



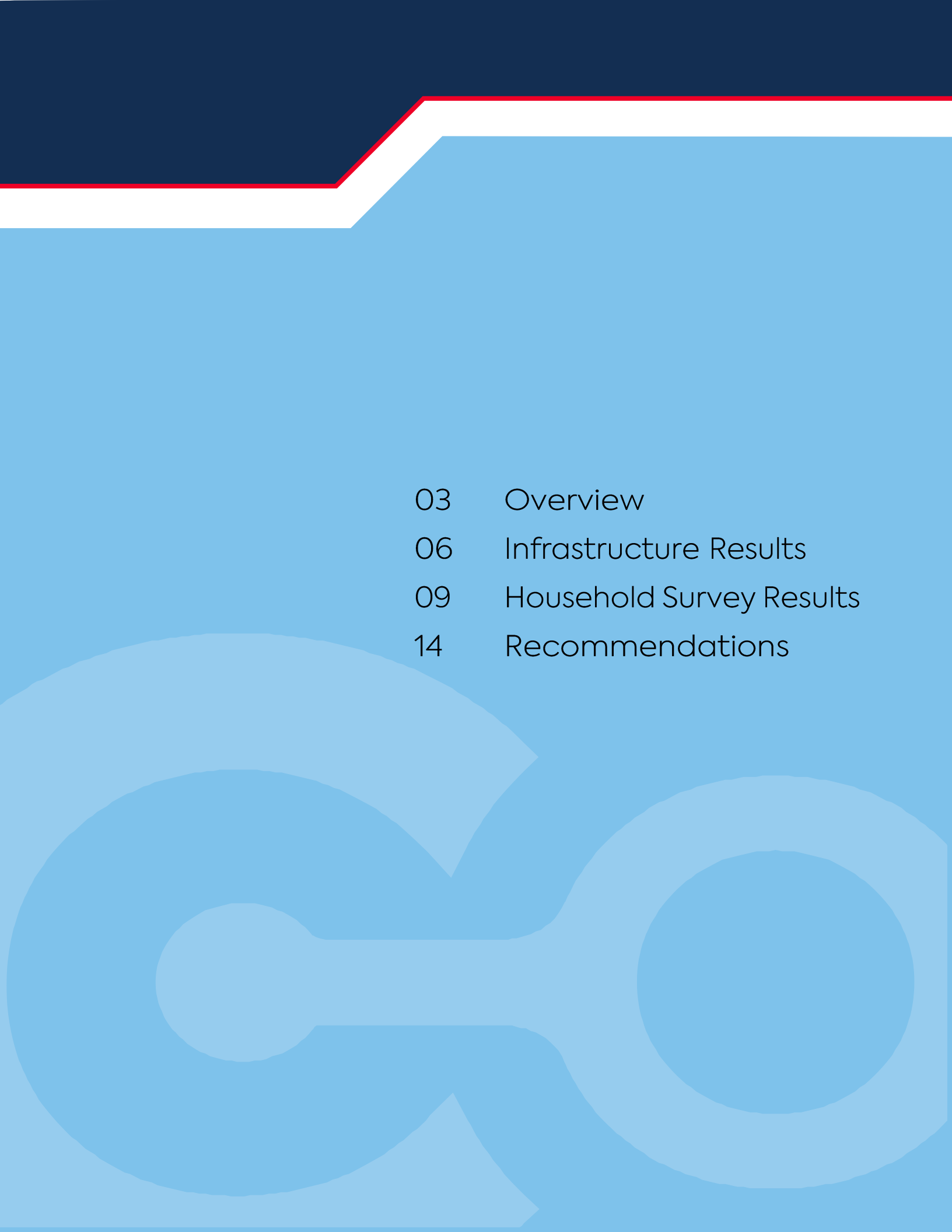
Connected
A CONNECTED NATION Initiative

Addressing Your Community's Unique Needs

Wise County, Texas Executive Summary

May 2025

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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, Wise 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 most significant impact toward improving broadband access, adoption, and usage across every local sector.

Pursuant to this goal, between January and April 2025, Wise County conducted a comprehensive survey of broadband technology access and adoption across the community, collecting responses from local 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 Wise 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](#).

WISE COUNTY, TEXAS QUICK FACTS

Population
68,632

Households
26,319

Median Household Income
\$91,920

Poverty Rate
9.2%

Adults with a Bachelor's Degree
or Higher
23.4%

Hispanic or Latino
20%

Households with
Broadband Access¹
99.5%

Source: [Wise County U.S. Census Profile](#)

¹The current FCC definition of broadband is a minimum of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload. These data are derived from the [FCC National Broadband Map](#) – with numbers as of June 2024.



28.6%

of households in
Wise County
report subscribing
to fixed internet
service



Nearly 3 out of 4 households surveyed (**71.4%**) reported subscribing to mobile broadband; of those, **20%** use their mobile internet as a primary or secondary connection to go online.

99.5% of households in Wise County have access to internet service at speeds needed to run many modern applications (100 Mbps downstream and 20 Mbps upstream). Statewide, **91.9%** of households have internet access at these speeds.

Households in Wise County have fewer internet devices than other Connected communities for most categories – including **0.45** desktops and **1.3** tablets per household on average.

Most households surveyed (**80%**) reported being satisfied with their current internet service.

Over 3 out of 5 households surveyed (**64.3%**) reported an interest in additional internet options at home.



Infrastructure Results



According to data from the FCC's National Broadband Map, as of June 2024, 99.5% of Wise County households have access to broadband of at least 100/20 Mbps – the current definition of broadband set forth by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Broadband service in Wise County is distributed throughout the county.

Wise County, under the leadership of County Judge J.D. Clark, has built partnerships to expand broadband infrastructure in the county. In 2022, the county entered into a public-private partnership with Nextlink Internet and Tarana to connect more than 65,000 residents. The innovative partnership [“combined fiber and Tarana’s next-generation fixed wireless access technology”](#) to bring connectivity to the region. The county supported these efforts with a \$1.3 million allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funding. This partnership also brought gigabit fiber connections to 20 county offices.

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

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE QUICK FACTS

Unserved Households (100/20 Mbps)
132

Households Served (10/1 Mbps)
99.9%

Households Served (25/3 Mbps)
99.9%

Households Served (100/20 Mbps)
99.5%

Households Served (1,000/100 Mbps)
37.5%

Broadband data released by the FCC for their [National Broadband Map](#).

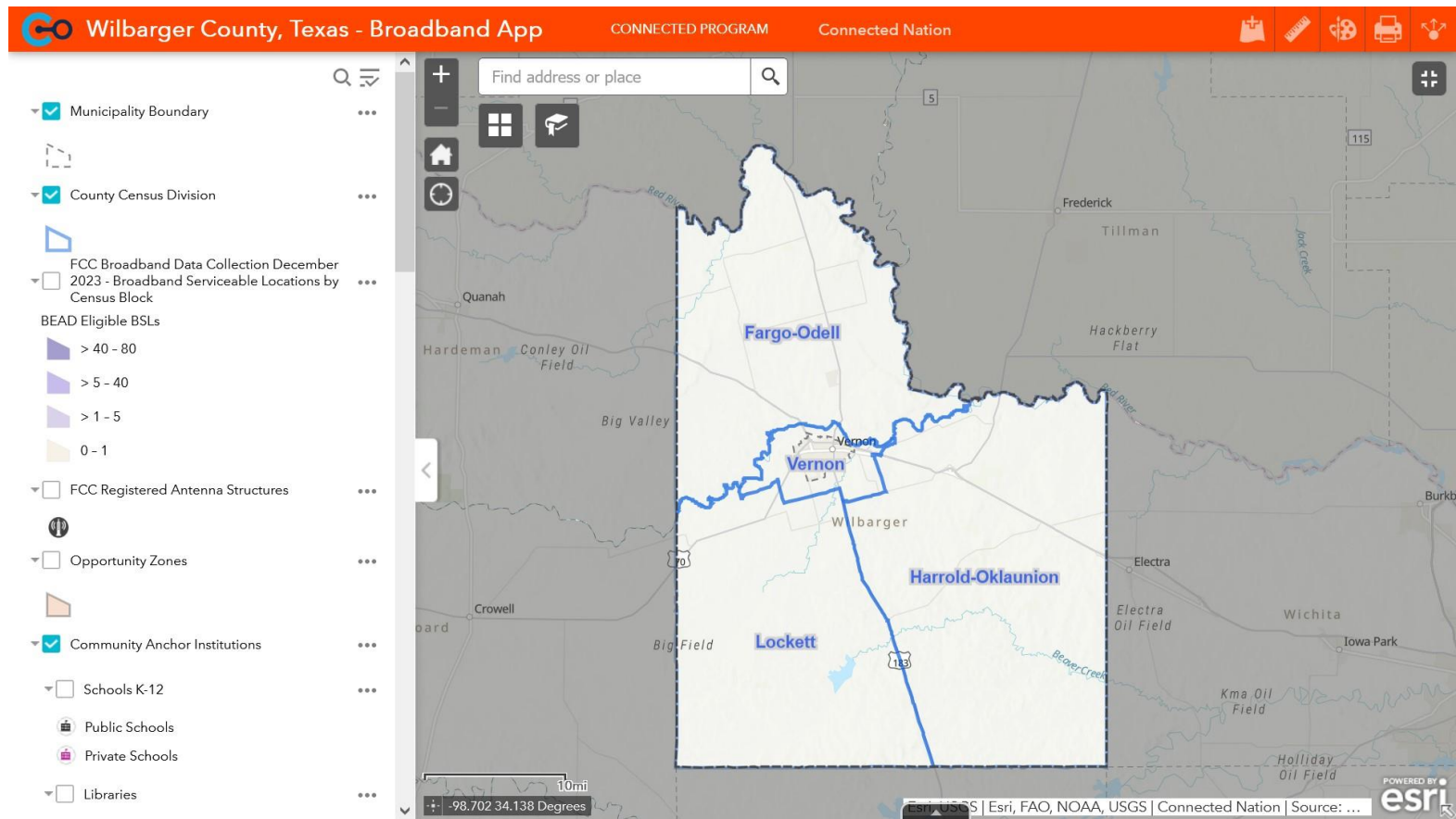
PROVIDER	TECHNOLOGY	MAXIMUM DOWNLOAD SPEED (Mbps)	MAXIMUM UPLOAD SPEED (Mbps)
AMA TechTel	Fixed Wireless	100	20
AT&T	Fixed Wireless	25	3
AT&T	Copper	75	5
AT&T	Fiber	5,000	5,000
Brightspeed	Copper	80	5
Brightspeed	Fiber	940	940
Centric Fiber	Fiber	1,000	1,000
Comcell	Fixed Wireless	50	5
Frontier	Fiber	5,000	5,000
Nextlink	Fixed Wireless	500	20
Nextlink	Fiber	5,000	5,000

Wise County Infrastructure



Open Infra	Fiber	10,000	10,000
Spectrum	Fiber	1,000	500
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25	3
Verizon	Fixed Wireless	50	5
Vyve Broadband	Cable	1,000	50

Accurate maps are the first step in understanding the status of broadband infrastructure in Wise County and statewide. The map below depicts wired and licensed fixed wireless broadband coverage at speeds of 100/20 Mbps from the FCC Broadband Map, which is also available [here](#).





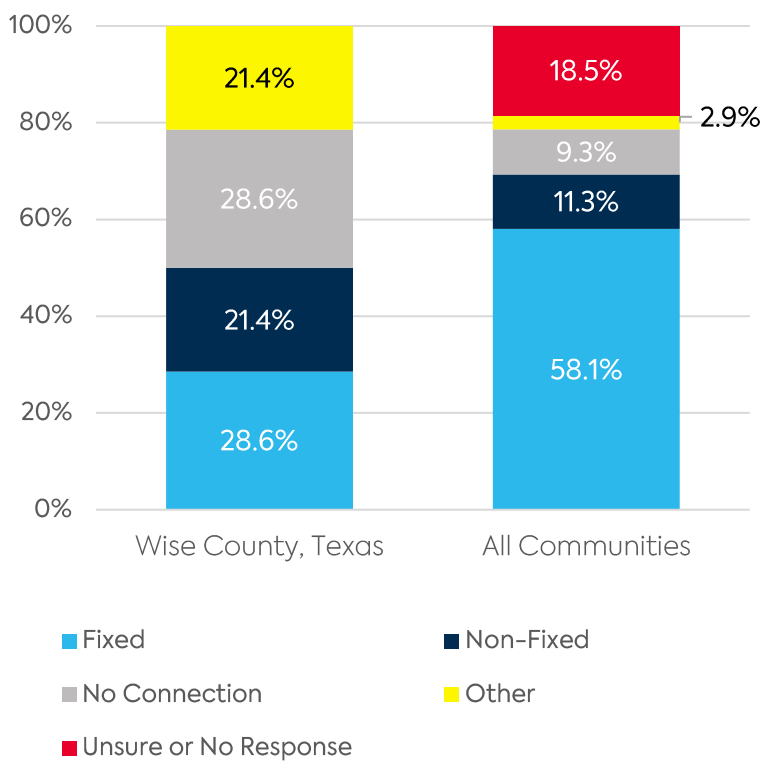
Household Survey Results

Household Survey Results



The following section provides an overview of results from a broadband survey conducted in Wise County between January and April 2025. Altogether, CN Texas received 14 survey responses from households across the county; respondents provided insights into their internet connectivity or lack thereof. Data from Wise County are compared with data from hundreds of other rural Connected communities across Michigan, Oklahoma, and Texas to benchmark and identify areas for improvement.

Home Broadband Adoption



ADOPTION

In Wise County, 28.6% of households that took the survey subscribe to fixed broadband service delivered via cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology. Another 1 in 5 households (21.4%) subscribe to non-fixed broadband service. This leaves 21.4% of households who answered “other,” and 28.6% who do not have a home internet connection.

Household Survey Results

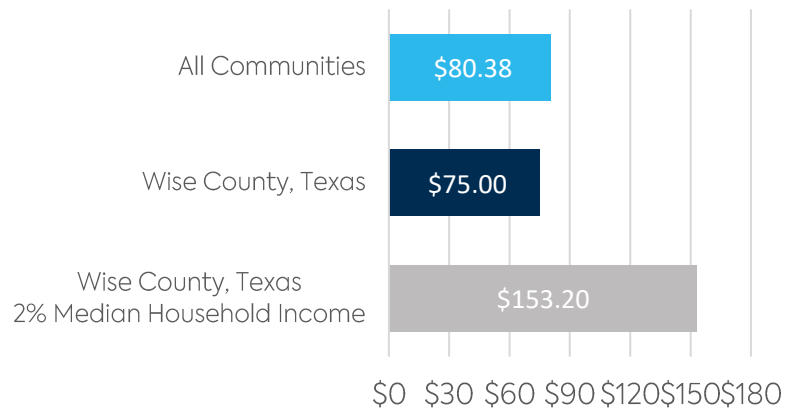


CONNECTION DETAILS

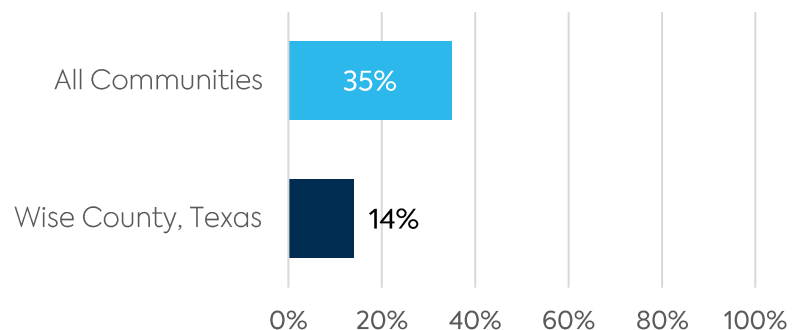
Two percent of monthly income is a recognized standard for measuring the affordability of a home internet connection. Respondents indicate that, on average, their internet connection costs about \$75 per month. This is less than the monthly cost paid in other communities (\$80.38). Two percent of the median household income in Wise County is \$153.20 per month.

The FCC currently defines broadband as an internet connection with a download speed of at least 100 Mbps and an upload speed of at least 20 Mbps. On average, respondents indicate that their connection's advertised download speed is 88.2 Mbps – lower than the standard for broadband. Only 14% of internet-connected households surveyed subscribe to download speeds faster than 100 Mbps.

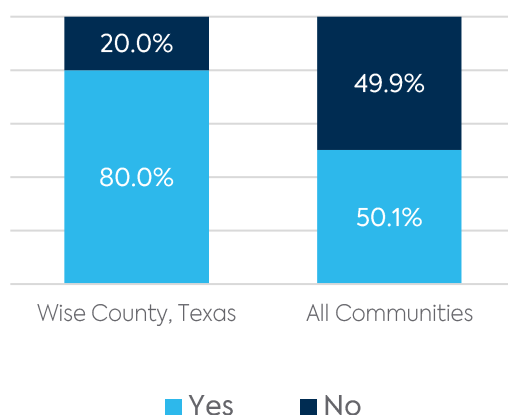
Average Monthly Cost



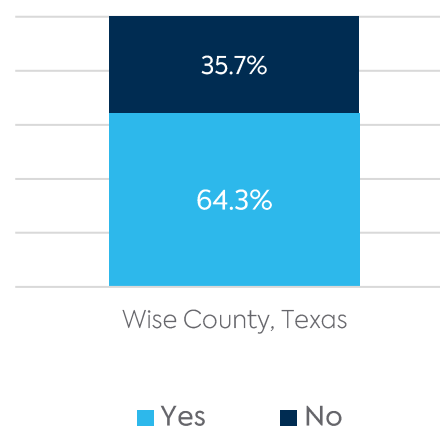
Percentage of Respondents with At Least 100/20 Mbps



Does Your Internet Meet Your Needs?



Are You Interested in More Choices at Home?



Household Survey Results



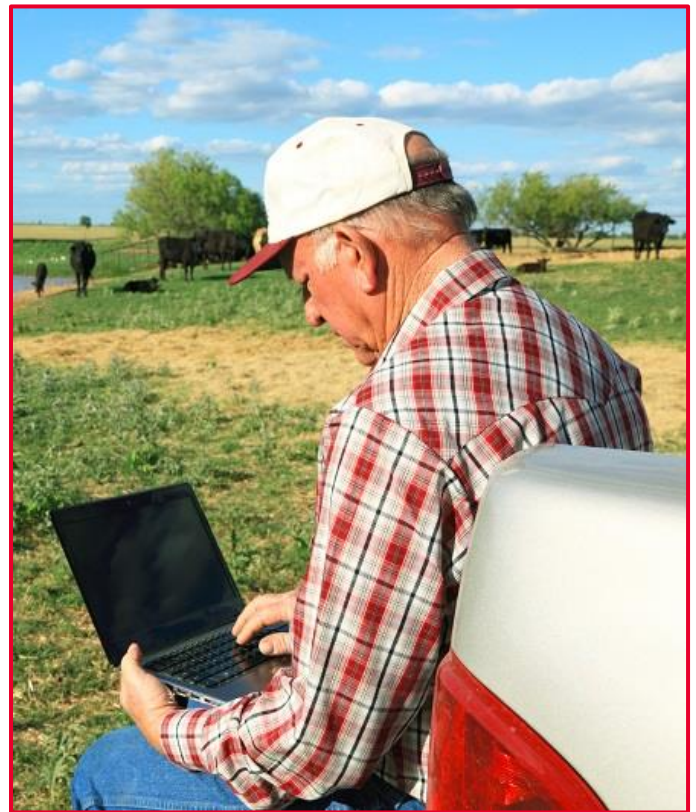
Competition provides residents with service choices, allowing households to switch providers if their current service does not meet their needs. Most responding households (80%) indicate that their internet connection meets their needs, a higher rate of satisfaction than among households in other communities (50.1%).

Over 3 in 5 respondents (64.3%) indicated they were interested in additional internet choices for their homes.

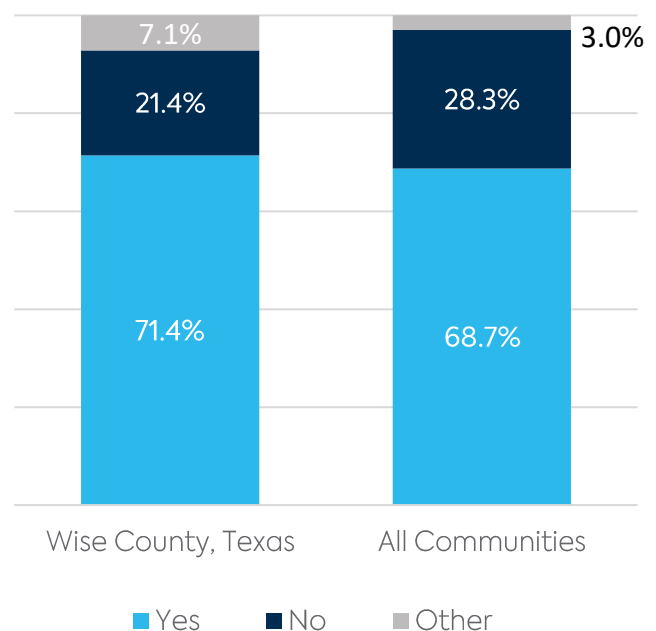
MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

Just under 3 out of 4 households (71.4%) report that they subscribe to mobile internet service that they access via a smartphone or similar mobile device. This is slightly more than what is reported in other Connected communities (68.7%).

Additionally, 20% 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





Recommendations



The following recommendations are presented to assist Wise County in expanding broadband access and adoption throughout the community.

A residential survey was carried out in Wise County between January and April 2025 to assess the connectivity, affordability, and general technology needs of the county's residents. This qualitative data collection effort informed the analysis and recommendations in this plan. Additionally, Connected Nation Texas (CN Texas) hosted two days of digital skills workshops at the Decatur Public Library, which were free and open to the public. The classes engaged residents in digital skill-building exercises and empowered safe, online learning. CN Texas personnel also met with local citizens, nonprofit staff, and an internet service provider working in the area to understand connectivity challenges.

Key issues that arose during the digital skills workshops included the current costs and reliability of local internet service. Many residents shared they feel they are paying too much for service that doesn't deliver what they need and that when connection issues arise, it can take days or even weeks to get technical support to their property. These qualitative conversations, alongside the quantitative data analysis, provide a robust picture of connectivity challenges and opportunities in the county.

The following recommendations combine data from the countywide survey, online research, and direct community feedback to advance broadband programming and initiatives in the community. Given the successful public-private partnership to expand broadband infrastructure and access in the county, described in the summary above, these recommendations focus on encouraging adoption and use of high-speed internet by county residents and on continuing to find innovative partnerships and solutions to address connectivity. Increasing broadband adoption and use will allow the community to reap the benefits of the initial investment into high-speed broadband infrastructure and fulfill the vision that began with the expansion of broadband access.

Goal 1: Continue to expand strategic partnerships to increase broadband availability and reliability in Wise County.

Objective: Ensure all residents have access to the internet and speeds that meet their needs for work, education, telehealth, and quality of life purposes.

Wise County has made significant investments to ensure the county has improved broadband infrastructure. This has increased broadband availability in the area. Broadband access is necessary to participate in the online world, but it is often not the only barrier residents are facing. Wise County should continue to explore partnerships and opportunities to get more residents online. It is important for Wise County to continue to track broadband developments at the state and federal levels for additional opportunities to increase broadband access, adoption, and use.

Action 1 – Partner with local nonprofits, community anchor institutions, and internet service providers (ISPs) to promote low-cost broadband programs.



One of the main barriers people face when getting online is the affordability of internet service. While the physical connection may be available, Wise County should also consider the cost of high-speed internet service, including the equipment and devices needed to go online. The county should work with community leaders and institutions to publicly promote programs and opportunities designed to reduce the cost of broadband service. Wise County residents noted affordability as a key barrier, especially for those outside the city limits. One resident stated, “I pay too much for service that doesn’t meet expectations.”

Below are some programs and resources that are available to residents.

- **Resources to locate affordable internet service or computers:** Online databases and programs are available to identify local and national providers who offer special low-cost services for vulnerable populations, older adults, and low-income families with children.
 - EveryoneOn (<https://www.everyoneon.org/>) is one such program that helps residents locate low-cost internet services and affordable computers by ZIP Code and by need, based on their participation in assistance programs.
- **State and federal low-cost programs:**
 - [Lifeline](#) is a federal program administered through the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Universal Service Administrative Co. that lowers the monthly cost of phone or internet services for eligible consumers. Consumers can get up to \$9.25 off the cost of phone, internet, or bundled services each month. Households can qualify based on income or participation in federal or tribal assistance programs.

ISPs often offer their own low-cost options or subsidized programs to consumers at a greatly reduced cost. Local advocacy for internet affordability, using Wise County-specific data, will be essential to ensuring residents can continue to access online information and virtual resources.

Action 2 – Maintain open communication and positive relations with internet service providers (ISPs) working in the county.

ISPs are key partners for communities looking to expand broadband access. Wise County has strong relationships with ISPs, including Nextlink Internet, which has partnered with the county to expand broadband infrastructure. Checking in regularly with ISPs allows community leaders to stay abreast of construction and expansion progress or changes in plans, to identify challenges they are facing, and to communicate community goals and objectives. This open communication allows ISPs to better understand community needs and for communities to better understand the obstacles and barriers ISPs face. During CN Texas’s qualitative conversations, residents noted that, while service was reliable in the city, it was less reliable in more rural parts of the county. One resident described how it took multiple weeks to get a service provider out to their property to fix a broken connection, leaving them disconnected from the internet.

Action 3 – Explore options for expanding access to public Wi-Fi in locations residents frequent.

Wise County can partner with local businesses, community anchor institutions, and other government



entities to make public Wi-Fi available. The county could compile a listing of locations with publicly available Wi-Fi and post it on county websites so residents know where they could go to access the internet. The county could also post locations for any available public computing spaces.

Resources

- [The FCC High-Cost program: CAF A-CAM](#)
- [The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund \(RDOF\)](#)
- [Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Allocation by County](#)
- [ARPA SLFRE, Final Rule](#)
- [Broadband Development Office Funding Programs](#)
- [BroadbandUSA: Federal Funding Guide](#)
- [Guide to Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities in the U.S.](#)
- [Lifeline Program](#)

Goal 2: Support the advancement of digital skills for Wise County residents.

Objective: Partner with libraries and community organizations to provide digital literacy training.

Broadband connects people to the world and opens the door to opportunity. Where there is broadband, there is development, achievement, and innovation. In rural communities, broadband looks like economic development, greater education opportunity, advancement in agriculture and farming, connection to telehealth services, infrastructure improvement, and general technological advancements. To effectively engage online, an individual must have the digital skills to safely navigate the internet. Many local and national organizations and institutions offer digital training and literacy workshops to the public for free or reduced costs in pursuit of digital opportunity for all. Making these programs widely and frequently available throughout Wise County will increase engagement, adoption, and use of the internet.

CN Texas recently partnered with the Decatur Public Library to bring digital skills workshops to the county. All participants received a certificate of completion at the end of each class. Additionally, all participants and the library received a link to the online curriculum to further their digital learning. This engagement is a prime example of programming that community anchor institutions can offer to residents, often free, in partnership with local and national organizations. Continuing this work is a priority for the library and should be supported.

Action 1 – Identify and convene community leaders to be broadband champions.

Broadband access and adoption are critical to many parts of a community's development. Sectors as diverse as education, health care, economic development, and public safety all have a shared interest in ensuring that residents can successfully navigate online platforms. Bringing together a broadband taskforce and regularly convening the group to discuss the challenges and opportunities



they are seeing from their perspective, as well as to identify areas of collaboration and learning, can help meet broadband adoption goals.

Action 2 – Identify or develop additional curriculum for free community workshops.

Community organizations should continue offering digital skills workshops in partnership with local and regional organizations. Classes can be offered at local facilities, such as the school gym, library, or the community center, and be advertised through the local media. Classes should promote safe online activity and increase digital engagement. The more the community engages online, the more residents will reap the benefits of a digital lifestyle.

Workshop topics might include:

- How to teleconference
- Cybersecurity 101
- Microsoft Office skills
- Intro to social media and website building
- Telehealth basics

Action 2- Partner with community stakeholders for workshop execution.

Many nonprofits and community-based organizations are providing digital skills training to the people they serve as part of the work of fulfilling their mission. Examples could include a health clinic teaching people how to use its online patient portal, the school district training parents on how to navigate its parent portal to receive messages and check their students' grades, or the library training residents to apply for jobs online. Bringing these entities together to share resources and to strategize on how to best serve the community will allow for collaboration. Collectively, community stakeholders could partner to host digital training sessions, with different organizations contributing space, devices, or skilled facilitation.

There are many resources online that offer curriculum and content. CN Texas provided curriculum and materials to the Decatur Library when it offered in-person training. This curriculum can be used as is or customized further to meet the needs of residents. Additionally, CN Texas offers Teens Teach Tech, powered by AT&T, a program where teens receive training and are empowered to provide digital skills training and digital navigation services to adults in their community. The teens are also eligible for financial incentives and community service credit through the program. If interested, please reach out.

Resources

Digital Literacy

- [Connected Nation Digital Literacy Workshops](#)
- [Digital Learn – Free courses to learn anything about computers](#)
- [Digital Literacy Curriculum for K-12](#)



- [Free Applied Digital Skills – Google for Education](#)
- [Live, Virtual Classes for Seniors](#)
- [AARP Joins Nonprofit to teach tech to older adults](#)
- [The complete guide to digital skills](#)
- [Grow with Google](#)

Cybersecurity

- [Cybersecurity courses](#)
- [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency – Cyber Resource Hub](#)
- [Connected Nation Cybersecurity Workshops](#)

Goal 3: Pursue opportunities to support Wise County residents and businesses using broadband and related technologies.

Objective: Bring additional resources to Wise County to support residents' adoption and use of the internet.

Broadband spurs development at the individual and community level – expanding access expands opportunity. Helping the community understand how broadband adoption can help them meet their personal needs and goals, as well as support the community as a whole, can increase adoption and allow the investments made into broadband infrastructure to multiply.

Action 1 – Showcase the local impact of increased broadband use in the community.

Increasing broadband adoption can have significant economic development impact for the county and can bring personal benefits to users. A community outreach initiative highlighting the benefits of broadband adoption can help illuminate important use cases and instill confidence in local residents, allowing them to gain the skills needed to navigate the online world. A training for small business owners could help them build an online presence and sell their goods to people across the country. The county could advertise all the local government services residents can access online and promote easy ways to engage with local government through technology. Creative ways to highlight the benefits of being online will encourage more residents to adopt broadband and realize the potential of being more engaged in the digital world.

Action 2 – Pursue state and federal funding for broadband advancement.

The infusion of state and federal funds into broadband expansion is an opportunity for Texas communities to support ISPs and other entities who are looking to expand infrastructure and programs that support robust broadband delivery. Wise County should explore the best ways to compete for these dollars, as appropriate.

In addition, other funding sources promise opportunities for broadband, such as the U.S. Economic



Development Association or U.S. Department of Agriculture. Funding guides have been linked in the resource section. Capitalizing on today's once-in-a-generation funding opportunities will be paramount to ensuring Wise County residents have faster, more reliable broadband for years to come.

Action 3 – Pursue philanthropic grants to advance local community development using broadband technologies (e.g., workforce development, telehealth, digital literacy, etc.).

Many Texas and national philanthropic organizations are supporting this work. Wise County should evaluate these grant programs and make strategic decisions to apply for funding to advance broadband access, adoption, and use in the county.

Wise County has been allocated grant-writing funds in conjunction with the countywide Connected Engagement program. The goals and actions outlined in this document provide the framework for county leaders to prepare for and pursue applicable funding opportunities and program advancements designed to close the Digital Divide in Wise County. Through countywide partnerships and collaborative efforts, the community can advocate and provide equitable, affordable, and reliable broadband access for all residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions. Texas Rural Funders maintains an online hub of grant resources. The community may consider utilizing this resource to identify a funding program that best meets their needs.

Resources

- [Texas Rural Funders Latest Grants](#)