

## MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON BROADBAND 2022 ANNUAL REPORT WRITING TEMPLATE / GUIDELINES

### AFFORDABILITY & ADOPTION - Overview / Intention for this document:

Given that each task force subgroup is composed of many different voices from many different organizations, we hoped to offer a format that may make the process of “synthesizing” and integrating the various perspectives that will be shared from each subgroup easier to form, and easier for the report writing team to assemble into a draft for the full group’s consideration.

### Overall approach:

- In the sections below, identify and highlight the Key Challenges/Concerns, and Recommendations in your subgroup area using “bullet point” formatting (see below)
- Be concise in making your points in each of the sections - you can use as many bullet points as you need in each section to share the information you wish to convey
  - Use sub-bullets if needed to add relevant detail
- Use hyperlinks (e.g. [supporting reference material](#)) to strengthen your points
- Feel free to write a short intro narrative for each section if you think that will be helpful to others to establish a context for what you’ve included in each section

### Outline of Key Challenges (*what is the nature of the problem, and what obstacles stand in the way of addressing the problem?*)

#### Adoption

1. Access - no option for high-speed in their area. No means, that they know of, to get it.
  - a. We are still at \_\_\_ % with at least 25/3 speeds.
2. Some community members don’t trust government programs or have concerns about security, so don’t take advantage.
  - . Not feeling that being online is relevant to their life (not knowing how it could positively impact them or their family) (*possible combination with previous ‘top level’ items*)
  - a. Need better understanding of non-adoption reasons - any common demographic characteristics or proven strategies for increasing adoption (highlight some MN success stories?)
  - b. Any data on the costs associated with non-adoption of high speed?
- i. What is the economic cost to not having everyone on high speed ?
  3. Language barriers - English not first language and info about access and technical info all in English
    - . About ½ million Minnesotans (10.5% of the population) speak English “less than very well” <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/language/MN> (41% of Foreign Born and .08% of US Born)
  4. Comfort with hardware and software - technical background, ability to manage router for wifi in the home, ability to understand operating system vs applications, etc. {Ex. this is a primary barrier for my 80 yr old mother, if the internet stops working she has to get someone to come to her rural home to figure it out and she’s offline till then, so doesn’t want to rely on having it}
  5. Lack of information / digital literacy - knowing how to navigate to find information online and understanding how to evaluate that information

6. Not knowing about options for providers in their area (current Broadband Task Force map tells what providers are available at an address, but kinda technical to find it, is it accurate?) The map on the Broadband site isn't super easy to find or use.

Steps needed:

- .Go to Office of Broadband website
- i.Go to [Maps then Data](#) then General Map (not intuitive)
- ii.<https://gis.connectednation.org/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=a2d243ccf7e547eba2ec0d5c80c80917>
- iii.Click past a screen that welcomes you to the map
- iv.Find the line that says "On the map screen, click on this icon to find providers". (among lots of links and text on the page)
- v.Put in the address correctly so it finds it and click "Find Provider Details". (not super easy to do)
- vi.Sometimes it says "There were no results found." (I have at least 3 high-speed options in Mankato) and no link/prompt on what to do next.

7. Not having/knowing about adaptive devices (screen readers, captioning, adaptive mice, etc) if they have a temporary or permanent challenge. Folks with lifelong disabilities typically will work with county and other resources, but someone with a new issue due to injury, age, etc. won't necessarily know these things exist.

Across Minnesota, about 593,700 persons have one or more disabilities, roughly 10.9% of the population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey. [https://mn.gov/admin/assets/minnesotans-with-disabilities-popnotes-march2017\\_tcm36-283045\\_tcm36-283045.pdf](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/minnesotans-with-disabilities-popnotes-march2017_tcm36-283045_tcm36-283045.pdf)

8. (How to frame this as a challenge) Promoting telehealth projects in MN: [gptrac.org/caring-for-the-whole-person](http://gptrac.org/caring-for-the-whole-person)

9. Lack of leadership in areas that could help with adoption. I.E. No statewide leadership in education technology. [MDE] works with schools and libraries could play a key role in providing information to families with children (and communities in general through community education) but need some guidance to be effective.

MDE collects digital equity data, but does little with it and is unable to get many districts to provide it.

- a. Limited connection between schools, libraries and other agencies related to broadband or digital equity.

10. Smaller communities don't have enough capacity to follow up on opportunities to expand the high speed coverage in their communities (e.g. fellowship opportunities, etc)

11. **Lack of Reliability** - Reliable internet is service that is on when needed, that performs at the speed promised and that has customer service available from the provider in a reasonable timeframe.

One in 7 Minnesotans report not having reliable internet during the pandemic: <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/blog/mdc/internet>

### **Affordability**

1. There are lots of models to enhance affordability, but information about them is not readily available to community leaders (and the public) so they can consider those options
2. Not knowing about Federal ACP program that offers help with internet access fees
  - a. Having to take too much time to complete all of the requirements to qualify for the program
  - b. Some aspects about the process are too complicated, and/or additional support is needed to complete the documentation
3. Not knowing about affordability programs from their providers (some offer special pricing for low-income households)

4. Not being able to afford a device (phone, laptop, tablet) at home (and to replace it every few years as they become obsolete) (PCs for People not well-known, not available everywhere?)
5. (Costs for providing high speed in GreaterMN vs. metro areas is much greater per student) Disparity of cost for commercial level broadband services for schools in certain parts of the state. (2019 Data - 85 of Minnesota's non-charter districts, in rural parts of the state pay more than \$20 per pupil after all state and federal reimbursements and 20 pay more than \$40 per pupil with the highest at \$80 to \$140 per pupil. The metro area average cost is just over \$5 per pupil, resulting in geographic inequities for equivalent levels of service for districts based on their size.)
6. More...

### **Outline of Key Recommendations** (*what is being proposed to address the problems?*)

#### Adoption

1. Providing a way for people to easily find out what the options are for access in their area - with links to providers.
2. Provide a way for people that, after checking with providers, find that they don't actually have access to report that back (so we can update maps and be aware of the gap).
3. Personal help - digital navigators, can help address several of the challenges above. By connecting with a person individually, they can find out what their barriers are and address them with information and personal connection. How can we highlight, support, expand programs like those below? (esp. to Greater MN)
  - a. <https://www.literacymn.org/digitalliteracy>
  - b. <https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/>
  - c. <http://mnabe.org/abe-instruction/digital-literacy>
  - d. <https://www.spnn.org/literacy-minnesota>
  - e. Fund the creation of a new simple / easy to use web based service that helps get new users on line
4. Instructional videos - many folks without high-speed internet use cellphones to access information and video watching is one of the most common activities. Videos available in English and main languages like Spanish, Somali and Hmong that do remote digital navigation could do things like point folks to where they can find out who the internet providers are in their area, tell them about ACP, explain some basics and tell them how to find more help. (YouTube and TikTok could be used for this)
  - . Fund the creation of the above resources (consolidation / organization of these resources)
5. Premade digital marketing materials (in various languages and formats for ADA) that can be distributed to each county to fill in with the relevant info for their county.
6. Establish and fund a position within the MN Department of Education (MDE) that provides leadership to schools (and libraries) on education technology including issues of adoption, digital equity, affordability and more.
7. Recommendation from last year - fund ACP fellows (\$225,000) to work in rural communities & tribal nations to help bridge the gaps, assist with grant applications and reporting or help with outreach efforts.
8. Reliability
  - . Tests of reliability include inter-rater (gathered from many people about the same provider and location), test-retest (gathering data about the same provider and location over time), parallel forms (gathering similar data in different ways about the same provider and

location), and consistency (self-reported info from providers about each location consistent with other data)

- a. Funding for studies like the one in Challenges above to remain informed about reliability perceptions in the state
- b. Easy centralized, state-managed means for people to report issues with speed, uptime or customer service from their ISP. Route that information to the ISPs to address and gather/share data about types of issues (access, speed, customer service, etc).
- c. Rankings of broadband providers based on consumer feedback, speed tests, uptime percentages, but narrowed to Minnesota only... like <https://www.usnews.com/360-reviews/services/internet-providers> (Best overall)
- d. <https://www.usnews.com/360-reviews/services/internet-providers/best-rural> (Best in Rural areas)

#### Affordability

1. Spend some OBD resources and time preparing materials (online and print) that focus on how affordable going online can be - prepared posts about places to get free/low-cost equipment, provider programs and ACP. (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc)
2. Provide grants to help expand programs that go into people's homes and help them get set up with internet and devices. (Seniors, low-income, new Minnesotans, etc)
3. Recommendation from last year - fund fellows (\$225,000) to work in rural communities to help bridge the gaps, assist with grant applications and reporting or help with outreach efforts.
4. More...

Any Additional Considerations-

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