Connected
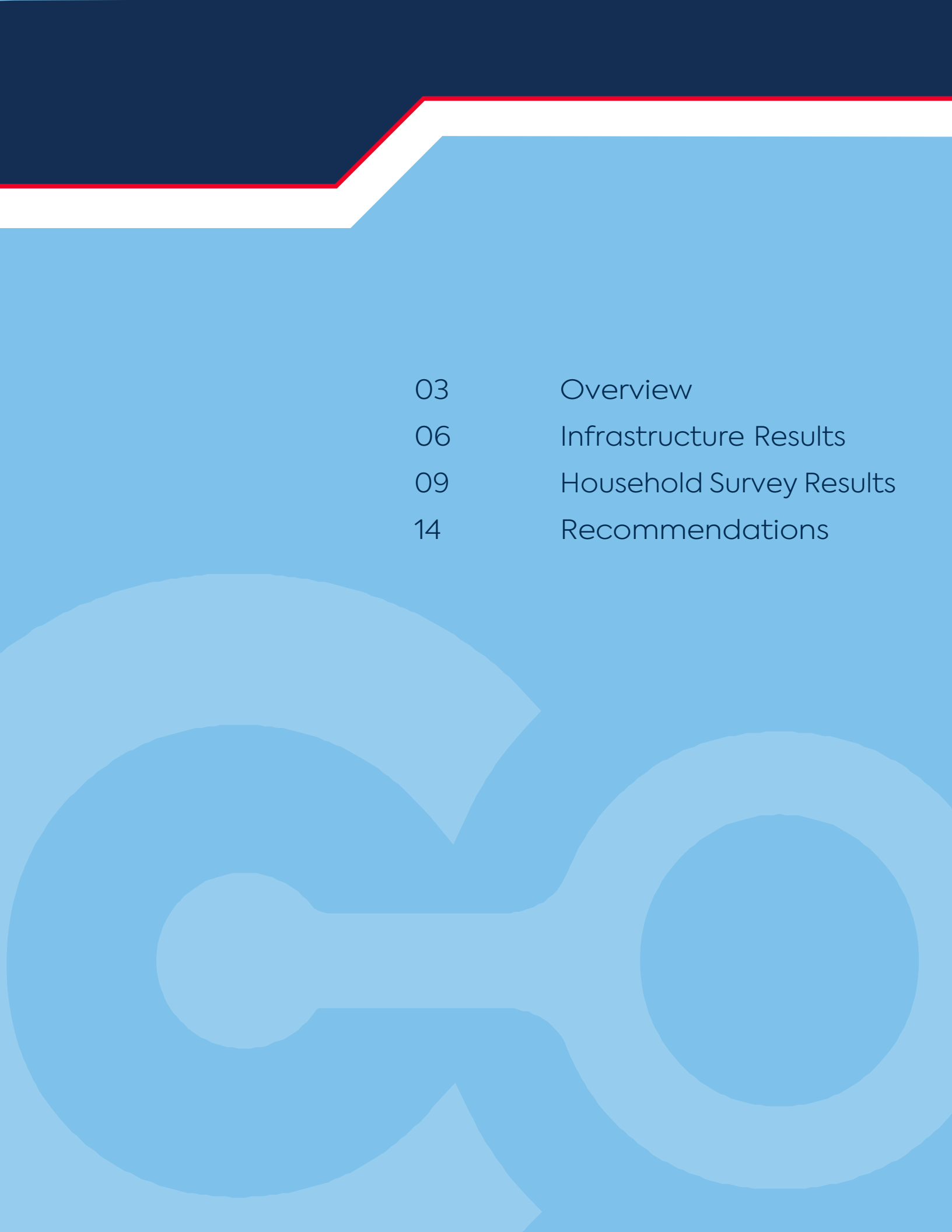A CONNECTED NATION Initiative

Addressing Your Community's Unique Needs

Red River County, Texas

Executive Summary

November 2022

Overview

Red River County Overview

Today, technology plays a pivotal role in how businesses operate, how institutions provide services, and where consumers choose to live, work, and play. A community's success has become dependent on how broadly and deeply it adopts technology resources, which include access to reliable, high-speed networks, the digital literacy of residents, and the use of online resources for local business, government, and leisure.

As such, Red River County stakeholders partnered with the Connected Nation Texas (CN Texas) Connected Community Engagement Program to conduct a study designed to determine the availability of broadband infrastructure, how county residents are adopting and using broadband services, and what action steps would have the greatest impact toward improving broadband access, adoption, and usage across every local sector.

Pursuant of this goal, between August and October 2022, Red River County conducted a comprehensive survey of broadband technology access and adoption across the community that collected responses from 215 households. CN Texas staff also met with community officials to determine community needs and gather qualitative data for consideration in the study.

This study approached broadband holistically — focusing on the quality of life offered when residents and community leaders alike access, adopt, and use broadband in a productive and meaningful capacity. With this approach, the assessment identified issues and action opportunities necessary to close the local Digital Divide.

Data collected as part of the engagement played an integral role in developing a unique, locally informed action plan for Red River County. This document provides a summary of that assessment, as well as recommendations for improving broadband and technology access, adoption, and usage. Additionally, CN Texas created an interactive map. To access that map, please click here.

RED RIVER COUNTY, TEXAS QUICK FACTS
Population
11,587
Households
5,143
Median Household Income
$37,135
Poverty Rate
20.2%
Adults with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher
15.7%
Hispanic or Latino
6.6%
Households with Broadband Access[1]
91.17%

Source: Red River County US Census Profile
[1]The current FCC definition of broadband is a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. These data are derived from Connected Nation Texas and last updated in January 2022. https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/

32.1%

of households in Red River County report subscribing to fixed internet service

*For households that do not subscribe to home internet service, the top barriers are a **lack of broadband service availability** and the **cost of internet service**.*

__75.8%__ of households in Red River County have access to internet service at speeds needed to run many modern applications (100 Mbps downstream and 10 Mbps upstream). Statewide, __93.6%__ of households have internet access at these speeds.

Over 3 out of 5 employed survey respondents in Red River County (__62.4%__) report teleworking in some capacity. Of those, __37%__ telework every day and __15%__ telework several

Nearly 3 out of 5 households surveyed (__59.4%__) and 3 out of 4 businesses (__75%__) reported being dissatisfied with their current internet service. The top reasons for dissatisfaction were slow speeds, unreliable connections, and high prices.

More than 9 out of 10 households (__97.9%__) said they would like to have improved or additional options for home internet service.

Red River County Infrastructure

A ccording to CN Texas broadband data initially released in January 2022, followed by additional public feedback, field validation, and provider input, 91.17% of Red River County households have access to broadband of at least 25/3 Mbps — the current definition of broadband set forth by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Broadband service in Red River County is distributed throughout the county.

Below is the list of internet service providers (ISPs) in Red River County. Please contact your provider for the most up-to-date information on speeds, prices, and service areas.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE QUICK FACTS

Unserved Households (25/3 Mbps) 1,024
Households Served (10/1 Mbps) 95.78%
Households Served (25/3 Mbps) 91.17%
Households Served (50/5 Mbps) 84.66%
Households Served (100/10 Mbps) 75.76%

Broadband data released by CN Texas in January 2022:
https://connectednation.org/texas/mapping-analysis/

| PROVIDER	TECHNOLOGY	MAXIMUM DOWNLOAD SPEED (Mbps)	MAXIMUM UPLOAD SPEED (Mbps)
Blossom Telephone	Fiber	100	50
Blossom Telephone	DSL	10	1
Nextlink Residential	Fixed Wireless	100	100
Peoples	Fixed Wireless	10	2
Suddenlink Communications	Cable	400	40
T–Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25	3
Valor Communications of Texas LP	DSL	200	200
WiFires Communications LLC	Fixed Wireless	72	7
Zulu Internet Inc.	Fixed Wireless	15	5

Below is Red River County's (25/3 Mbps) map. To access the full map, go to https://connectednation.org/texas/county-maps/ and select Red River County from the list. Portions of the county are served by internet service providers (ISPs) offering slower advertised speeds, and those areas are not shown on this map.

The first step in understanding the status of broadband infrastructure in Red River County and statewide is having accurate maps. Accordingly, CN Texas works with providers to develop a variety of broadband maps at the state and county level. Data shown on this map are 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 was 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 alone — a format that tends to overstate the service territory. To

access the map as a PDF, click [here](#).
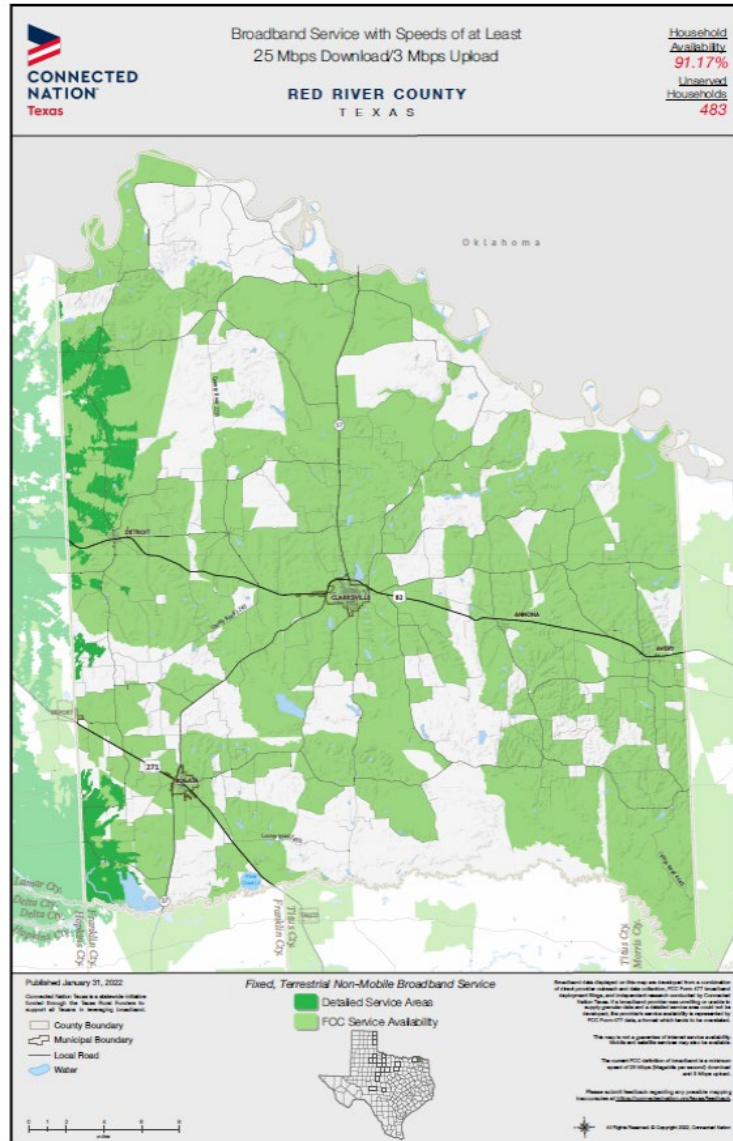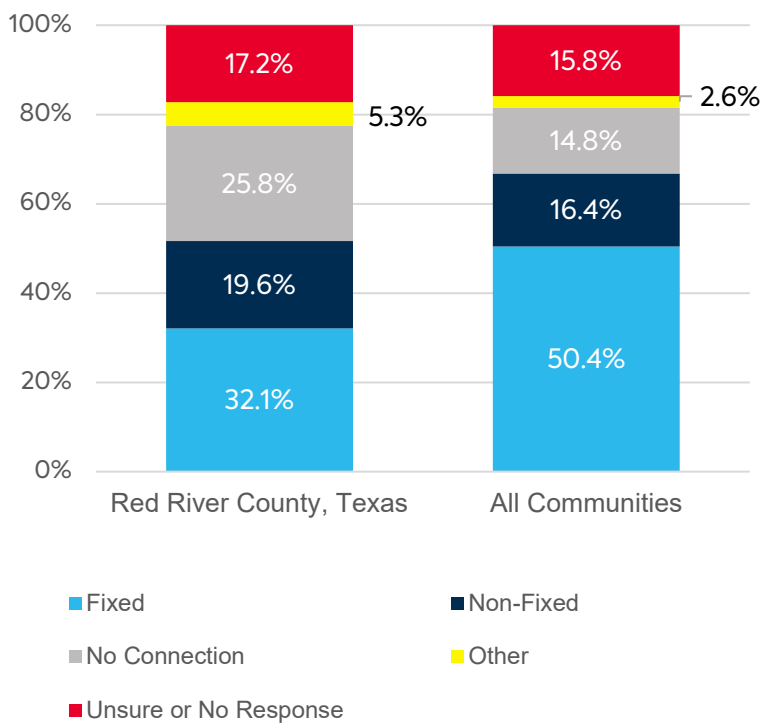
Household Survey
Results

Household
Survey Results

T he following section provides an overview of results from a broadband survey conducted in Red River County between August and October 2022. Altogether, CN Texas received 215 survey responses from households across the county; respondents provided insights into their internet connectivity or lack thereof. Data from Red River County are compared to data from hundreds of other rural Connected communities that participated in the program across Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Pennsylvania to benchmark and identify areas for improvement.
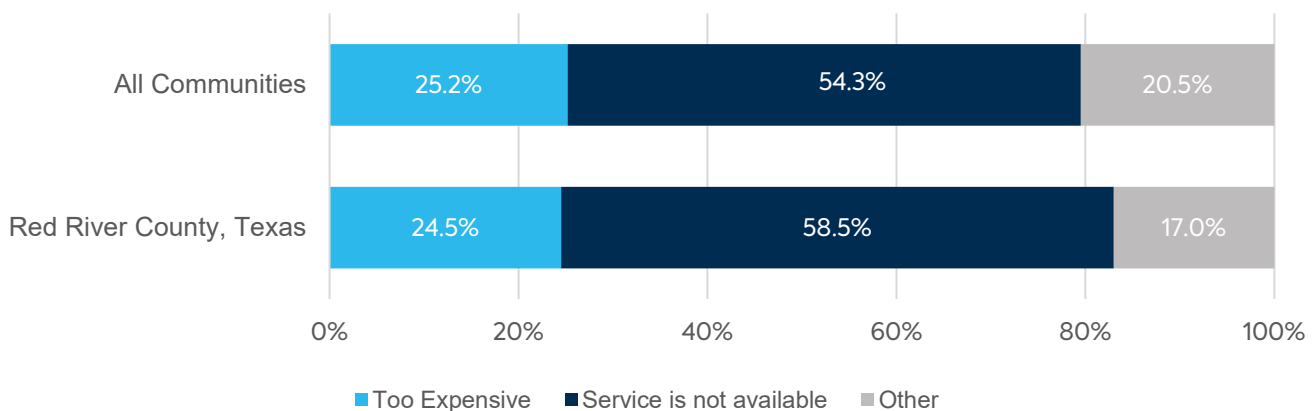
ADOPTION

In Red River County, 32.1% of households that took the survey subscribe to fixed broadband service delivered via a cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology, while 19.6% indicate they have internet service delivered via dial-up, satellite, or a mobile wireless service. This leaves 25.8% without internet and 17.2% of survey respondents unsure of what service they have or provided no response.

Among those without a home internet connection, 24.5% said they did not have broadband because it was too expensive. An additional 58.5% say service is not available.

Home Broadband Adoption

	Red River County, Texas	All Communities
Unsure or No Response	17.2%	15.8%
Other	5.3%	2.6%
No Connection	25.8%	14.8%
Non-Fixed	19.6%	16.4%
Fixed	32.1%	50.4%

Legend:
- Fixed
- Non-Fixed
- No Connection
- Other
- Unsure or No Response

Primary Barrier

	Too Expensive	Service is not available	Other
All Communities	25.2%	54.3%	20.5%
Red River County, Texas	24.5%	58.5%	17.0%

Legend:
- Too Expensive
- Service is not available
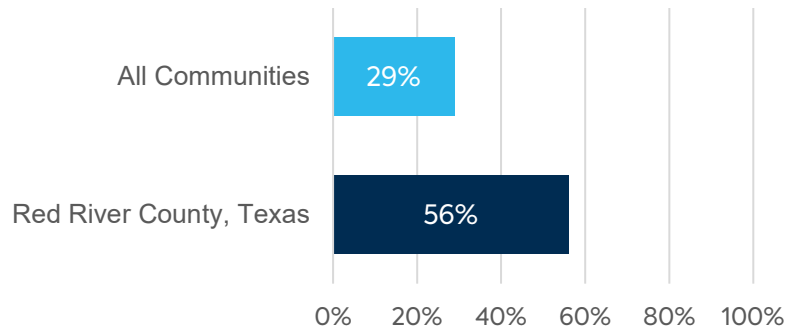- Other

CONNECTION DETAILS

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 about $93.68 per month. This is higher than the monthly cost paid in other communities ($78.16). Two percent of the median household income in Red River County is $61.89 per month.
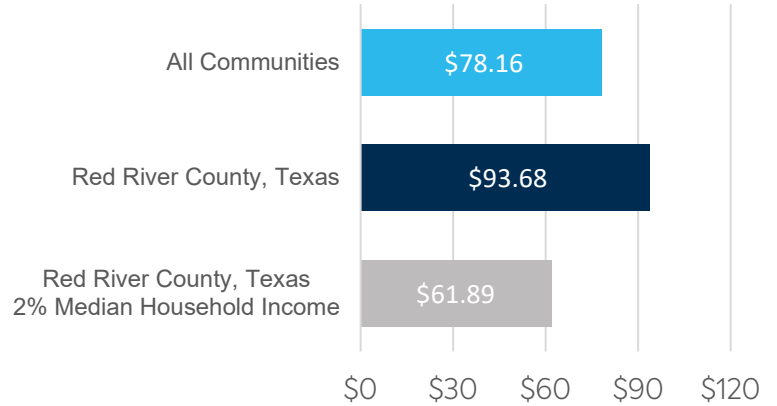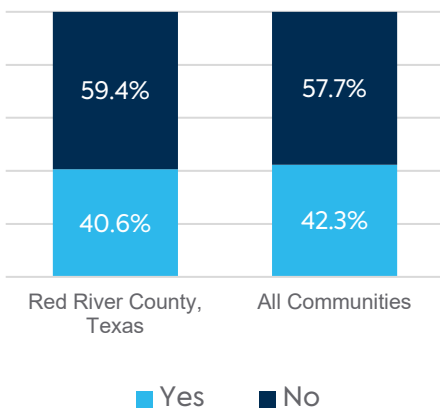
The FCC currently defines broadband as an internet connection with a download speed of at least 25 Mbps and upload speed of at least 3 Mbps. On average, respondents indicate that their connection's advertised download speed is 101.38 Mbps. In Red River County, 56% of internet-connected households subscribe to download speeds faster than 25 Mbps.
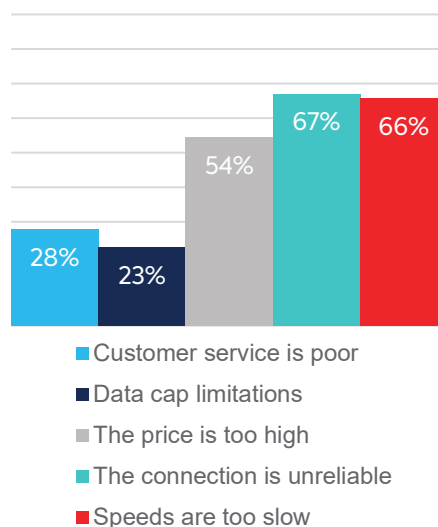
Average Monthly Cost

All Communities	$78.16
Red River County, Texas	$93.68
Red River County, Texas 2% Median Household Income	$61.89

$0 $30 $60 $90 $120

Percentage of Respondents with At Least 25/3 Mbps

All Communities	29%
Red River County, Texas	56%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Does Your Internet Meet Your Needs?

Red River County, Texas: No 59.4%, Yes 40.6%
All Communities: No 57.7%, Yes 42.3%

- ■ Yes
- ■ No

Why Doesn't Your Internet Meet Your Needs?

- Customer service is poor: 28%
- Data cap limitations: 23%
- The price is too high: 54%
- The connection is unreliable: 67%
- Speeds are too slow: 66%

- ■ Customer service is poor
- ■ Data cap limitations
- ■ The price is too high
- ■ The connection is unreliable
- ■ Speeds are too slow

Are You Interested in More Choices at Home?

Red River County, Texas: Yes 97.9%, No 2.1%

- ■ Yes
- ■ No
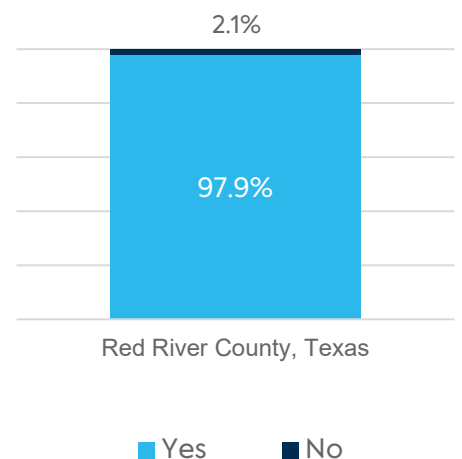
Competition provides residents with choices for service, allowing households the ability to switch providers if their current service does not meet their needs. Roughly two-fifths (40.6%) of responding households indicate that their internet connection meets their needs. This is a lower rate of satisfaction than among households in other communities (42.3%).

When asked why their connection does not meet their needs, 66% of dissatisfied households indicate that their speed is too slow, 67% say their connections are unreliable, and 54% indicate that the price is too high. Respondents could choose more than one reason for dissatisfaction.

Finally, over 9 out of 10 respondents (97.9%) indicate that they are interested in additional internet choices for their home.
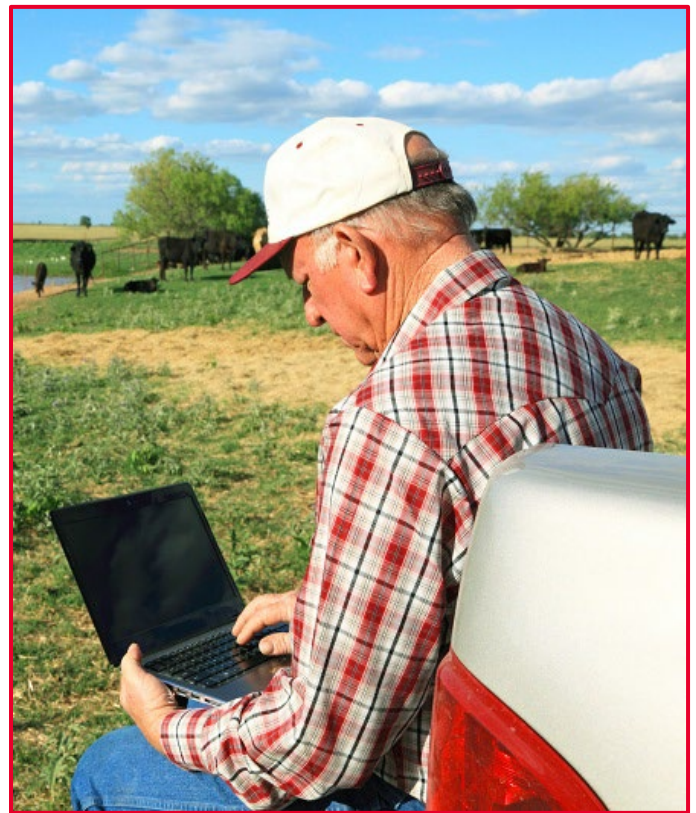
MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

More than 3 out of 5 households (62.9%) reported that they subscribe to mobile internet service that they access via a smartphone or similar mobile device. This is slightly less than what is reported in other Connected communities (70.4%).

Additionally, 49.1% of mobile-connected households report that they either rely on those mobile connections as their primary source of home internet connectivity or use mobile service to connect other household devices to the internet.

Households Subscribing to Mobile Internet Service

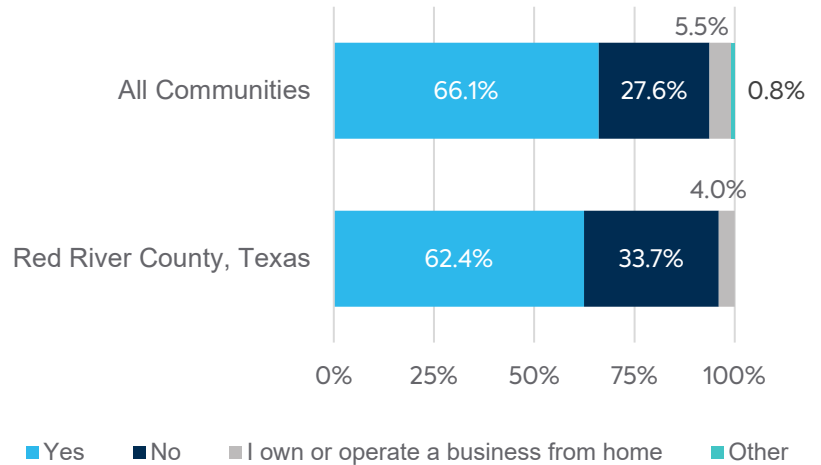|	Red River County, Texas	All Communities
Other	8.06%	0.5%
No	29.0%	29.1%
Yes	62.9%	70.4%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Other
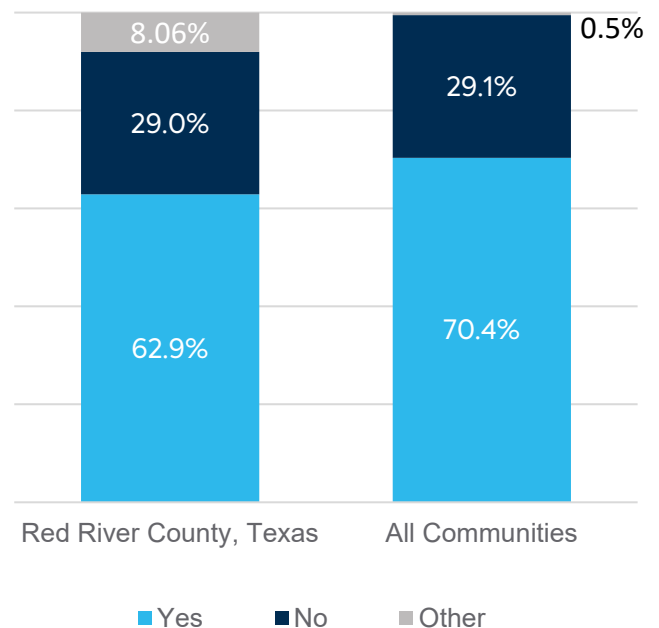
TELEWORK

Teleworking, or telecommuting, refers to working outside of the conventional workplace by way of telecommunications or computer-based technology. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to allow their staff to telework.
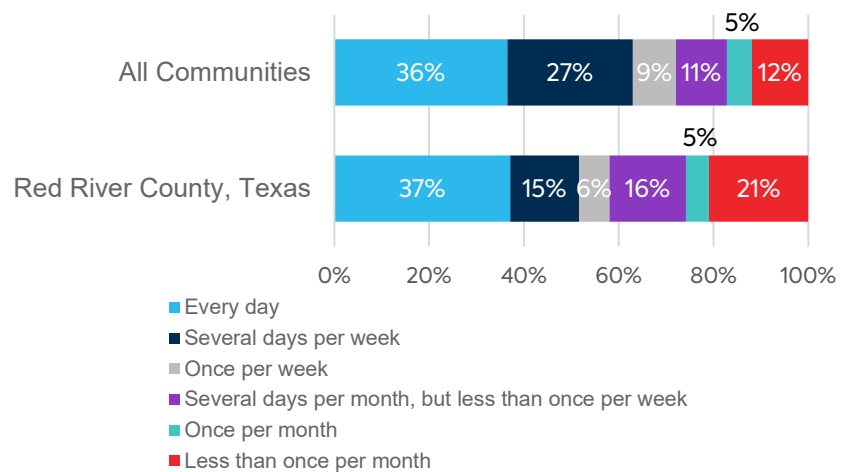
Teleworking is quickly becoming a critical part of growing a local economy because it represents an opportunity to attract and retain employees even when employees are not located in the same community as their employers. However, this only works if those employees have access to advanced broadband infrastructure.

Just over 3 out of 5 employed respondents in Red River County (62.4%) telework at least part of the time. More than 1 out of 3 teleworkers (37%) work remotely every day, while approximately 58% telework at least once a week.

Do You Currently Telework?

	Yes	No	I own or operate a business from home	Other
All Communities	66.1%	27.6%	5.5%	0.8%
Red River County, Texas	62.4%	33.7%	4.0%	

How Frequently Do You Telework?

	Every day	Several days per week	Once per week	Several days per month, but less than once per week	Once per month	Less than once per month
All Communities	36%	27%	9%	11%	5%	12%
Red River County, Texas	37%	15%	6%	16%	5%	21%

Recommendations

T he following recommendations are presented to assist Red River County in expanding broadband access and adoption throughout the community.

Red River County boasts a rich Texas history, but like many rural communities, the county has been losing industries and jobs for many years. The only hospital closed in 2014, and the ripple effect on the workforce, residential growth, and healthcare is evident. The good news is that access to broadband can address many of these challenges by offering telehealth service until a new hospital can be built, increasing residential growth through the ability to telework, and providing better educational opportunities through online courses.

Residents were vocal about broadband availability in the county. Some feedback includes:
- "Our rural community in Red River County desperately needs affordable, reliable, high-speed internet."
- "High-speed internet needs to be cheaper and more reliable in our county/city. Currently, it is flaky and expensive and is a factor in considering moving to the community for serious internet users."
- "I do a lot of continuing education as a nurse, and it is difficult at times to do live recordings. Also, if I had better internet, I could come home and finish charting at home instead of staying at the office until 7:00 at night."

With internet service provider (ISP) grants from the Rural Development Opportunity Fund (RDOF) and funding opportunities through federal and state governments, Red River County can become a digital-ready community by supporting new broadband infrastructure and providing digital literacy opportunities for its residents.

Goal 1: Establish central broadband leadership in Red River County by making permanent the Technology Action Team formed during the Connected Nation's engagement program.

Objective: Establish a permanent Technology Action Team in Red River County that can serve as the go-to point of contact for questions, meetings, and projects.

From August to October 2022, the Red River County broadband team, in partnership with Connected Nation Texas (CN Texas), collected surveys across nine community sectors to assess the connectivity, affordability, and general technology needs of Red River County residents. The local broadband team, led by Clarksville City Mayor Ann Rushing, brought together community stakeholders spanning education, government, health care, business, and technology. With the once-in-a-generation infusion of money coming from the federal and state governments, it is paramount that Red River County establishes a Technology Action Team to ensure the work to improve broadband to date is carried forth, and the community is staying on top of the state, local, and federal broadband happenings.

Recommendations

Actions:

Action 1: **Establish a permanent Technology Action Team.** A standing group of leaders is already active in the broadband space; it's a matter of making it official. This group should serve as a local group of advisors related to broadband and technology. This will be especially important as funding opportunities arise.

The Technology Action Team should have representation from all community sectors:

- **Health care:** Local physicians, Lennox Health Resource Center
- **Government:** County judge, county commissioners, mayors, city councils, county IT director, economic and development directors
- **Education (K-12):** Superintendents, school IT directors: Avery ISD, Clarksville ISD, Detroit ISD, Rivercrest ISD
- **Education (higher education):** Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, Paris Junior College
- **Public safety:** Sheriff's office, police and fire departments, emergency management
- **Agriculture:** County agriculture agent, leading agriculture producers
- **Business:** Local chambers of commerce
- **Nonprofits and community organizations:** Clarksville Public Library, Alma Flippo Public Library, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas, The HUB Community Center, Red River County Chamber of Commerce, Red River County Historical Society, Lennox Foundation
- **Community at large:** Residents who are interested in furthering the broadband agenda of Red River County

The responsibilities of the team include:

- Staying up to date on state and federal broadband legislation
- Applying for applicable state and federal grant programs
- Ensuring digital engagement in Red River County in all the community sectors (telehealth, telework, online learning, Wi-Fi in businesses, etc.)
- Attending workshops, webinars, meetings, and general training that discuss broadband specifically and telecommunications generally
- Providing digital literacy and digital skills assistance to the community's at-risk populations
- Participating in regular meetings. The team should meet at least once a month. Meetings can be held virtually, in person, or in a hybrid capacity to accommodate members' needs. 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 Red River County.

Action 2: **Develop a technology portal/website to promote local broadband resources**. The **website** should serve as a one-stop resource guide for broadband providers, community residents, and local leaders. The website should include resources related to digital literacy, digital skills,

reduced-cost broadband offerings in the county, public-computing centers, and other relevant information for residents and ISPs.

Action 3: Track state and national broadband policies. The Technology Action Team should remain informed and up to date on any publications, events, and policy briefs published by the Governor's Broadband Development Council (GBDC) and the Broadband Development Office (BDO). The team should coordinate ongoing community outreach efforts and initiatives following the long-term objectives of the aforementioned entities. Local broadband teams should mirror the successes and objectives laid out by the state of Texas. Taking advantage of federal and state funding as it becomes available will position Red River County to increase digital opportunities for all its residents.

Action 4: Build relationships with ISPs, starting with the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) recipients. The FCC awarded funds to ISPs in a reverse auction to deploy infrastructure to unserved/underserved areas. This included locations with no internet access or with internet speeds of 25/3 Mbps or less.

Three ISPs were awarded federal money to deploy broadband to areas that currently do not have a least 25/3 Mbps in Red River County.
- AMG Technology Investment Group LLC — adding 183 new locations and receiving $186,024
- Charter Communications — adding 1,321 new locations and receiving $3,029,118
- Windstream Services — adding 11 new locations and receiving $5,124

The areas can be viewed on CN Texas maps.
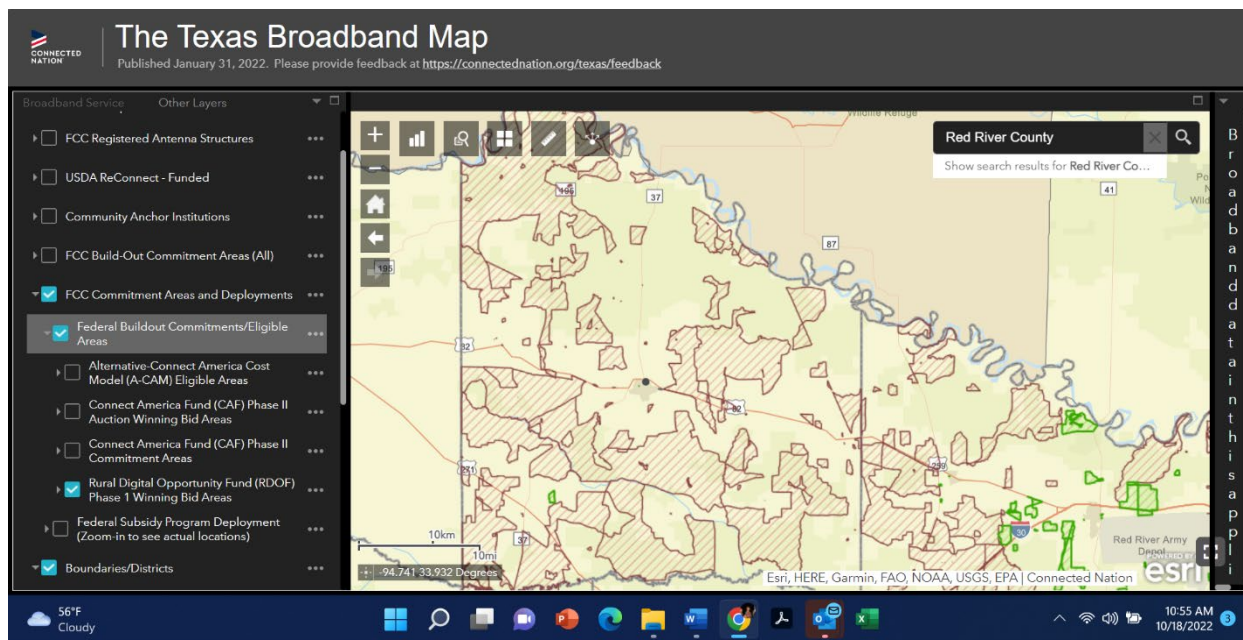
Establishing relationships with ISPs can open conversations about increasing speeds where needed and easing barriers to deployment (such as easement constraints, lease agreements, etc.). Talking with ISPs can help Red River County leaders bring attention to unserved/underserved areas, and partnerships can be developed to be inclusive of all areas. The county has assets such as towers for antennas or infrastructure, and ISPs have experience operating an internet business. Working together can benefit the community.

Current ISPs in Red River (Data published January 31, 2022, CN Texas):

Provider	Doing business-as	Technology	Website	Max. download speed (Mbps)	Max. upload speed (Mbps)
Blossom Telephone Co. Inc.	Blossom Telephone	Fiber	http:/www.blossomtel.net	100	50
Blossom Telephone Co. Inc.	Blossom Telephone	DSL	http:/www.blossomtel.net	10	1
AMG Technology Investment Group	NextLink Residential	Fixed Wireless	http://nextlinkinternet.com/	100	100
Peoples Communication Inc.	Peoples	Fixed Wireless	http://www.peoplescom.net	10	2
Suddenlink Communications	Suddenlink Communications	Cable	http://www.suddenlink.com/	400	40
T-Mobile USA Inc.	T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	http://www.t-mobile.com	25	3
Ansteorra Inc.	WiFires Communications LLC	Fixed Wireless	http://wifires.com/	72	7
Zulu Internet Inc.	Zulu Internet Inc. CenturyLink	Fixed Wireless	http://www.zuluinternet.com	15	5
Valor	Valor	DSL	https://www.windstream.com	100	100
Valor	Valor	Fiber	https://www.windstream.com	200	1.5

An example of where conversations need to take place is in the Haywood Community. One resident said, "We are in the Haywood Community in Red River County: very little update for our area. We just became people with county water. We have been asking since 1966!! We need broadband service. Thank you."

Charter Communications has some RDOF funds to serve this area, and an open dialogue with leaders and the community can make sure service is provided where needed.

Responsible parties:
City council members, Red River County Judge, county commissioners, anchor institutions, chambers, and engaged residents.

Timeline:
Building out the Technology Action Team should begin within three months of approval of Technology

Action Plan.

Resources:
[Municipal Boards: Best Practices for Adoption Technology](#)
[Smart Cities Readiness Guide](#)
[Texas Broadband Providers by County](#)
[Becoming Broadband Ready](#)
[How states are expanding broadband access: New research identifies tactics for connecting unserved communities](#)
[Connected Nation: What we do for you](#)
[US Telecom: Preparing your Community for Broadband Success](#)
[For full effect, the broadband expansion will require cooperation](#)
[Texas Broadband Development Office: Funding Resources](#)
[EDA: Economic Adjustment Assistance](#)
[Current Broadband Funding](#)
[Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#)
[Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, County Allocation](#)
[Guide to Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities in the U.S.](#)

Goal 2: Promote community adoption of broadband and workforce development by offering free digital literacy and skills training to residents.

Objective: Providing a comprehensive approach to digital literacy and skills training will promote broadband adoption throughout the county.

Digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information. It requires both cognitive and technical skills. It will also confirm that all residents have access to digital training, which promotes digital equity.
Actions:

Action 1: **Offer free digital readiness training programs to residents**. Offering digital skills training will increase adoption rates in the county, as more residents will feel comfortable with technology and understand how the devices and applications, they have access to can support their needs. The Technology Action Team should coordinate this effort and share opportunities widely, including on the technology portal/website.

Some digital training offerings may include:
- [Connected Nation, sponsored by AT&T](#). This program provides free digital training workshops to communities for a limited time. There are three programs for residents, teens, anchor institutions, and community organizations to choose from.
- American Library Association [DigitalLearn.org](#). Courses offered in Spanish and English
- [Goodwill Industries of Northeast Texas](#)

- [G-Suite](#)
- [Google for Education](#)
- [Microsoft digital literacy](#)

Offer workshops on skills local employers are looking for and community members may be interested in. Workshop topics to consider:

- **Introduction to Microsoft Office Suite** – Employers report that 27.3% of their workers are "poorly" to "fairly well" trained to match the organization's technology needs.
  - o **About**: Train employees on the basics of Microsoft Office Suite, given its ubiquitous use in companies/industries.
  - o **Who**: chambers of commerce
- **How to Teleconference** – 62.4% of employed survey participants telework in some capacity.
  - o **About**: What is telework, and why is it appealing for employees and employers?
  - o **Who:** chambers of commerce
- **Introduction to Social Media and Websites** – The survey reports that 50% of businesses do not have a website, and a high percentage of businesses do not use various digital communications tools to interact with their community.
  - o **About:** How can an online presence help businesses grow and improve productivity?
  - o **Who:** chambers of commerce
- **Telehealth 101** – Access to quality health care is essential, and modern technology offers greater access to health care providers via the internet. Eighty percent of survey respondents report they digitally interact with health care entities at least once a month.
  - o **About**: Discuss terminology commonly associated with telemedicine and the benefits of virtual health care.
  - o **Who**: Local health care facilities, including The Lennox Health Care Center
- **Online Safety Tips and Tricks** – Residents indicated they "know a little" to "I'm comfortable with this" when referring to cybersecurity on the internet.
  - o **About**: Being safe on the internet should be a priority for all. Discuss how to keep you, your family, and your information safe online.
  - o **Who**: Clarksville County Police or Sheriff's Department
- **Effective Online Learning and Teaching Strategies** – In Red River County, K–12 schools report that 45% of classroom instruction is traditional and 23.5% is web-facilitated. Blended learning techniques are crucial to incorporating effective teaching methods.
  - o **About**: Discuss what teachers and students can do to maximize the benefits of online learning.
  - o **Who:** ISDs

Action 2: Encourage local organizations and anchor institutions to partner for digital literacy and skills training.

There are community-based organizations and anchor institutions that have space and/or resources to host residents for these trainings. Many of these organizations are already providing some type of

technical support to their clients as part of other programs and offerings. These potential partners include:

- Clarksville Public Library. Many people depend on the library for internet services, which has become a vital anchor institution for promoting digital literacy.
- Workforce Solutions of Northeast Texas
- Red River County Chamber of Commerce
- The HUB Community Center

Responsible parties:
County judge, Technology Action Team, chamber, nonprofits/for-profits, public libraries, school superintendents

Timeline:
Digital literacy and workforce development programs are important now. Classes should be offered by Spring 2023. The curriculum should be reviewed and updated every three to four months.

Resources:
Libraries to Achieve Digital Equity for All
Improving the Quality of Life in Rural America with Broadband Internet
Implementing Productive Teleworking with Business-Quality Mobile Communications
The complete guide to digital skills
Digital Learn: Use a computer to do almost anything!
Promoting digital literacy for adult learners: a resource guide
Grow with Google
GCFLearnFree.org® program
National Digital Inclusion Alliance
5 Reasons Why Libraries are Essential to Have
First-Ever National Study: Millions of People Rely on Library Computers for Employment, Health, and Education (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)
Senior Connect: Connecting Seniors in Central Texas
Plainfield Public Library to Offer Computer Literacy Training
Closing the digital skills gap: Opportunity Las Cruces
Eau Claire County: County Stars free digital literacy program
It Takes a Village: Solving the Broadband Adoption Problem in Rural America
Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas

Goal 3: Provide resources for low-cost broadband options and increase free Wi-Fi services in public areas.

Objective: Remove barriers to internet adoption by providing free Wi-Fi in public places and information about low-cost options for residents to close the Digital Divide.
In Red River County, 24.5% of survey participants do not have an internet connection because service

is too expensive. Of those who do have a connection, 59.4% say they are dissatisfied with their service. Diving deeper into the statistics, 54% of those dissatisfied with service say cost is a factor. Other reasons for dissatisfaction are unreliable connections and slow speeds. With an aggressive strategic plan to connect the county to reliable and affordable broadband, Red River County can position the region to increase economic growth and educational opportunities by addressing these concerns with providers, anchor institutions, and others, and offering solutions.

Actions:

Action 1: **Promote programs that help residents overcome the affordability barrier to broadband adoption.** Red River County should collaborate with community leaders and institutions to publicly promote programs and opportunities designed to reduce the cost of broadband service. This can be done by sending notices out with the water bill, posting notices in the newspaper or monthly school newsletters, discussing programs at Commissioners' Court or City Hall meetings, or advertising affordability programs at frequently visited community buildings and businesses.

Below are some programs and resources that could be promoted to residents:

- **Resources for locating affordable internet service or computers:** Online resources can help Red River County residents identify local and national providers who offer special, low-cost services for vulnerable populations, older adults, and low-income families with children. Such resources include EveryoneOn, which helps residents locate low-cost internet services and affordable computers by ZIP code and need, based on their participation in assistance programs.
- **Information about low-cost internet services offered by providers:** In Red River County, AT&T offers the *Access from AT&T* program for $10 per month or less based on the maximum speed available at the subscriber's address, with speeds up to 25Mbps. Spectrum (Charter) service once made available in the county offers *Spectrum Internet Assist* for about $20 a month for up to 30 Mbps. *This is subject to household eligibility and service availability at a specific address. Prices are subject to change, so residents are advised to check with their providers.*
- **State and federal low-cost programs:** Two critical programs offer discounts for broadband to eligible households:
  - **Lifeline program:** This is a government assistance program run by the Public Utility Commission of Texas that provides a discount to qualifying low-income customers who subscribe to voice telephone service or broadband internet service. The Lifeline discount for qualifying low-income customers may be up to $12.75 per month ($3.50 state discount and $9.25 federal Lifeline discount), depending on the services a resident subscribes to and their eligibility. Lifeline service is non-transferable and is limited to one discount per household.
  - **The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP):** This program is run by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to help low-income households pay for internet service and connected devices such as a laptop or tablets.

- A complete list of Texas providers offering ACP discounts
- A full list of providers listed by city, state, or ZIP code that offer this service

Action 2: Make public Wi-Fi locations available throughout Red River County. The Technology Action Team should document and promote an inventory of public Wi-Fi locations in the community, focusing on institutions frequented by residents. This can be done by collaborating with community anchor institutions, such as public libraries, to identify the number of Wi-Fi hotspots and public computers available. Additionally, compiling community hotspot availability in public places, such as parks and other recreational centers, and developing plans to create hotspots in areas where people attend recreational activities, such as tourist attractions, can significantly expand public access. A notable statistic from the survey reports 83.3% of business respondents do not offer free public Wi-Fi.

Action 3: Convene community anchor institutions such as libraries, community centers, and senior centers that host public computing centers to discuss their significant role in providing open, public internet access to residents in downtown areas or other public spaces. This is a simple, straightforward way to encourage the community to participate in bridging the Digital Divide. Other opportunities may exist with religious facilities, schools, local government offices, RV parks, restaurants, or various social service providers that offer services in English and Spanish.

Responsible parties:
Technology Action Team, librarians, commissioners, county judge, local chambers, churches, chambers, and providers

Timeline:
An inventory of library broadband offerings and free community public broadband should be performed within three months of acceptance of this plan.

Resources:
The Affordable Connectivity Program
Lifeline Program designed to help with monthly phone and internet costs
Ideas to reduce your monthly billing
FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel responds to Rep. Mrvan on improving veterans' access to broadband
Should cities offer free Wi-Fi?
How one city provided free Wi-Fi to their businesses
Keeping Communities Connected spotlights creative library broadband services during the pandemic
Filling the gap: Wi-Fi hotspots for a rural community
Supporting Technology-Based Economic Development is key to EDA's Mission

Goal 4: Improve healthcare outcomes by developing a vibrant telehealth network in Red River County.

Objective: Ensure Red River County residents can participate in and benefit from advances in telehealth should be a priority of the Technology Action Team.

With the advances in broadband access and the innovations over the past two years to expand access to telehealth, healthcare providers have many opportunities to use technology to improve efficiency and outcomes. Increasing access to telehealth improves short- and long-term health outcomes for residents. This is especially important in rural areas, where the distance to health care facilities and the availability of appointments can be a barrier to preventative and routine care.

Actions:

Action 1: **Explore school telehealth programs to provide healthcare and testing for common ailments such as strep, flu testing, and COVID-19.** Providing telehealth opportunities in schools promotes health care for all students, improves attendance, and care can be provided with or without insurance. Students are already in school buildings daily and can easily access this opportunity. Currently, only Clarksville ISD subscribes to a student telehealth service – Goodside Health. Goodside Health allows immediate access to physical and behavioral health care via the internet. It is offered free of charge to the students and endorsed by Superior HealthPlan.

Action 2: **Convene a countywide discussion on how telehealth can be implemented in public spaces.** In Clarksville, Windstream has deployed fiber to several anchor institutions and the downtown area. Telehealth offerings can be supported in the city library and The HUB Community Center, among other community spaces. Making available public telehealth stations allows residents to receive medical attention when a physical doctor visit is not possible or necessary.

Libraries and other nonprofits are expanding their services, often including those that are not considered part of their core mission, to meet the needs of the communities they serve. There are successful examples of libraries making a dramatic difference in their communities by providing a safe place for residents to seek telehealth care. An article entitled Public Libraries Tackle Telehealth Challenges provides examples and resources on how to get started.

CN Texas also offers many open-source resources and information about telehealth, including a five-part webinar, research papers, and blogs for communities to use.

Superior HealthPlan provides a "Teladoc" service to its members.

Responsible parties:
County and city leadership, libraries, community health organizations, Red River County school districts: Avery Independent School District; Clarksville Independent School District (Clarksville ISD is contracted with Goodside Health, but it has not deployed the program to date); Detroit Independent School District; Rivercrest Independent School District

Timeline:

Telehealth services should be implemented in the school districts within three months of acceptance of the Technology Action Plan. Community meetings should take place when an expert from the telehealth field can be scheduled to attend.

Resources:

[Find a provider by SuperiorHealth Plan](#)
[Clinics near Red River County](#)
[Pottsboro Area Library](#)
[NBC News Think piece by Connected Nation](#)
[Michigan telehealth](#)