

HARRISON COUNTY, TEXAS

Executive Broadband Plan Summary
October 2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 OVERVIEW	3
02 INFRASTRUCTURE	6
03 HOUSEHOLDS DETAILED FINDINGS	10
04 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS.....	15

OVERVIEW *01*



OVERVIEW

Today, technology plays a pivotal role in how businesses operate, how institutions provide services, and where consumers choose to live, work, and play. The success of a community depends on how broadly and deeply the community adopts technology resources, which includes access to reliable, high-speed networks; the digital literacy of residents; and the use of online resources locally for business, government, and leisure.

The Connected Nation Texas (CN Texas) Connected Program partnered with the Harrison County Broadband Team to conduct a study designed to determine the availability of broadband infrastructure; how its residents are adopting and using broadband services; and what steps would have the greatest impact toward improving broadband access, adoption, and use across every sector locally.

Pursuant of this goal, between November 2020 and June 2021, Harrison County conducted a comprehensive survey of broadband technology access and adoption across the community that collected responses from 1,519 households. CN Texas staff also met with community officials to determine community needs and to gather qualitative data for consideration in the study. Overall, the assessment was designed to identify issues and opportunities to close the local Digital Divide.

Harrison County is in a good position to improve broadband access, adoption and use throughout the community. Understanding how to partner with local providers and keeping up with grant expenditures, including the likes of Coronavirus State and Local funds, is imperative to long-term success. Many recommendations in this action plan are inexpensive or cost nothing at all but will contribute greatly to community development.

The following provides a summary of that assessment as well as recommendations for improving broadband and technology access, adoption, and use. The community action plan brings specific attention to broadband planning efforts and infrastructure expansion through discussion on community adoption, digital literacy, and general technology training. Harrison County has been allocated nearly \$13 million in American Rescue Plan funds; with that amount of money, it is paramount the community engage in proper budgeting and long-term planning to ensure the necessary actions are being taken that benefit the most residents now and in the future. To highlight key findings CN Texas created an interactive map for these communities. To access the map, click [HERE](#).

Harrison County - Quick Facts	
Population	68,839
Number of Households	24,197
Median Household Income	\$58,817
Poverty Rate	21.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	19.7%
Homeowner	72.3%
Hispanic or Latino Population	13.6%
Households Served with Broadband ¹	69.66%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey (5-yr estimate) and 2020 Decennial census:

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=0500000US48203>

¹ The current FCC definition of broadband is a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. This data is derived from Connected Nation Texas, Dec 2020. https://cn-maps.hatfield.marketing/US/TX/v4/tx_harrison-county_25x3.pdf

KEY FINDINGS

- About one-half of the households who responded to the survey (50%) use fixed internet connections² such as DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless, with an additional one-fourth of residents using non-fixed internet connections³ including dial-up, satellite, and mobile-only services.
- For households that said they do not subscribe to home internet service, the top barrier was a lack of available service, followed by the cost of internet service.
- The average internet speed reported by households in Harrison County (23.68 Mbps) is significantly lower than connections in other Connected communities (33.70 Mbps) and is below the current FCC definition of broadband (minimum speed of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload).
- About 83% of businesses that participated in the survey report subscribing to fixed or non-fixed broadband service. However, 55% reported they were dissatisfied with their service citing slow speeds as the leading reason for their dissatisfaction.
- 37% of businesses do not encourage or require employees to pursue further education as part of employment; 38% of businesses said technology training was not important, only slightly important, or they were neutral on the topic.
- 93% of households said they would like to have improved or additional options for home internet service.
- According to CN Texas maps, more than 7,400 households do not have access to internet service at speeds that the FCC defines as broadband (25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload). Statewide, 96.8% of households have broadband access at these speeds.



7,441
Homes in
Harrison County
do not have
access to
broadband at
25/3 Mbps

² Fixed internet connections include DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology.

³ Non-fixed internet connections include dial-up, satellite, and mobile-only services. These non-fixed types of internet services, while providing basic access, can often be plagued by connection latency, have costly monthly data plans, or can be impacted by weather, terrain, large expanses of open water, and other environmental factors.



INFRASTRUCTURE *02*

INFRASTRUCTURE

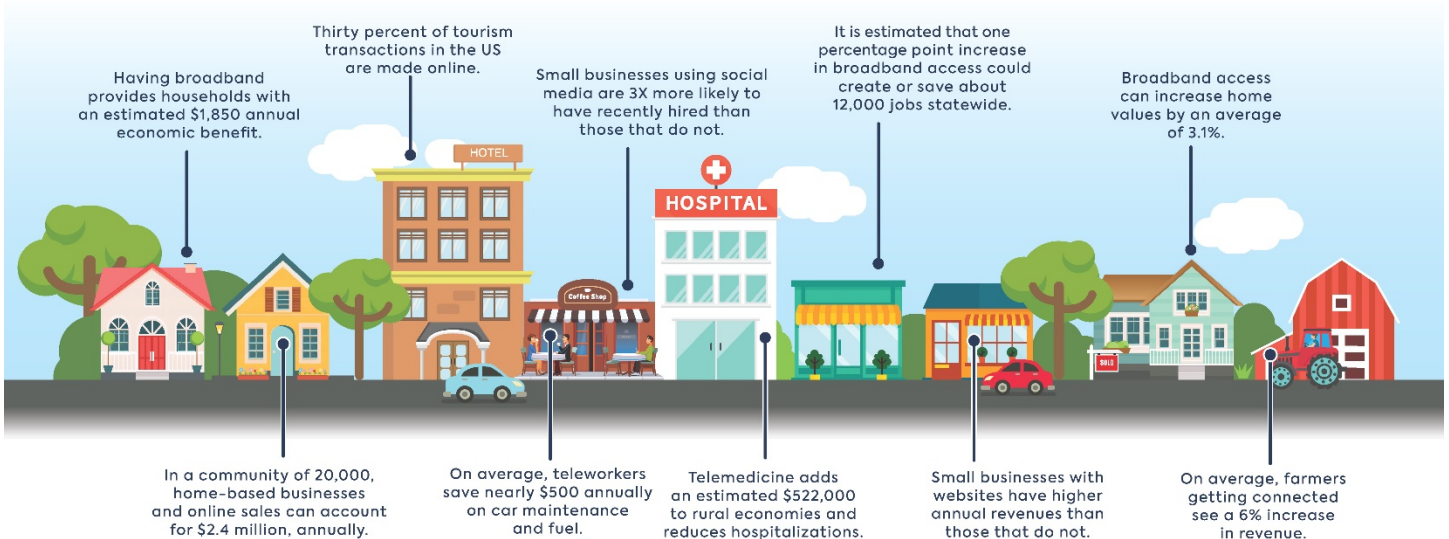
The first step in understanding the state of broadband infrastructure in Harrison County and the rest of Texas is having accurate maps. Accordingly, CN Texas works with providers to develop a variety of broadband maps at a state and county level. Data shown on these maps is derived from a combination of direct provider outreach and data collection, FCC Form 477 broadband deployment filings, and independent research conducted by CN Texas. If a provider were unable or unwilling to supply granular data and a detailed service area could not be developed, the provider's service is represented by Form 477 data, a format that tends to overstate the service territory.

Broadband - Quick Facts	
Number of Unserved Households	7,441
Households served (10/1 Mbps)	90.77%
Households served (25/3 Mbps)	69.66%
Households served (50/5 Mbps)	67.61%
Households served (100/10 Mbps)	66.1%

Broadband data collected by CN Texas in 2021
<https://connectednation.org/texas/mapping-analysis/>.

According to CN Texas broadband data collected in July 2021 - with additional public feedback, field validation, and provider input, seven in ten homes in Harrison County have access to broadband of at least 25/3 Mbps, the current definition of broadband as set forth by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). There were 13 internet service providers identified in the area, they are listed on the following page.

Connected Community Ecosystem

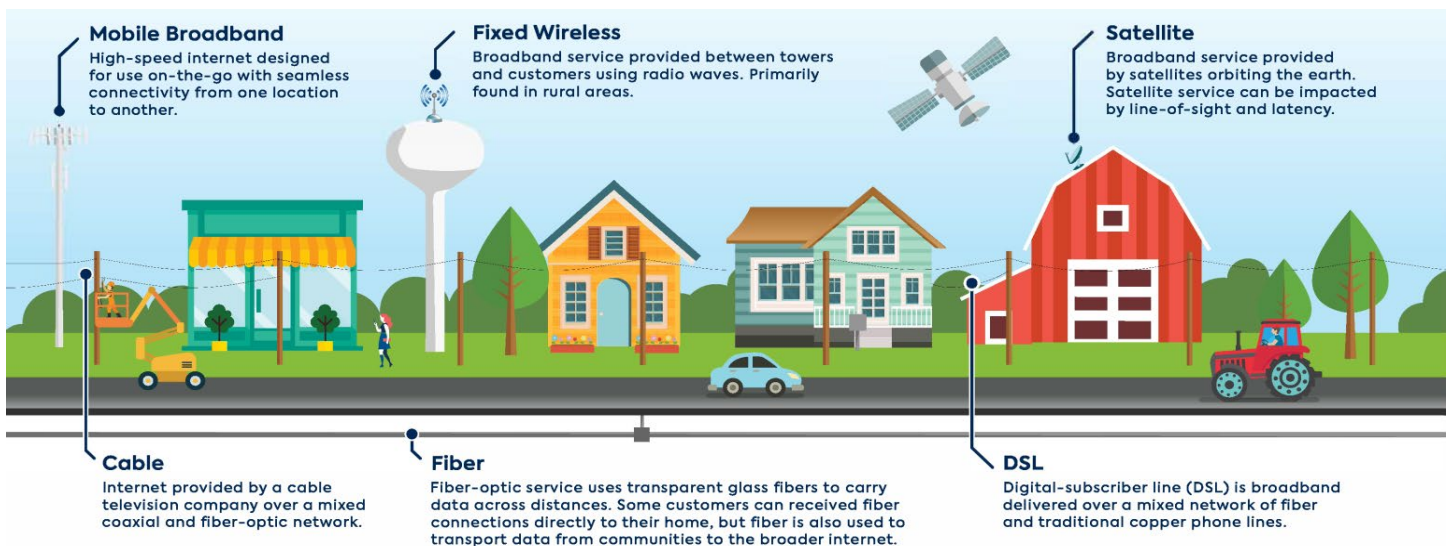
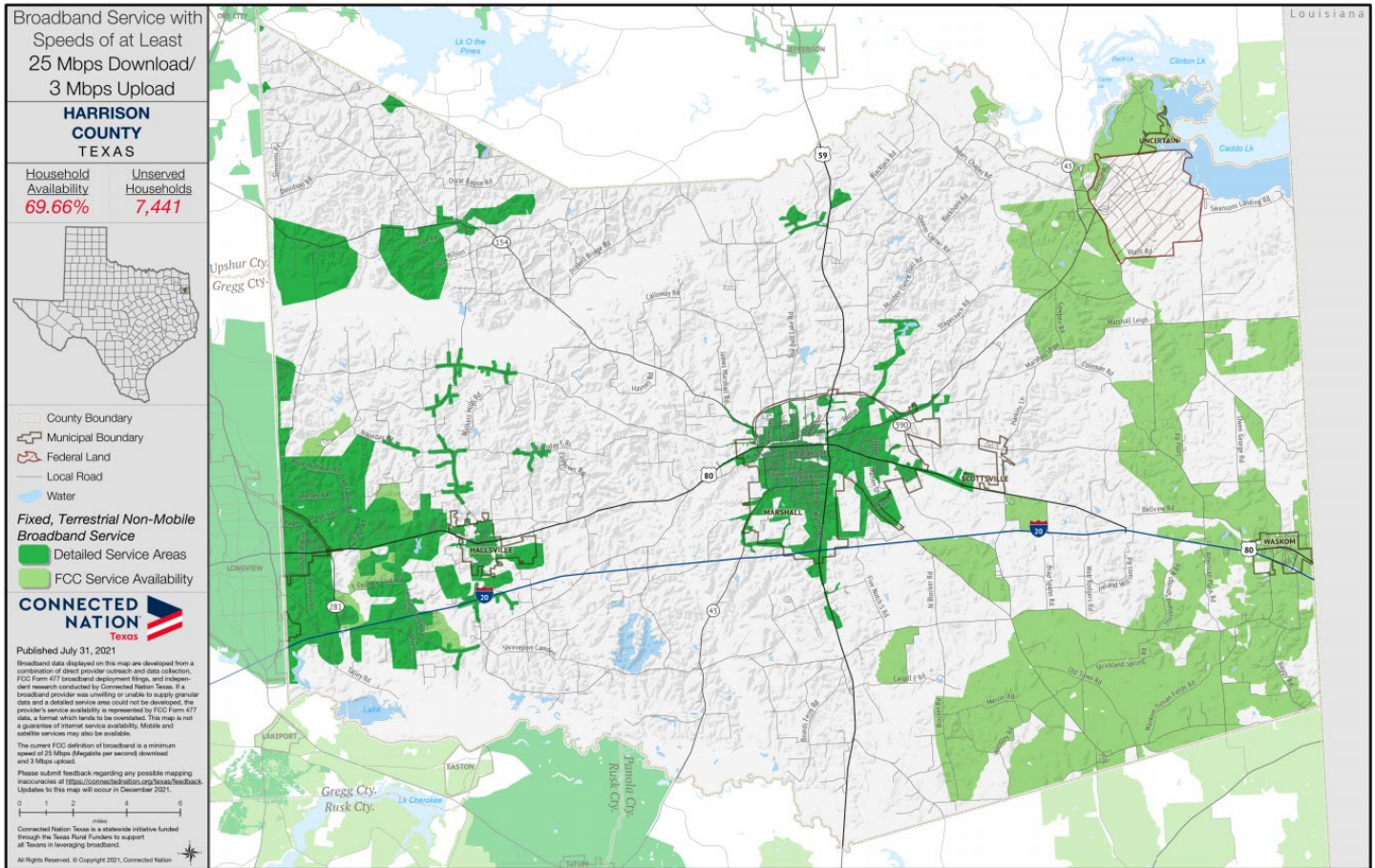


Internet Service Providers in Harrison County

PROVIDER	TECHNOLOGY	MAXIMUM DOWNLOAD SPEED (Mbps)	MAXIMUM UPLOAD SPEED (Mbps)
AT&T	DSL	18	6
	Fixed Wireless	10	1
Comcast	Cable	987	35
Eastex Net	Fiber	100	100
	DSL	25	20
Etex	Fiber	250	25
	DSL	50	5
	Fixed Wireless	10	1
Fidelity Communications	Cable	1000	40
	Fiber	1000	1000
Frontier	DSL	100	10
Longview Cable	Cable	150	10
NDemand	Fixed Wireless	10	3
Skynet Country	Fixed Wireless	16	2
Suddenlink	Cable	25	5
Valor Commuications	DSL	200	200
	Fiber	200	200
Zito Media	Cable	100	10
ZOOM	Fixed Wireless	15	2

HARRISON COUNTY, TEXAS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Below is Harrison County's (25/3 Mbps) map, access the full map by selecting it from the menu [here](#). Other portions of the county are served by internet service providers (ISPs) offering slower advertised speeds.





HOUSEHOLDS:
DETAILED FINDINGS

03

HOUSEHOLDS – DETAILED FINDINGS

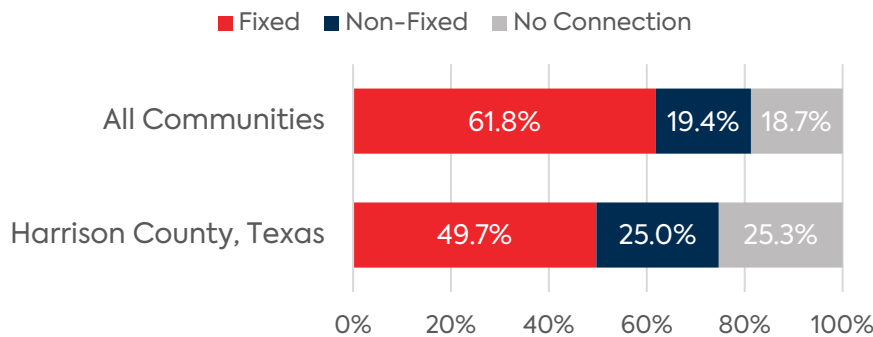
The following provides an overview of results from a broadband survey conducted in Harrison County between November 2020 and June 2021. Altogether, CN Texas received 1,519 completed surveys from households across the county, and respondents provided insights into their internet connectivity, or lack thereof. Data from Harrison County are compared to data from dozens of other rural Connected participating communities across Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Pennsylvania, to benchmark and identify areas for improvement.

Households – Quick Facts	
Fixed Home Broadband Adoption ⁴	49.7%
Average Monthly Cost of Internet	\$90.71
Average Download Speed	23.68 Mbps
Households Satisfied with Service	40%

Source: Harrison County Household Survey conducted by CN Texas

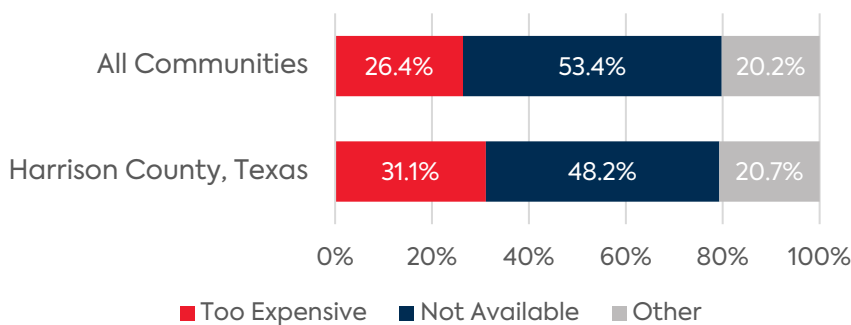
ADOPTION

Home Broadband Adoption



In Harrison County, 49.7% of households that took the survey subscribe to fixed broadband service delivered via a cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology. One-quarter of respondents (25%) indicate they have internet service, but it is delivered via dial-up, satellite, or a mobile wireless service. This leaves another 25% of households without internet access at home.

Primary Barrier to Home Broadband Adoption

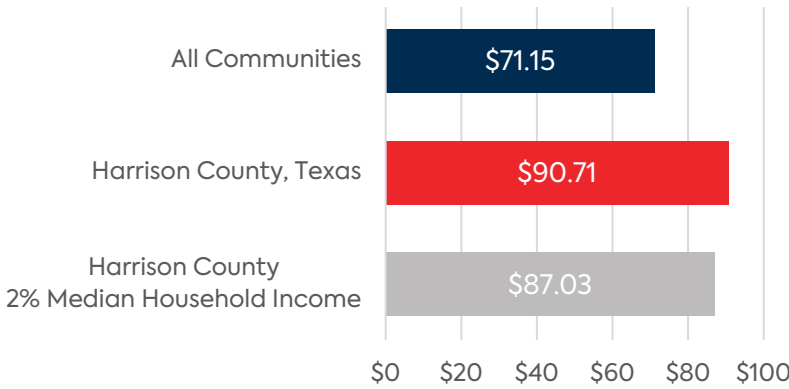


Among those without a home internet connection, 31% said they did not have broadband because it was too expensive, while nearly 48% indicate that it was not available at their address. Like in many communities, cost and availability are the two primary barriers to home broadband adoption.

⁴ Fixed home broadband connections are those provided by cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology.

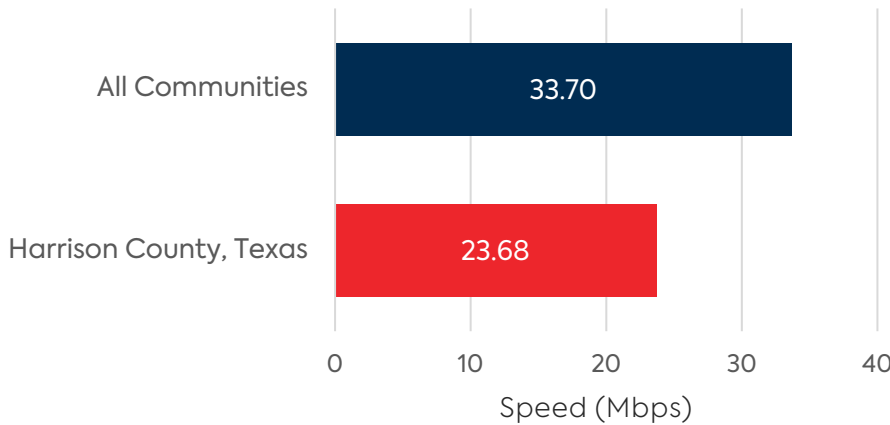
CONNECTION DETAILS

Average Monthly Cost for Home Internet Service



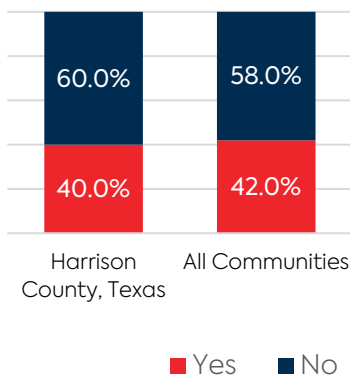
Two percent of monthly income is a recognized standard for measuring the affordability of a home internet connection. Respondents indicate that, on average, their internet connection costs \$90.71 per month, which is nearly \$4.00 more than 2% of monthly income in Harrison County.

Average Download Speed (Mbps)

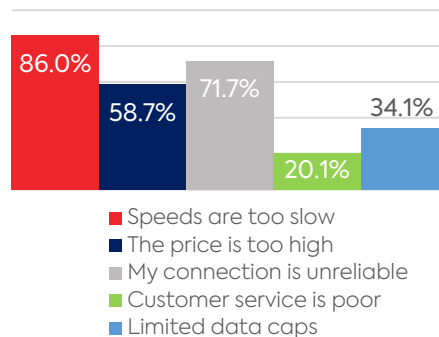


The FCC currently defines broadband as an internet connection with a download speed of at least 25 Mbps and upload speed of at least 3 Mbps. On average, respondents indicate that their connection's download speed is 23.68 Mbps, which is less than the speed of household connections in other communities and below the defined speed of broadband which is 25 Mbps.

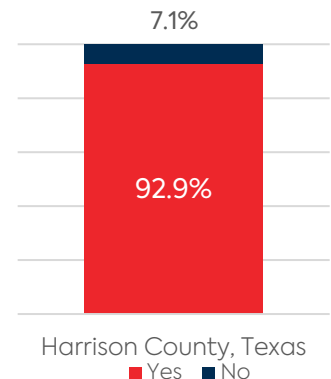
Does Your Internet Connection Meet Your Needs?



Why Does Your Connection Not Meet Your Needs?



Are You Interested in Additional Internet Choices at Home?



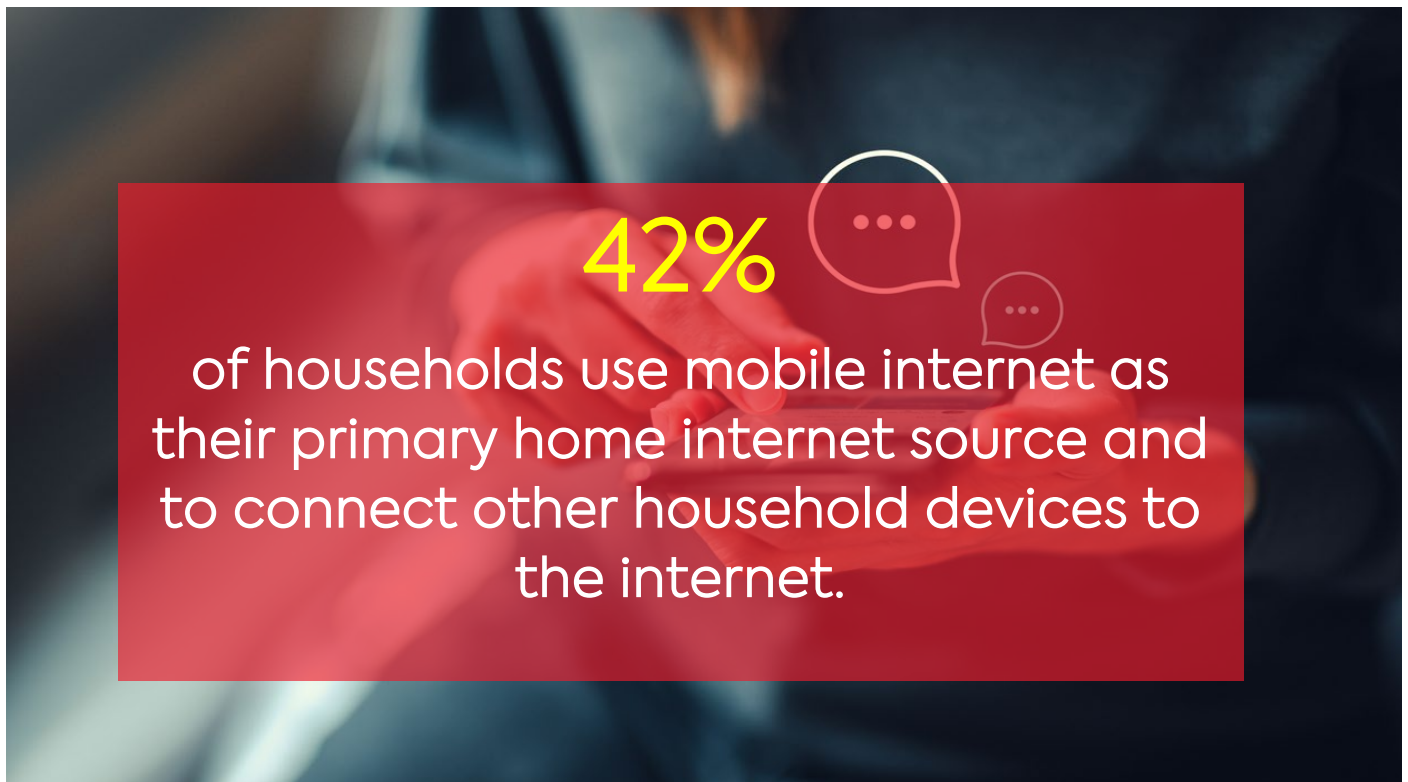
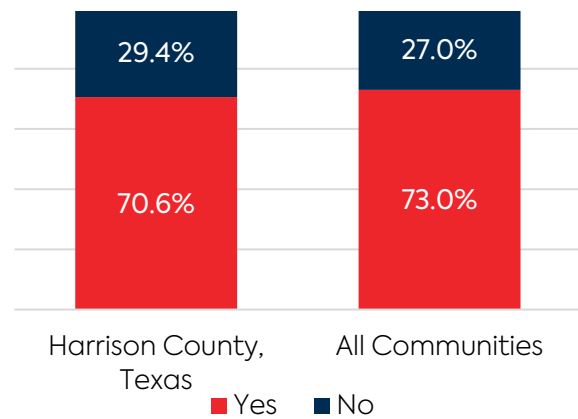
Competition provides residents with choices for service, allowing households the ability to switch providers if their current service does not meet their needs. Three out of five respondents (60%) indicate that their internet connection does not meet their needs. This is a similar rate of dissatisfaction to households in other communities. When asked why their connection does not meet their needs, 86% of households indicate that the speed is too slow. Nearly three out of five (58.7%) say the price is too high, and more than seven out of ten (71.7%) indicate that the connection is unreliable (respondents could choose more than one reason). Finally, nearly every respondent (92.9%) indicates that they are interested in additional internet choices for their home.

MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

70% of Harrison County households report that they subscribe to mobile internet service which they access via a smartphone or similar mobile device. This is slightly less than averages reported in other Connected Communities.

Additionally, 15.2% of mobile-connected households report that they rely on their mobile connection at home as their primary source of internet connectivity and 27.0% use mobile service to connect other household devices to the internet.

Households Subscribing to Mobile Internet Service



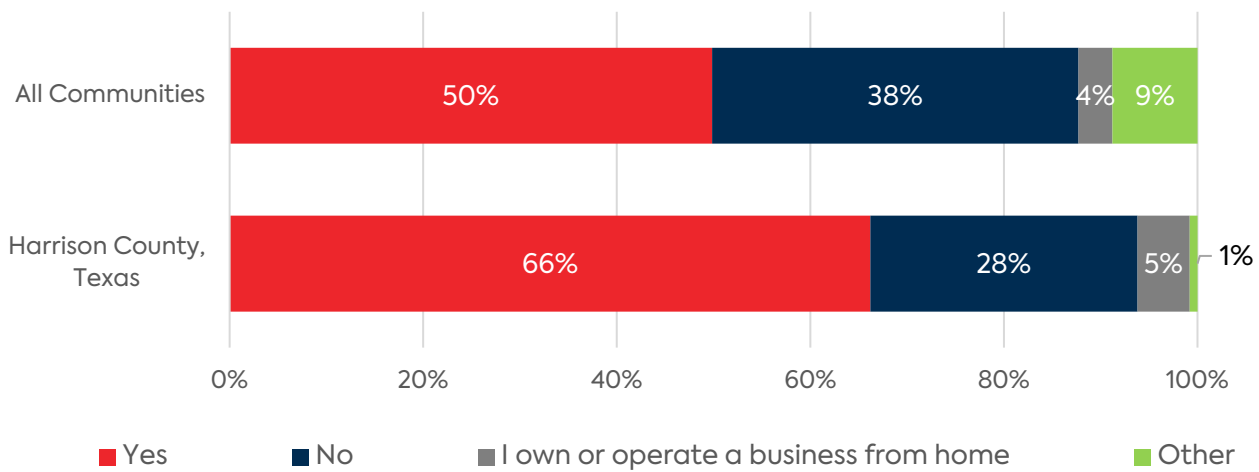
42%

of households use mobile internet as their primary home internet source and to connect other household devices to the internet.

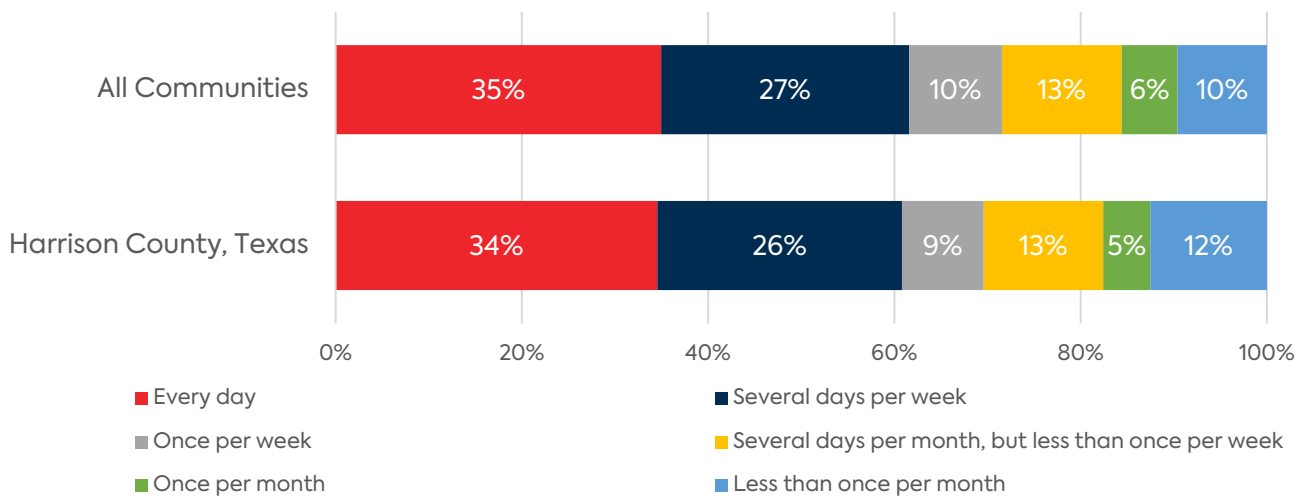
TELEWORK

Teleworking, or telecommuting, refers to working outside of the conventional workplace and communicating with it by way of telecommunications or computer-based technology. Teleworkers often do not register on typical measures of economic or workforce activity. Economic development strategies traditionally involve the attraction or retention of employers. While this is a critical part of growing a local economy, telework represents an opportunity to attract or retain employees even though their employer may not be located within the community, but only if those employees have access to advanced broadband infrastructure. Two out of three employed residents in Harrison County (66%) indicate that they telework in some capacity, with an additional 5% owning or operating a business from home, 34% of teleworkers indicate they work from home every day. It's important to note, these surveys were collected during COVID.

Do You Currently Telework For Your Job?



How Frequently Do You Telework?





RECOMMENDED
ACTIONS *04*

RECOMMENDATION ACTIONS

Goal 1: Develop a broadband technology council in Harrison County.

Establishing a broadband council in the community can help to sustain the implementation of this technology action plan and the growth of broadband infrastructure and technology access, adoption, and use. The broadband council should be comprised of one central leader and a board of advisors, representing key community sectors such as government, healthcare, education, etc. The council, through its single appointed leader, should have power to act on behalf of Harrison County in matters pertaining to broadband: grants, infrastructure, and community providers. Each member of the council should be passionate about expanding broadband in the community and understands the demographics of the residents.

Overall, the Council should: 1) promote broadband and technology access, adoption, and use; 2) monitor local, national, and global technology trends; 3) educate the community on broadband and technology and empower digital engagement; 4) attend and facilitate events focused on technology innovation, broadband infrastructure, and connectivity in general; 5) take action on recommendations from the plan as well as others that promote sustainable broadband solutions.

Objective:

Establish an organized group of broadband advocates in Harrison County focused on increasing technology access, adoption, and use.

Actions:

Action 1 – The Harrison County Commissioners Court should commission a comprehensive community group referred to as the Broadband Technology Council. The council should include individuals who represent key community sectors including healthcare, government, education, public safety, agriculture, etc. The Council should have one chairman and seven advisors. The council chairman should be appointed by the Harrison County Commissioners Court, as this person will be acting on behalf of the county in an official capacity in matters pertaining to broadband. It is important for the county government to take ownership in this appointment. The board of advisors will augment the work of the chairman, serving to outreach into their respective professional fields.

Members could include:

- **Healthcare:** Clinic Directors, Family Doctors, Hospital Directors
- **Government:** County Judge, County Commissioners, Mayor, City Council, County IT Director

- **Education:** Superintendents, School IT Directors, Presidents of local colleges (Marshall ISD, Hallsville ISD, Harleton ISD, Waskom ISD, Karnack ISD, Elysian Fields ISD, Trinity Episcopal School, East Texas Baptist University, Texas State Technical College, Panola College, Wiley College)
- **Public Safety:** Sheriff, Police Chief, Fire Marshall (Volunteer), EMS
- **Agriculture:** County Ag Agent, Leading Ag Producers
- **Business:** Chambers of Commerce Presidents (Marshall, Hallsville, Waskom), Marshall EDC
- **Community At-Large:** Someone from the community who is interested in furthering the broadband agenda of Harrison County

Action 2 – The council should meet at least once a month. Meetings can be held virtually or in-person to accommodate needs of members. These meetings should provide updates on community activities, allow time for guest speakers and presentations, and offer an open forum for discussion about broadband advancements in Harrison County.

The responsibilities of the Committee should include:

- Stay up to date on state and federal broadband legislation
- Monitor broadband grant expenditures in the County
- Apply for applicable state and federal grant programs
- Monitor state, national, and global technology trends
- Ensure digital engagement in Harrison County in all community sectors (telehealth, telework, online learning, Wi-Fi in businesses, etc.)
- Update Commissioners Court, City Council and other governing bodies as needed
- Attend workshops, webinars, meetings, and general trainings that discuss broadband specifically and telecommunications generally
- Provide digital literacy and digital skills assistance to at-risk populations in the community

Action 3- The council should create a central technology portal/website that promotes local technology resources for use by residents. This portal/website should be updated following each Council meeting to include a summary of meeting notes, decisions, and next steps. The website should include resources related to digital literacy, digital skills, reduced-cost broadband offerings in the county, local technology hubs, and other pertinent county information.

Responsible Parties:

Community anchor institutions: libraries, schools, businesses, non-profits, etc.; Internet service providers; Local units of government; Community residents.

Timeline:

Members of the broadband council should be identified within 16 weeks of receiving this plan.

Resources:

Municipal Boards: Best Practices for Adoption Technology

<https://insights.diligent.com/boardroom-technology-local-government/municipal-boards-best-practices-for-adopting-technology>

Smart Cities Readiness Guide

<https://rg.smartcitiescouncil.com/>

Texas Broadband Providers by County

<https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/>

Anatomy of a Community Broadband Manager

<https://nextcenturycities.org/the-anatomy-of-a-broadband-manager/>

City of Memphis: Broadband Project Manager, Senior

<https://memphistn.referrals.selectminds.com/jobs/broadband-project-manager-senior-1529>

City of Houston: Senior Community Liaison

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/houston>

TARA Leadership: Rondella Hawkins

<https://austintexas.gov/page/tara-leadership>

Josh Edmonds: Director of Digital Inclusion for the City of Detroit

<https://detroitmi.gov/news/city-hires-new-director-help-close-detroits-digital-divide>

Goal 2: Increase broadband speeds in unserved and underserved areas of Harrison County.

According to maps published in July 2021 by Connected Nation Texas, 69.66% of Harrison County households have access to broadband speeds of 25/3 Mbps, which is the FCC's current definition of broadband. This leaves an estimated 7,441 households unserved. The 25/3 Mbps speed tier supports an average of three to five devices at any given time. Given the state of our digital society, three to five devices is a minimal count considering laptops, desktops, smart TVs, cellphones, gaming consoles, security cameras, home appliances, and the like, are all competing for one of those five slots. At speeds of 100/10 Mbps, 66.1% of Harrison County households have access to broadband. This leaves more than 8,000 households unconnected at the faster speed tier. Upon review of the map, it appears the broadband hubs in Harrison County are concentrated around town centers. Specifically, Marshall, Hallsville, and Waskom appear to be connected at both speed tiers, while surrounding areas are sparsely connected. This action plan seeks to provide a path forward such that all households could connect to broadband and benefit from a digitally inclusive lifestyle.

Objective:

Increase broadband speeds in Harrison County through infrastructure development and improvement projects.

Actions:

Action 1 – To begin addressing slow internet speeds, the broadband council, in partnership with community leadership, needs to meet with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the community. This includes meeting with those providers who have been allocated funding through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF). Community leaders should assess the **status** and **viability** of ongoing or upcoming infrastructure improvement and expansion projects. It will be important to know and understand where new or improved infrastructure is being built around the county and how it will affect broadband speeds and delivery to residents. Furthermore, when meeting with providers, community leaders should address the survey results, highlighting the need for affordable, reliable, and fast service. It is important for providers to understand the consumer base in Harrison County to provide the best customer service experience.

RDOF Phase I Auction Winning Bids:

- CCO Holdings (Charter): 5,214 Locations for \$7,853,792.40
- LTD Broadband: 27 Locations for \$27,714.00

CCO Holdings (Charter) was originally listed as a winning bidder in Harrison County, however 22 census blocks have since been listed by the FCC on their default public notice and will not be funded (link provided in resources).

Action 2 – During meetings with providers, the community should discuss how they could be a project partner- be it financial or strategic in nature. Ultimately, Harrison County should play a strategic role in ongoing or planned projects that will widely benefit the most residents.

Harrison County has been allocated \$12,927,140.00 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Should Harrison County choose to spend any of the federal funds on broadband, it is important that the County is prepared, informed, and readily equipped to begin working with reliable partners.

Action 2A – Harrison County has received a large amount of funding through the American Rescue Plan. It is imperative that the community spend this money wisely and with long-term potentiation in mind. These are unprecedented levels of broadband funding and it is integral to the success of the County that the funds be spent appropriately to ensure all residents have equitable access to broadband now and in the future.

Action 3 – In addition to speaking with providers about planned and ongoing projects, an important piece of the puzzle is understanding where infrastructure is and where it is not. Ultimately, infrastructure is what facilitates a broadband connection. As Harrison County seeks to bring better connectivity to residents, it's important to know what providers serve the community and where their infrastructure is located. Accordingly, Harrison County should consider conducting a field validation study. Field validation would entail on the ground data collection that would help identify necessary infrastructure assets to ensure broadband services are available and corroborate provider service boundaries. Such work allows the community to accurately assess and map broadband services and speeds and could reveal additional areas of need.

Action 4 – Following meetings with providers, the broadband council should identify state and federal grant programs that are of benefit and interest to furthering the community's broadband agenda. Broadband grants focus not only on infrastructure expansion and improvement but on device acquisition, digital literacy, improving connectivity in community organizations, and other related areas. In a time when broadband is at the forefront of state and federal legislative conversation, it is important for the broadband council to make the most of available funds. Grant lists have been linked in the below resources.

Responsible Parties:

Local units of government; Broadband providers; Community and regional organizations.

Timeline:

Community leaders should begin meeting with internet service providers within three months of receiving this plan. While Harrison County does not have to allocate funding or spend federal dollars within that same three months, the community should outline the scope of broadband infrastructure projects (ongoing and planned) within that timeline.

Resources:

Guide to Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities in the U.S.

<https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2021/guide-to-broadband-funding-opportunities-in-us/>

Current Broadband Funding

<https://connectednation.org/current-broadband-funding>

BroadbandUSA: Federal Funding Guide

<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/federal>

Texas Broadband Providers by County

<https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/>

Auction 904: Rural Digital Opportunity Fund

<https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904>

Connect America Fund Phase II FAQs

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/connect-america-fund-phase-ii-faqs>

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds>

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, County Allocation

https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/fiscalrecoveryfunds_countyfunding_2021.05.10-1a-508A.pdf

First RDOF Default Public Notice

<https://www.fcc.gov/document/first-rdof-default-public-notice>

Goal 3: Prioritize broadband as an important tool for digital adoption, workforce development, entrepreneurship and advancing economic and community development opportunities.

Broadband impacts every sector of a community, from government to schools to public safety. It is important to understand how residents *are* and *are not* using broadband to promote community solutions that increase and improve broadband access, adoption, and use. That is why Harrison County partnered with Connected Nation Texas in 2021 to better understand the broadband landscape of the community. Broadband is a key tool to economic and community development, specifically playing an important role in a community's workforce development. The more skilled a local workforce, the more attractive the community is to potential new businesses and industries. According to the broadband survey conducted in Harrison County, 27% of businesses said technology-related training for employees was not important or only slightly important to them. Another 11% were neutral on the topic. As society becomes increasingly digital and reliant on online platforms, it is paramount that communities are equipped with the skills needed to engage and work online.

Objective:

Increase broadband adoption and use rates among residents of all ages through community workshops focused on digital literacy, digital skills, and telework readiness.

Actions:

Action 1 – The broadband council should partner with local and regional organizations to facilitate free digital literacy and digital skills workshops. Workshop curriculum should be curated using material created by the County and publicly available programs, such as AARP, Grow with Google, and Digital Learn (resources linked below). Classes should be offered at local facilities, such as the school gym or the community center, and be advertised through the local media. The intention is for residents and community leaders to understand the importance of digital engagement and to feel

comfortable using online platforms. The more the community engages online, the more they will reap the benefits of a digital lifestyle.

Community partners can include:

- East Texas Council of Governments
- Chambers of Commerce (Marshall, Hallsville, Waskom) and Marshall EDC
- Schools: Marshall ISD, Hallsville ISD, Harleton ISD, Waskom ISD, Karnack ISD, Elysian Fields ISD, Trinity Episcopal School, East Texas Baptist University, Texas State Technical College, Panola College, Wiley College
- Public libraries
- Marshall-Harrison County Literacy Council
- Institutions and businesses who would directly benefit from greater digital adoption (i.e., banks, telehealth providers, online schools)

Workshop topics can include:

- How to teleconference
- Cybersecurity 101
- Microsoft Office skills
- Introduction to social media

Action 1A – Community workshops should focus on increasing the online presence of community institutions. This includes creating websites and social media accounts for businesses, government officials, healthcare providers, schools, etc. Only 69% of businesses indicate they have a website, while 79% of residents indicate they interact online with local business daily and weekly. Websites are a key marketing tool for businesses and an important resource for updates in times of emergency. In addition to community workshops, the community should leverage the Grow with Google program that provides free training content for small business on topics such as building your online presence, engaging with customers on Google for free, and digital marketing. Additionally, the program supports local communities in hosting virtual workshops.

Action 1B – Additional community workshops should focus on technology training for local employees. Technology is ever-changing and employee technology skills are important to meeting the needs of local businesses. Currently, only 30% of businesses require their employees to pursue continuing education as part of their employment. Growing technology skills of the workforce is critical to ensuring employers have the talent they need to expand and sustain their operations.

Action 2 – The broadband council should work with local schools in Harrison County to integrate digital skills and digital literacy into classroom curriculum. According to survey results, the average device to student ratio is 1.7 indicating students have access to internet devices. With access to internet devices comes the opportunity to learn online skills that will prove beneficial to students academically, professionally, and socially. It's important to understand that a device is only as useful as the user's skillset. If someone cannot utilize Microsoft Word, answer emails, or surf the web, then the perks of a laptop will largely be lost on them. Furthermore, amongst school-aged children, digital skill training should focus on equipping students with tools that will be beneficial for further educational attainment (i.e., college applications, SAT prep) and professional development (i.e., resume writing, online portals).

Action 3- According to the United States Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimate, the average commute in Harrison County is 24.2 minutes. Additionally, according to the Census Bureau's ACS 5-year estimate for Harrison County, 85% of residents commuted to work alone, while another 7.7% carpooled to work. While this is on par with the state average for commuting (27.2 minutes), the last year has showcased the need and society's ability to successfully telework, which would cut out commuting altogether. Telework is a viable work option in a digitally inclusive society but it requires a stable internet connection and requisite digital skills to be successful. Therefore, the broadband council should plan and host workshops that highlight the skills necessary for teleworking. In turn, businesses should be an integral part of the conversation as they too could benefit from a teleworking staff. The Chamber of Commerce and local businesses can lead the conversation on teleworking dos and don'ts, best practices, and personal success stories.

Responsible Parties:

Local businesses and business organizations (chambers of commerce and economic development corporations); local units of government; community residents; community anchor institutions (schools, libraries, healthcare clinics).

Timeline:

Digital skills and digital literacy workshops should be available no later than the end of Q2 2022. Curriculum should be reviewed and updated every three to four months.

Resources:

The complete guide to digital skills

<https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/the-complete-guide-to-digital-skills>

AARP Joins with Nonprofit to Teach Tech to Older Adults

<https://www.aarp.org/about-aarp/info-2021/oats-senior-planet.html>

Digital Learn: Use a computer to do almost anything!

<https://www.digitallearn.org/>

US Census: Harrison County

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0500000US48203>

Grow with Google

<https://grow.google/>

GCFLearnFree.org® program

[GCFLearnfree.org](https://www.gcflearnfree.org)