Connected
A CONNECTED NATION Initiative

Addressing Your Community's Unique Needs

Archer County, Texas
Executive Summary

July 2023

CONNECTED NATION

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Archer 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, Archer 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 January and April 2023, Archer County conducted a comprehensive survey of broadband technology access and adoption across the community that collected 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 Archer 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.

ARCHER COUNTY, TEXAS QUICK FACTS
Population 8,560
Households 3,371
Median Household Income $67,083
Poverty Rate 11.5%
Adults with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher 22.5%
Hispanic or Latino 8.7%
Households with Broadband Access[1] 88.34%

Source: Archer County U.S. 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 the FCC National Broadband Map – with numbers as of June 2022.

71.4%

of households in Archer County report subscribing to fixed internet service

All responding households (100%) said they would like to have improved or additional options for home internet service.

76.4% of households in Archer County have access to internet service at speeds needed to run many modern applications (100 Mbps downstream and 20 Mbps upstream). Statewide, 86.59% of households have internet access at these speeds.

2 out of 5 employed survey respondents in Archer County (40%) report teleworking in some capacity. Of those, 50% telework every day.

More than 2 out of 5 households surveyed (61.5%) report being dissatisfied with their current internet service. The top reasons for dissatisfaction are slow speeds, unreliable connections, and high prices.

Archer County Infrastructure

According to data from the FCC's National Broadband Map, as of December 2022, 95.54% of Archer County households have access to fixed broadband of at least 25/3 Mbps – the current definition of broadband set forth by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Broadband service in Archer County is distributed throughout the county.

Below is the list of internet service providers (ISPs) in Archer 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) **150** |
| Households Served (10/1 Mbps) **96.65%** |
| Households Served (25/3 Mbps) **95.54%** |
| Households Served (50/5 Mbps) **93.29%** |
| Households Served (100/20 Mbps) **76.39%** |

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

| PROVIDER	TECHNOLOGY	MAXIMUM DOWNLOAD SPEED (Mbps)	MAXIMUM UPLOAD SPEED (Mbps)
Brazos Communications	Copper	25	3
Brazos Communications	Fiber	1000	500
Charter Communications	Cable	1000	35
Comcell	Fiber	1000	1000
Community Telephone	Fiber	1000	1000
Rise Broadband	Fixed Wireless	25	5
Santa Rosa Telephone Cooperative	Copper	50	5
Santa Rosa Telephone Cooperative	Fiber	1000	1000
TGM Pinnacle Network Solutions	Fixed Wireless	50	10
T-Mobile	Fixed Wireless	25	3
United States Cellular Corporation	Fixed Wireless	25	3
Valor Telecommunications of Texas LP	Copper	96	52

The first step in understanding the status of broadband infrastructure in Archer County and statewide is having accurate maps. The first map shown below depicts wired and licensed fixed wireless broadband coverage at speeds of 25/3 Mbps from the FCC Broadband Map, also available [here](#).
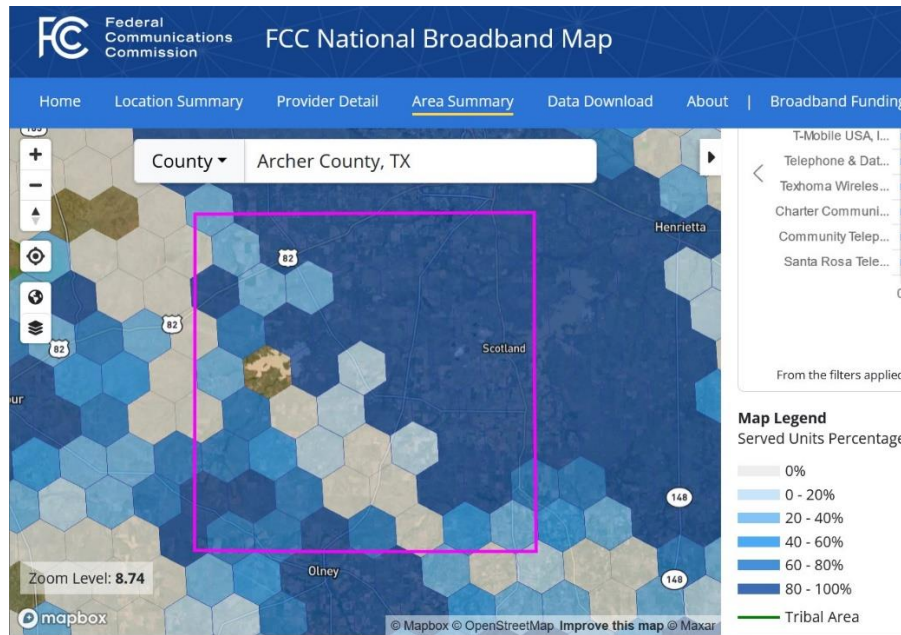
Accordingly, CN Texas also develops a variety of broadband maps at the state and county levels. The map below illustrates BEAD Broadband Serviceable Locations at the census-tract level; darker colors indicate that more locations are eligible for service expansion. Data shown on this map are derived from a combination of direct ISP outreach and data collection, FCC broadband data as of June 2022, and independent research conducted by CN Texas.
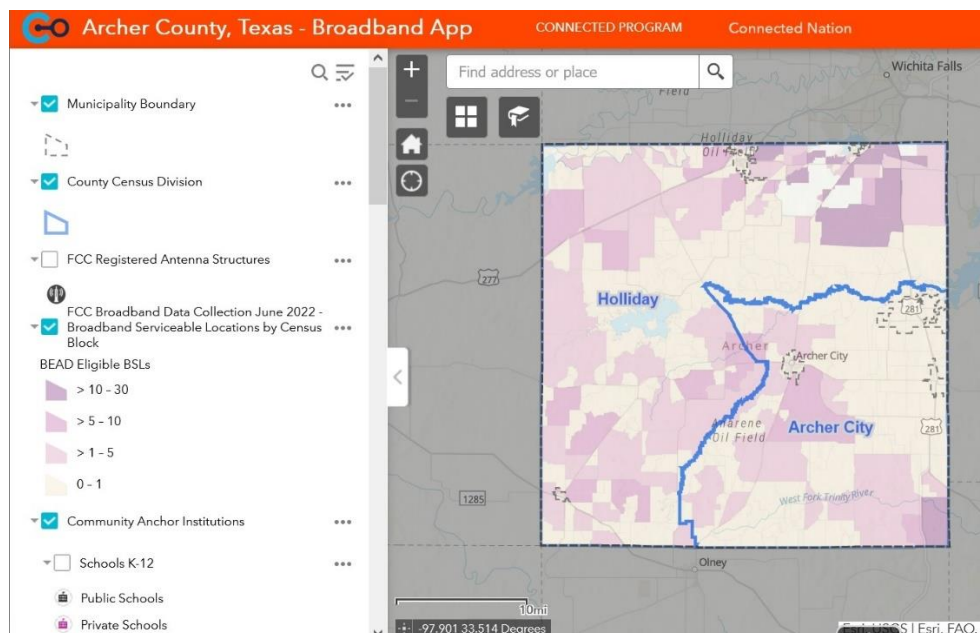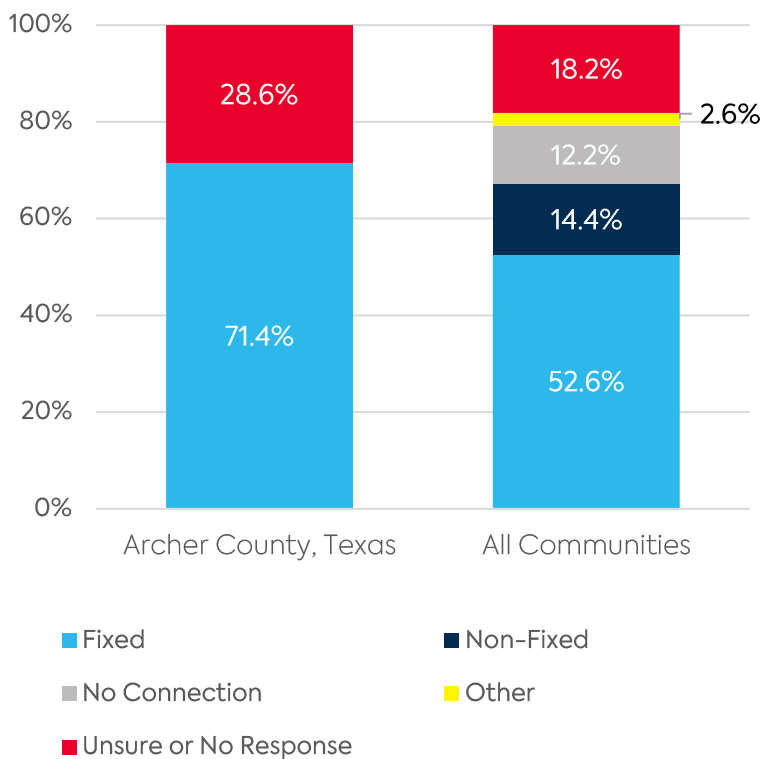
Household Survey Results

T he following section provides an overview of results from a broadband survey conducted in Archer County between January and April 2023. Altogether, CN Texas received 14 survey responses from households across the county; respondents provided insights into their internet connectivity or lack thereof. Data from Archer County are compared to data from hundreds of other rural Connected communities across Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Pennsylvania to benchmark and identify areas for improvement.

Home Broadband Adoption

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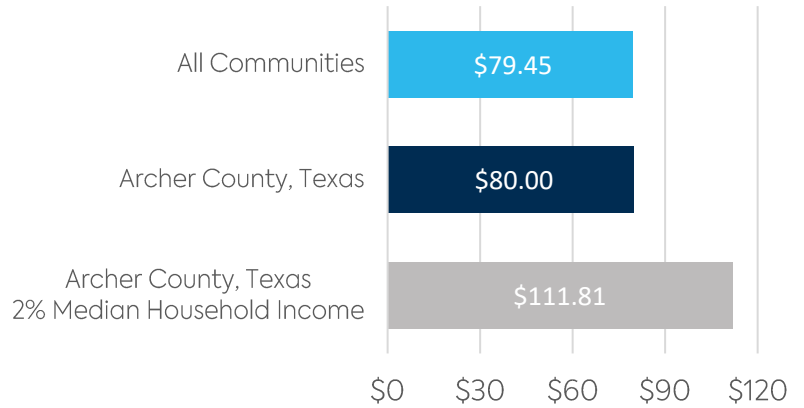- No Connection
- Other
- Unsure or No Response

ADOPTION

In Archer County, 71.4% of households that took the survey subscribe to fixed broadband service delivered via a cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology. The remaining 28.6% of survey respondents either report being unsure of what service they have or provide no response.
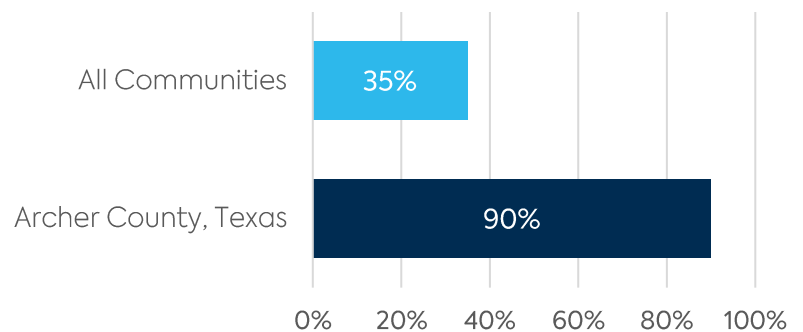
CONNECTION DETAILS

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 $80 per month. This is slightly more than the monthly cost paid in other communities ($79.45). Two percent of the median household income in Archer County is $111.81 per month.
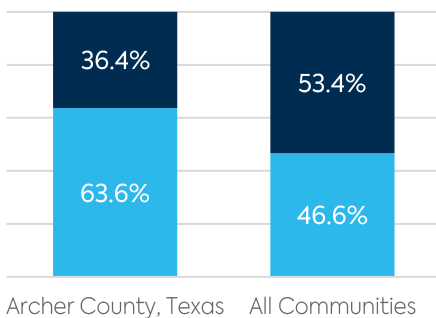
The FCC currently defines broadband as an internet connection with a download speed of at least 25 Mbps and upload speed of at least 3 Mbps. On average, respondents indicate that their connection's advertised download speed is 148 Mbps. In Archer County, 90% of internet-connected households subscribe to download speeds faster than 25 Mbps.

Average Monthly Cost

All Communities	$79.45
Archer County, Texas	$80.00
Archer County, Texas 2% Median Household Income	$111.81

$0 $30 $60 $90 $120

Percentage of Respondents with At Least 25/3 Mbps

All Communities	35%
Archer County, Texas	90%

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

Does Your Internet Meet Your Needs?

Archer County, Texas: Yes 63.6%, No 36.4%
All Communities: Yes 46.6%, No 53.4%

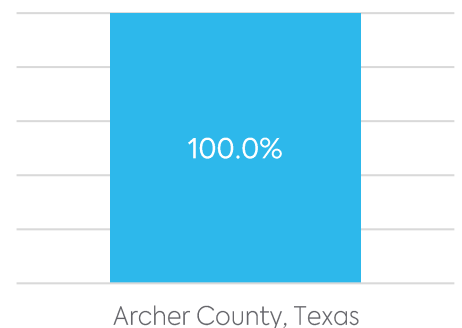Legend: ■ Yes ■ No

Why Doesn't Your Internet Meet Your Needs?

Speeds are too slow: 100%
The connection is unreliable: 50%
The price is too high: 25%
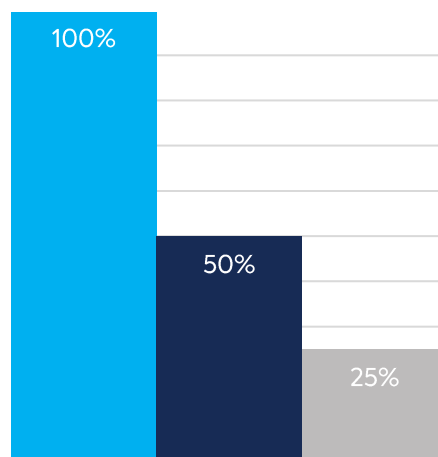
Legend: ■ Speeds are too slow ■ The connection is unreliable ■ The price is too high

Are You Interested in More Choices at Home?

Archer County, Texas: 100.0%

Legend: ■ 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. More than 3 out of 5 (63.6%) responding households indicate that their internet connection meets their needs. This is a higher rate of satisfaction than among households in other communities (46.6%).

When asked why their connection does not meet their needs, 100% of dissatisfied households indicate that their speed is too slow, 50% report that their connections are unreliable, and 25% say that prices are too high. Respondents could choose more than one reason for dissatisfaction.

Finally, all respondents (100%) indicate that they are interested in additional internet choices for their home.
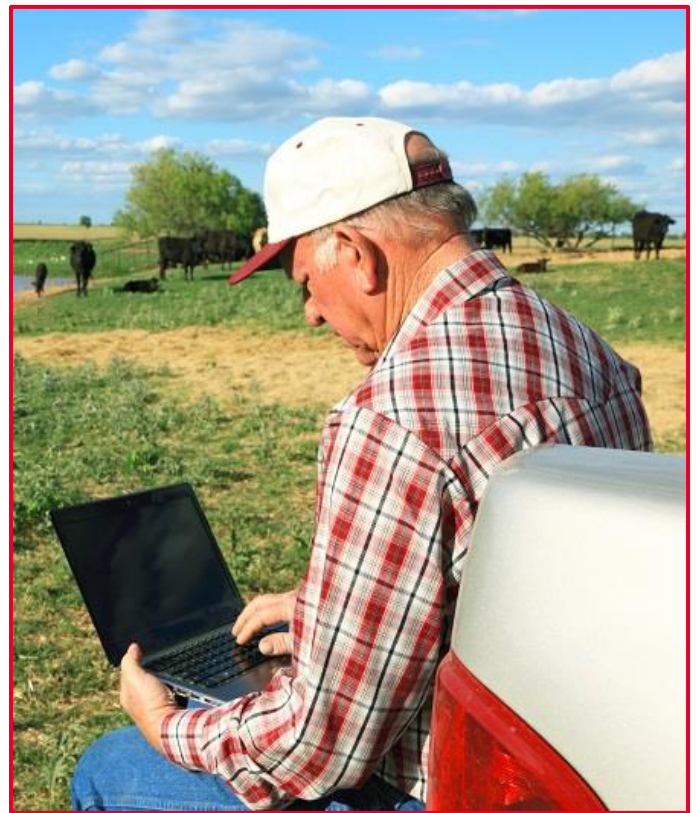
MOBILE CONNECTIVITY

More than 7 out of 10 households (72.7%) 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 (68.5%).

Additionally, 12.5% 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

	Archer County, Texas	All Communities
Other	9.1%	
No	18.2%	30.4%
		1.1%
Yes	72.7%	68.5%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Other
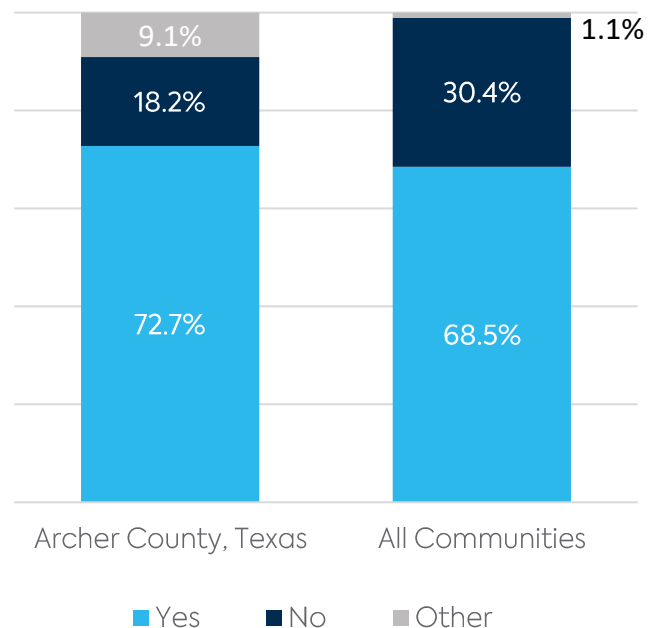
TELEWORK

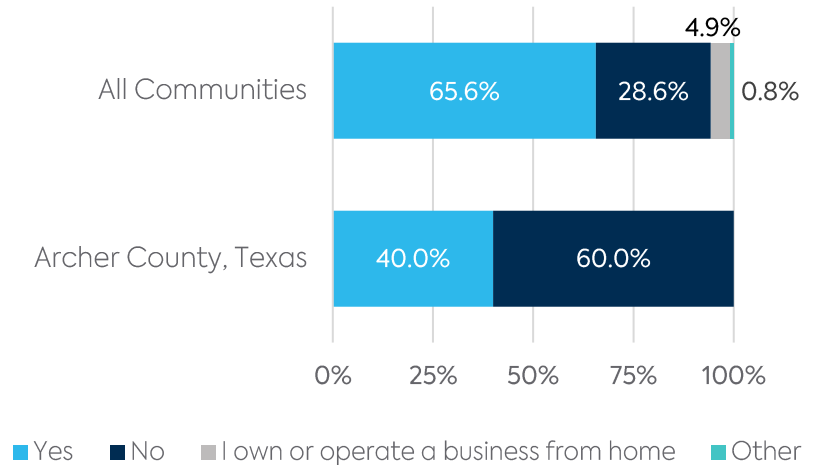Teleworking, or telecommuting, refers to working outside of the conventional workplace by way of telecommunications or computer-based technology. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to allow their staff to telework.
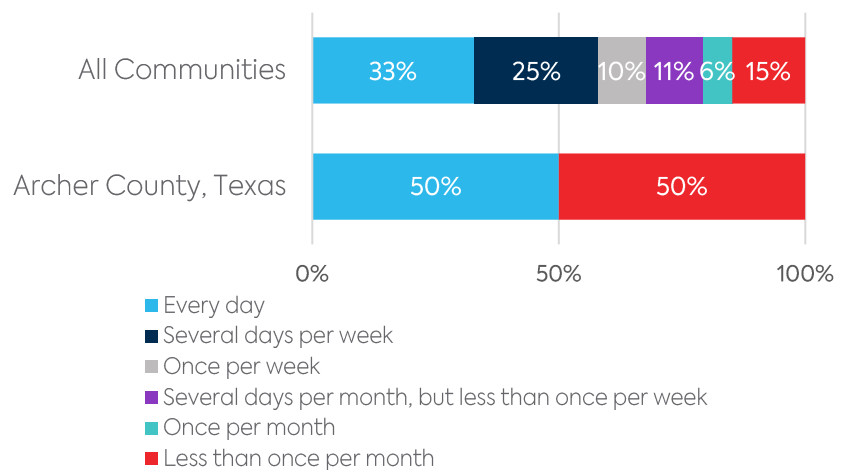
Teleworking is quickly becoming a critical part of growing a local economy because it represents an opportunity to attract and retain employees even when employees are not located in the same community as their employers. However, this only works if those employees have access to advanced broadband infrastructure.

Two out of five employed respondents in Archer County (40%) telework at least part of the time. Half of teleworkers (50%) work remotely every day.

Do You Currently Telework?

All Communities	Yes 65.6% · No 28.6% · 0.8% · 4.9%
Archer County, Texas	Yes 40.0% · No 60.0%

■ Yes ■ No ■ I own or operate a business from home ■ Other

How Frequently Do You Telework?

All Communities	33% · 25% · 10% · 11% · 6% · 15%
Archer County, Texas	50% · 50%

■ 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

Recommendations

The Archer County Broadband Team partnered with Connected Nation Texas (CN Texas) for a local Connected Community Engagement designed to assess the connectivity, affordability, and general technology needs of the county's residents. Based on data from a countywide survey and community conversations, the following recommendations are presented to Archer County.

Goal 1: Develop and support county engagement structure that ensures broadband needs are being met in Archer County for residents and local organizations.

The state of Texas was allocated $3.3 billion under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) via the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program and the Digital Equity Act. These programs will fund projects that help expand high-speed internet access and ensure Texas communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy by promoting a diverse array of digital advancement projects. With this once-in-a-generation infusion of money coming from the federal government, it is critical that Archer County establishes a plan moving forward to keep the broadband space as a top-of-mind priority. This requires ongoing assessments, monitoring of services, and local funding allocations to support ongoing improvements.

Objective: Establish central leadership in Archer County as a tool for economic and community development.

Action 1 – Establish a Broadband Council to function as advisors to the county.

The establishment of a county-based Broadband Council is vital to ensure that the community stays on top of the state, local, and federal broadband happenings. An official Broadband Council emphasizes that the county recognizes broadband as a high priority of focus and investment and sends a message to the community that access to information, economic development, quality of life, and the community's health and well-being are important.

Broadband Council advisory members should include representatives from a wide variety of community stakeholders, such as:

- Health care: Local physicians or hospital staff
- Government: County Judge, County Commissioners, Mayor, City Council, County IT Director
- Education (K-12): Superintendents, School IT Directors

- Public Safety: County Sheriff's Office, Police Department, Fire and Rescue and surrounding Volunteer Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services
- Agriculture: County Ag Agent, Leading Ag Producers
- Business: Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development
- Library: Public Library Directors, Librarians
- Community At-Large: Someone from the community who is interested in broadband.

Broadband Council responsibilities should include:

- Keep abreast of state and national broadband policy initiatives and notable broadband news. Stay up to date on publications, events, and policy briefs published by the 1.) Governor's Broadband Development Council (GBDC) and 2.) Broadband Development Office (BDO), as well as monitor notable broadband developments via industry newsletters and focused research.
- Keep the community informed of projects and progress and invite community participation to maintain buy-in and high adoption rates. Getting community buy-in is essential to the long-term success and sustainability of community initiatives. Success of local initiatives requires community support, transparency, and engagement. Not only will this help keep the momentum going but will show ISPs there is true interest for expanded service in the area, which will encourage greater investment in the region.
- Stay up to date on state and federal broadband legislation.
- Apply for applicable state and federal grant programs.
- Ensure digital engagement in all community sectors (telehealth, telework, education, commerce, etc.).
- Attend workshops, webinars, meetings, and general training that discuss telecommunications, and broadband.
- Provide digital literacy and digital skills assistance to the community's at-risk populations.
- Hold regular meetings. The council 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 the county.

Timeline: Establish an official Broadband Council immediately.

Responsible parties: Economic Development Director, County Judge, City Manager, and Chamber of Commerce Director

Action 2 – **Appoint a Broadband Liaison to lead the effort.**

The broadband team needs a point person, a champion for connectivity in the county. Whether paid or volunteer, part-time or full-time, this person will be the point of contact for broadband in the county. The liaison will stay up to date on broadband policy news, new construction projects in the region, new laws, and funding opportunities, as well as maintain visibility to keep the community educated and engaged in internet adoption and expanded internet deployment.

Timeline: Establish an official broadband team and select a countywide team leader immediately.

Responsible parties: County Judge, Commissioners Court, Economic Director, and Broadband Council

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 SLFRF, Final Rule
- Governor's Broadband Development Council
- The Texas Statute
- Senate Bill 1238
- The 2021 Governor's Broadband Development Council's Report
- The 2020 Governor's Broadband Development Council's Report
- The Texas Broadband Development Office
- The Texas Broadband Plan 2022
- Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, County Allocation
- Final Rule
- CN's list of Current Broadband Funding
- BroadbandUSA: Federal Funding Guide
- Guide to Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities in the U.S.

Broadband readiness
- Texas Broadband Providers by County
- Smart Cities Readiness Guide
- Next Century Cities Becoming Broadband Ready Toolkit
- Municipal Boards: Best Practices for Adoption Technology

Broadband leadership
- [Ector County TX forms taskforce to set up broadband office](#)
- [City of Memphis: Broadband Project Manager, Senior](#)
- [Letter: Do your part on broadband](#)
- [The Anatomy of a Community Broadband Manager](#)
- [TARA Leadership: Rondella Hawkins](#)

Goal 2: Increase broadband access and reliability across Archer County

According to FCC's National Broadband Map, published in June 2022, 88% of homes in Archer County have broadband availability at the 25/3 Mbps threshold. Furthermore, according to survey results, 71% of residents subscribe to fixed broadband service, which includes cable, DSL, fiber, or fixed wireless technology. The remaining 29% were unsure of their current type of service. The average advertised download speed reported by survey respondents in the residential sector is 148 Mbps. At a download speed of 150Mbps, an individual can download an entire music album in about five minutes, and at this speed, about three to five devices in a household can be supported at any given time. The actual download speed that residents experience, however, may be slower than what is advertised by the individual provider. Two out of five households report the leading reason for dissatisfaction with their current internet service being, "speeds are too slow." Slow internet speeds are not only frustrating but can be very limiting.

In addition, 40% of those surveyed indicated that they telework in some capacity, with 50% doing some form of telework daily. Teleworkers cannot be successful or competitive in their job fields without reliable and fast internet connections. Beyond telework, it is important to recognize how slow internet speeds negatively impact and deter digital engagement.

In Archer County, residents may have access to the internet, providers must be encouraged to deliver speeds that meet the everyday needs and wants of residents, businesses, farmers, educators, and others with a reliable connection and an affordable plan.

Objective: Leverage community assets and partnerships to increase broadband speeds in Archer County through infrastructure development and improvement projects.

Action 1 – Meet with local broadband providers to form and foster working relationships.

An important step to increasing broadband access and reliability across Archer County is meeting

with local broadband providers. 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 access for residents. Archer County should maintain working relationships with each provider. As new grant programs and projects are announced or local needs arise, it will be crucial for the county to have a dedicated and informed point of contact with each provider who can assist, as necessary.

Action 2 – Provide survey data to all local providers.

When meeting with providers, community leaders should point out the survey results, highlighting the need for faster service at an affordable price. It is important for providers to understand the consumer base in Archer County to provide the best customer service experience. Sixty-four percent of households with a broadband subscription report being dissatisfied with their service, citing slow speeds, unreliable connections, and high prices as the leading reasons. All households surveyed want more choices. Armed with this information, broadband providers can address their service areas and improve access and education about their services throughout the county.

Action 3 – Pursue state and federal funding for broadband advancement.

The infusion of state and federal funds to expand broadband access, adoption, and use in the state is an opportunity for Texas communities to obtain funds via a competitive grant program. Archer County could obtain funds or partner with other entities, including internet service providers, to obtain funds for infrastructure deployment and adoption, and digital inclusion efforts.

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 these once-in-a-generation funding opportunities will be paramount to ensuring Archer County residents have faster, more reliable broadband for years to come.

Responsible Parties:
Local units of government; broadband providers; community and regional organizations

Timeline:
Archer County leaders should begin meeting with broadband providers within three months of

receiving this plan.

Resources

Treasury Issues Final Rule for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Program to Support the Ongoing COVID Program
https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0550

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

BroadbandUSA: Federal Funding Guide
https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/federal

Texas Broadband Providers by County
https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, County Allocation
https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/fiscalrecoveryfunds_countyfunding_2021.05.10-1a-508A.pdf

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

Goal 3: Promote free and reduced-cost broadband services to ensure all residents have equitable access to the internet.

While access to broadband may exist, adoption may not always occur. Broadband adoption occurs when a resident, business, or community institution recognizes the value of broadband (high-speed internet), subscribes to the service, and then goes online to use the internet. Adoption is critical for increasing the community's digital capacity and empowering residents and community leaders. To

adopt broadband, a person needs access to the internet, a digital device, and the requisite digital skills to navigate the online world and related technology.

Through conversations in the community, cost was identified as a key barrier to broadband adoption and use. Archer City Public Library cited high demand to use library and Texas Workforce Commission public computers, as well as consistent utilization of its three Wi-Fi hotspots. It is imperative for the county to implement solutions that can help overcome barriers to adoption, including those that promote affordability. No resident should be left offline due to financial constraints when state, federal, and nonprofit efforts are available to bridge the affordability gap.

Objective: Increase broadband adoption and usage rates among Archer County residents through low-cost connectivity solutions.

Action 1 – Promote programs that help residents overcome the affordability barrier to broadband adoption.

The county should collaborate with community leaders and institutions to publicly promote programs and opportunities designed to reduce the cost of broadband service. Promotion can be done by advertising in the local newspaper, providing updates in monthly school newsletters, posting flyers in public buildings throughout the county, and publicly discussing programs at Commissioners' Court and City Hall meetings.

Below are programs and resources that are available to residents.

- **Resource to locate affordable internet service or computers:** Using online resources, Archer County residents can identify local and national providers that offer low-cost services for vulnerable populations, older adults, and low-income families with children. Resources include EveryoneOn (https://www.everyoneon.org/), which helps residents locate low-cost internet services and affordable computers by ZIP code and need, based on their participation in assistance programs.
- **State and federal low-cost programs:** The following offer discounts for broadband to eligible households:
    - **State Lifeline Program:** 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 access service. The The Lifeline discount for qualifying low-income customers may be up to $12.75 depending on

the services provided and customer eligibility. Lifeline service is non-transferrable and is limited to one discount per household. More information can be found on the Public Utility Commission of Texas' website.

- **Federal Lifeline Program:** Lifeline is also available at the federal level to help qualifying low-income consumers access phone and internet service. Additional information about the program can be found on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website.
- **The Affordable Connectivity Program:** Once known as the Emergency Broadband Benefit, the Affordable Connectivity Program became permanent with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (commonly referred to as the Infrastructure Bill). The program provides a $30 per month discount for broadband with participating providers. For more information, visit the FCC's webpage.

The Broadband Council should consider the following institutions and leaders to help promote these programs:

- School Districts, including Archer City ISD, Holliday ISD and Windthorst ISD
- Local and county government
- Community-based institutions, including Archer Public Library, Holliday Public Library, food pantries, churches, etc.

Action 2 – Ensure that Archer County residents have access to affordable, internet-enabled devices that meet their needs.

Having a high-quality device is necessary to navigate many of the online platforms and modern applications related to accessing services, health care, education, and resources. The Broadband Council should promote programs that provide access to low-cost devices, such as PCs for People or HumanIT. Additionally, the county and/or cities within the county could consider creating a program where departments and businesses could donate surplus computing devices for refurbishment and distribution in high-need communities. The county could also apply for grant funds to acquire new devices or partner with community organizations and internet service providers to outfit buildings with computing devices.

Responsible Parties:
Local units of government and elected officials; broadband providers; community and regional organizations and institutions: businesses, schools, libraries; community residents

Timeline:

Disseminating information about free and reduced-cost broadband services should begin immediately to ensure anyone who wants access can get it. For residents who cannot access the internet at home, public computers are the next best option for accessing the digital world. To meet the needs of these residents, Archer County should increase the number of free, public computing stations by fall 2023.

Resources

Affordable Connectivity Program
https://connectednation.org/acprogram/

Universal Service Administrative Co.: Lifeline
https://www.lifelinesupport.org/#

Free Wi-Fi Hotspot Locator Apps
https://www.lifewire.com/free-online-wifi-hotspot-locators-818276

Texas Broadband Providers by County
https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/

Human I-T
https://www.human-i-t.org/

PCs for People
https://www.pcsforpeople.org/

5 Reasons Why Libraries are Essential to Have
https://princh.com/blog-5-reasons-why-libraries-are-essential-to-have/#.Ybt0tb3MKUl

Current Broadband Funding
https://connectednation.org/current-broadband-funding

BroadbandUSA: Federal Funding Guide
https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/federal

How to Create a Public Computer Center

https://www.newamerica.org/oti/blog/how-to-create-a-public-computer-center/

Northland Public Library
https://www.northlandlibrary.org/computer-center/

First-Ever National Study: Millions of People Rely on Library Computers for Employment, Health, and Education (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)
https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/media-center/press-releases/2010/03/millions-of-people-rely-on-library-computers-for-employment-health-and-education

Goal 4: Promote greater digital opportunity in Archer County through digital literacy campaigns.

The availability of broadband enables individuals to connect to the digital world and provides opportunities for personal and professional development, achievement, health care, and innovation. In rural Texas, broadband can lead to economic development, improved academic performance, advancements in agriculture and farming, access to telehealth services, infrastructure improvements, and overall technological advancements. In Archer County, it is crucial to recognize the value of broadband and how it can enhance quality of life.

Objective: Highlight the value offered by broadband through a literacy educational campaign and ongoing community outreach.

Action 1 – Identify community advocates in five community sectors who can lead digital engagement initiatives.

The Broadband Council should identify key advocates in the following areas to educate the community about the short- and long-term benefits of broadband adoption and use. Industry leaders should speak about the importance of broadband in their respective areas, as well as discuss the many uses. The more residents, businesses, and community anchor institutions that understand the value of broadband, the greater the likelihood of adoption and use. Potential partners for this work include:

- **Economy:** Archer County Commissioners Court, Nortex Regional Planning Commission, Workforce Solutions
- **Telehealth:** Archer County Hospital District
- **Agriculture:** Archer County Texas AgriLife Office
- **Education:** Archer City ISD, Holliday ISD and Windthorst ISD

- **Public Safety:** Archer County Sheriff's Department, local Police Departments, and Volunteer Fire Departments

Economy

Promote economic and practical advantages of teleworking: Broadband access is critical for ongoing economic development in communities. Reliable access provides opportunities to develop new businesses, expand current businesses, and recruit new residents to the area.

According to survey results, 40% of employed survey respondents telework. Of that group, 50% work remotely every day. By teleworking, an employee can reside in Archer County but be employed by an entity in Dallas, Houston, Lubbock, or anywhere in the world. Telework offers greater flexibility in work schedules and expands the number of job opportunities for rural Texans, while also increasing the number of potential applicants for employers. The requirements to telework include adequate digital skills to engage online and a reliable internet connection.

Promote e-commerce as the gateway to the global economy: As businesses and community organizations expand their online presence, they expand their customer pool and increase profit. By utilizing websites and social media to market services and sell products, businesses can take part in a larger digital economy.

Telehealth

Showcase physical health and time-saving benefits of telehealth services: The future of medicine is online. Telehealth is a great alternative — or in some cases the only solution — for communities without large hospitals, general practitioners, surgical attendees, and medical specialists. Online medical services can allow residents to schedule visits with doctors, dentists, surgeons, dermatologists, veterinarians, and other providers. These online services are not only important in times of emergency, but they allow residents flexibility when meeting with medical professionals. No longer do you have to take time off work to drive to the clinic, but rather use a phone or tablet to meet with your doctor from the comfort of your home or office.

Telehealth is important not only for treating physical needs, but also addressing psychological needs — so it should include therapy and related care. Telehealth is not intended to be a substitute for rural medical providers; if anything, telehealth is meant to enhance the services already offered by hard-working, conscientious, rural medical professionals. Key barriers to participating in telehealth include lack of digital skills necessary to access videoconferencing, access to affordable and adequate devices to successfully participate in remote sessions, and underlying fears of cybersecurity and privacy concerns.

Agriculture

Promote local implementation of precision agriculture: Agriculture is the backbone of Texas (and the United States as a whole). Innovations in farming technology, such as automated equipment and livestock tracking, are designed to increase sustainability and profitability, meet changing demands, and allow operations to stay competitive. The future of American agriculture relies on connectivity, not only so producers can stay connected to the outside world, but so local ag operations can run sustainable and successful businesses that contribute to local economies and global food sources.

Public Safety

Promote the importance of broadband in emergency preparedness and the public safety sector (911, interoperable networks). Public safety involves protecting citizens, organizations, and communities from danger, particularly in times of crisis. It involves the timely deployment of emergency response systems, personnel, video surveillance systems, and dissemination of timely and accurate information. With improved broadband connectivity and reliability comes increased public safety capabilities of EMS, police, and fire departments. This is because first responders can now communicate effectively using mobile devices while in the field and can also easily communicate with other agencies at local, state, and federal levels. Additionally, the increased connectivity allows for more efficient communication of important public safety information to the public, and the ability for the public to communicate back to first responders. Without adequate broadband infrastructure, many of today's systems to ensure public safety cannot be implemented successfully.

Action 2 – Provide and promote free community workshops.

Community leaders should partner with local and regional organizations to facilitate free digital literacy and skills workshops designed to increase digital literacy across the county. Workshop curriculum should be curated using material created by the county and publicly available programs, such as AARP 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 gain digital skills and to feel comfortable and safe using online platforms.

Workshop topics can include:

- How to teleconference
- Cybersecurity 101

- Microsoft Office skills
- Intro to social media and website building
- Telehealth basics

The general curriculum should be available at frequently accessed public locations in the form of paper handouts. Handouts function as a "grab and go" resource for residents to take and review later. In this way, everyone can benefit from the content in whatever way is most compatible with their schedule and preferred learning method.

Responsible Parties:
Community institutions: businesses, schools, libraries, chamber of commerce, local organizations; local government leaders and elected officials; broadband providers; community residents

Timeline:
Digital literacy and skills workshops should be available throughout Archer County by early 2024. The community should routinely assess the curriculum to determine if updates are needed.

Resources
Texas Broadband Providers by County
https://connectednation.org/texas/planning/

Improving the Quality of Life in Rural America with Broadband Internet
https://bonfire-ec.com/improving-the-quality-of-life-in-rural-america-with-broadband-internet/

Implementing Productive Teleworking with Business-Quality Mobile Communications
https://tango-networks.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Tango-Networks-Trend-Advisor-Productive-Teleworking-with-Mobile-Communications-v15May2020.pdf

How Better Broadband Access Will Help Telemedicine Reach Its Full Potential
https://intouchhealth.com/how-broadband-will-help-telemedicine-reach-its-full-potential/

The Benefit that Broadband Internet Offers for Ecommerce
https://www.newsanyway.com/2020/02/26/the-benefits-that-broadband-internet-offers-for-ecommerce/

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/

Grow with Google
https://grow.google/

GCFLearnFree.org® program
GCFLEanfree.org

BOSS: Business Owners Sharing Solutions
https://wichitafallschamber.com/boss/

Telehealth for behavioral health care
https://telehealth.hhs.gov/providers/telehealth-for-behavioral-health/

Texas Department of Health and Human Services: Aging
https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/aging

New telehealth station launching in Milam County
https://www.kbtx.com/2020/07/07/new-telehealth-station-launching-in-milam-county/

Telehealth station in Milam County first of its kind in Texas, bridging accessibility gap in rural areas
https://www.kxxv.com/brazos/telehealth-station-in-milam-county-first-of-its-kind-in-texas-bridging-accessibility-gap-in-rural-areas

Pottsboro Library teaming with UNT medical school for telemedicine program
https://www.kxii.com/2020/12/23/pottsboro-library-teaming-with-unt-medical-school-for-telemedicine-program/

Pottsboro Area Library: Check out telehealth at your local library!
https://pottsborolibrary.com/health/

County starts free digital literacy program
https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/county-starts-free-digital-literacy-program/article_8f99afcc-a222-5445-8438-1a410a215a49.html

Getting Started with Telemedicine
https://connectednation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Getting-Started-with-Telemedicine.pdf

Common Terms Associated with Telehealth and Telemedicine
https://connectednation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Common-Terms-Associated-with-Telehealth-and-Telemedicine.pdf

5 Tips for Securing your Mobile Device for Telehealth
https://connectednation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tips-for-Securing-your-Mobile_updated.pdf

Connecting Seniors in Central Texas
https://www.communitytechnetwork.org/blog/connecting-seniors-in-central-texas-with-senior-connect/

The Future of American Farming
https://www.benton.org/publications/future-american-farming