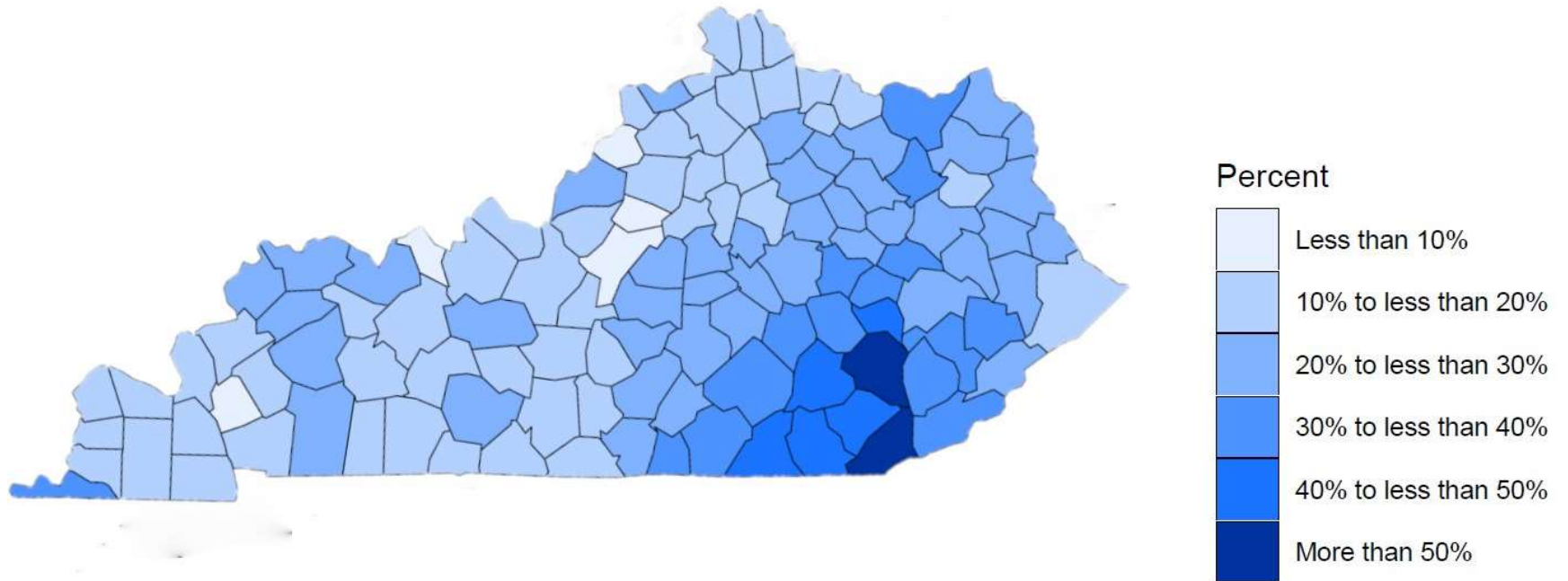
1. Enhance broadband availability and affordability for covered populations
2. Ensure access to affordable devices are available for all Kentuckians
3. Increase application accessibility and inclusivity to state and local government programs and services
4. Ensure that all Kentuckians are equipped to navigate the internet safely
5. Improve digital literacy for all covered populations in Kentucky
6. Kentuckians develop the digital skills necessary for work and life

National Data

A Pew Research study found that as of 2021:

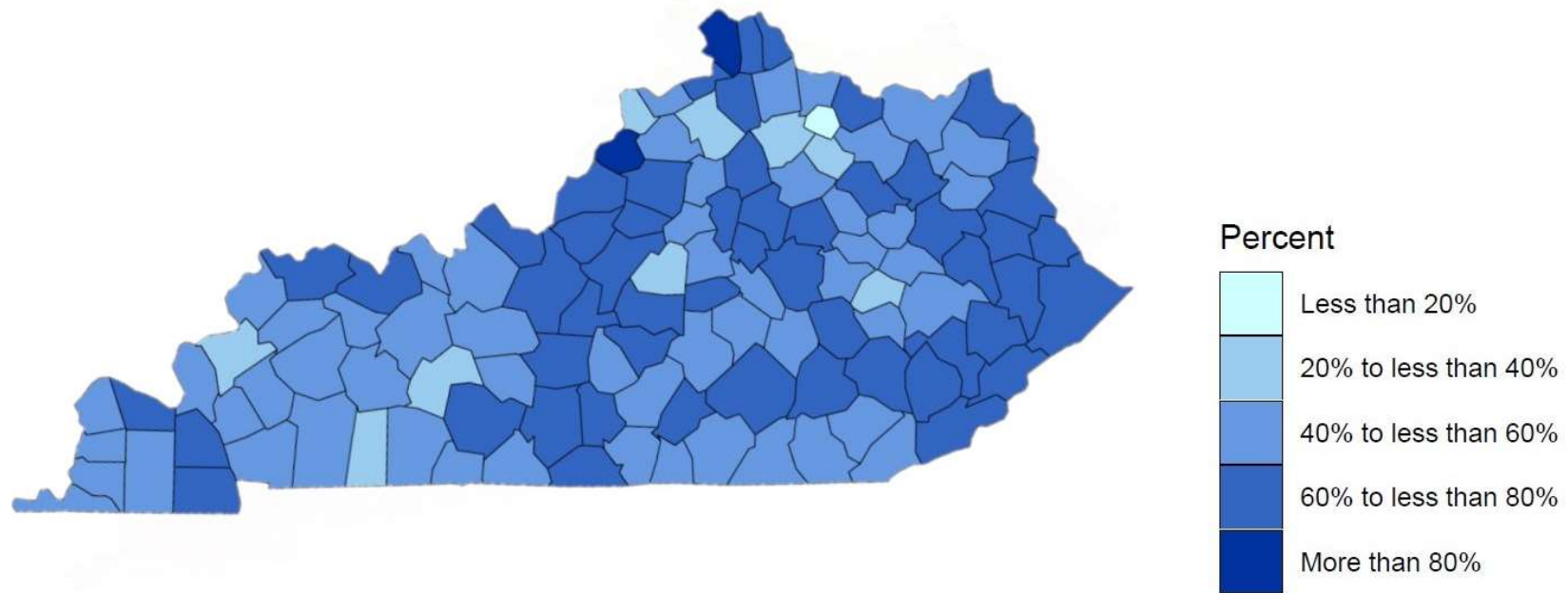
- **29%** adults with household incomes below **\$30,000** a year don't own a smartphone
- **44%** don't have home broadband services
- **46%** don't have a traditional computer

Kentucky Households Participating in ACP



As of April 2023

Fixed Home Internet Adoption



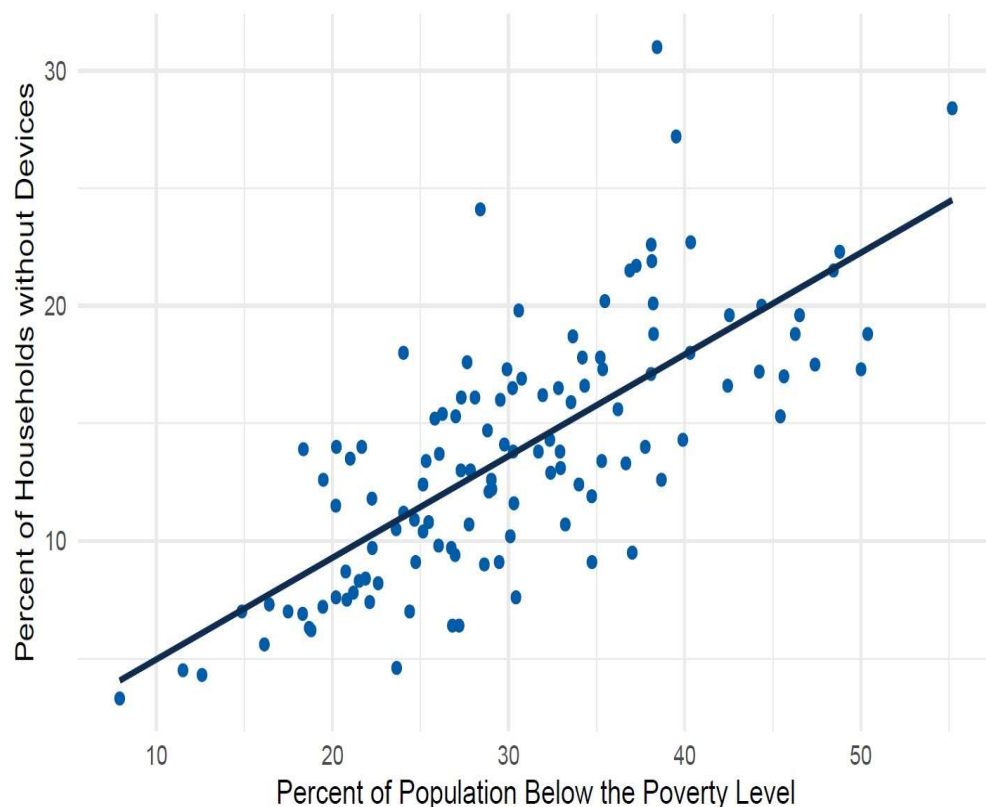
Based on 2017-2021 five-year ACS estimates

Residential Survey Results

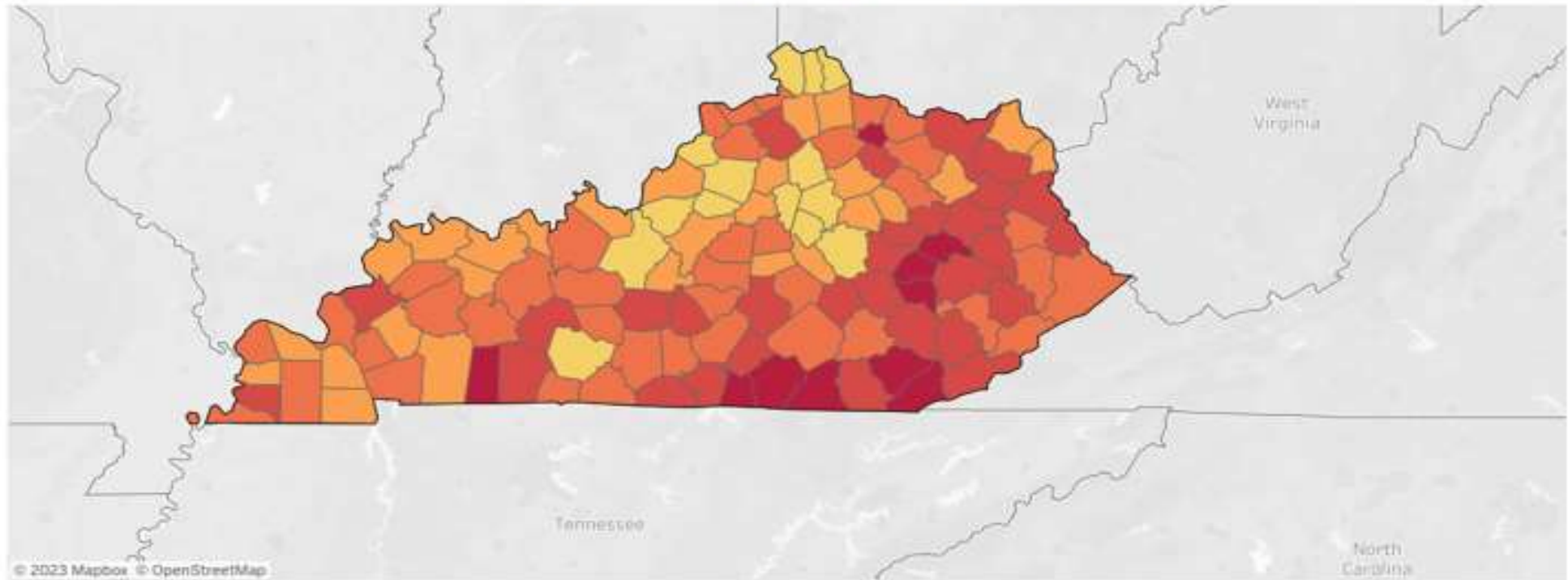
- Nearly half of survey respondents (46.8%) who do not subscribe to home internet service cite the monthly cost of service as a barrier to home internet adoption, followed by a lack of available internet at their residence and a lack of a computing devices

Publicly Available Data

- Counties with larger percentages of the population below the poverty level also have larger percentages of households **without computing devices**



Access: Households without Computer by County in State (Kentucky) in Year (All)

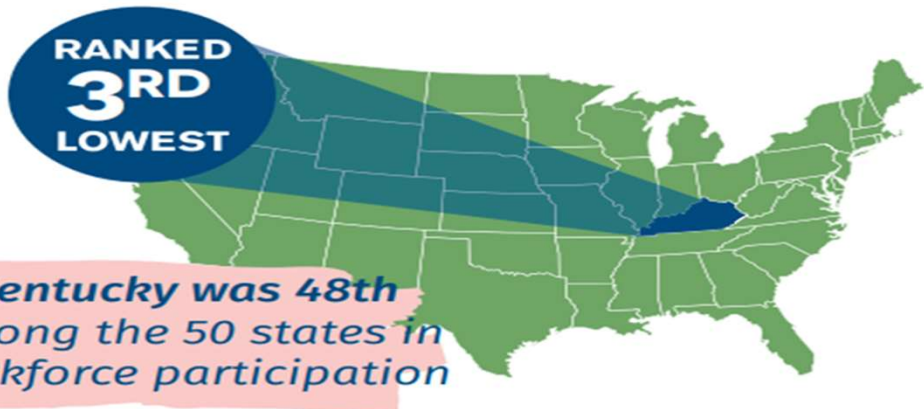
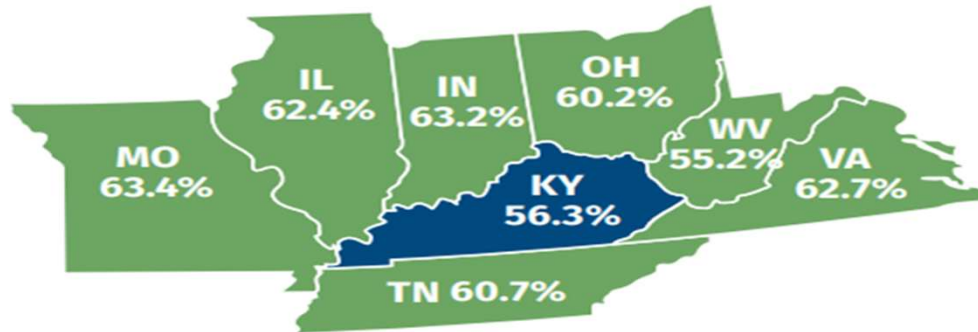


The situation becomes more alarming when comparing Kentucky's workforce participation rate to neighboring states. As of June 2021, Kentucky had the third lowest workforce participation rate in the nation, just slightly ahead of West Virginia and Mississippi, the two lowest.

Looking at some of our neighboring states, Kentucky's workforce participation rate is:

- **7.1 points below Missouri**
- **6.9 points below Indiana**
- **6.4 points below Virginia**
- **6.1 points below Illinois**
- **4.4 points below Tennessee**
- **3.9 points below Ohio**
- **1.1 points above West Virginia**

**Regional States
Labor Force
Participation Rate
Map**



With the exception of West Virginia, our neighboring states all have larger workforces when measured as a percentage of their populations. The average participation rate among neighboring states is 60.5 percent. For Kentucky to at least be in line with its neighbors, it would need to increase its labor force by 158,000, at current population levels.

[20 Years in the Making - Kentucky's Workforce Crisis 9-29-2021.indd \(kychamber.com\)](#)

Digital Equity Is Important

- Making meaningful progress toward achieving digital equity is one of the Governor Andy Beshear's top priorities. Through his Better Internet Plan, Gov. Beshear is committed to ensuring all Kentuckians have access to reliable high-speed internet and the right devices to access that technology, while also ensuring necessary resources are allocated to identify barriers to affordability and assure there is training and support available to develop our citizens' digital skills.
- The Office of Systems Equity is your resource and primary point of contact for all things related to Digital Equity in the commonwealth. You can email us or **call 502-564-0372** if you have questions or comments.

We Value Your Input!

- We ask that you actively participate in the breakout sessions today and tomorrow
- Please complete a brief questionnaire about your organization's location and current efforts underway to help Kentuckians access and use the internet at: digitalequity.ky.gov
- Then look for the: [Asset Inventory Instrument](#)

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Thank You!