



# Making Investments in Digital Infrastructure toward More Equitable Outcomes

#LiveAtUrban

# Housekeeping

- Virtual attendees: **CART captions** are available by clicking the CC button on your screen.
- The event is being recorded and the recording will be posted online afterward.
- Virtual audience can type questions into the **Q&A box** at any time.  
In-person attendees can use the **QR code** to submit questions and access speaker biographies.  
Simply scroll down and click “already registered.”
- Engage with us online using **#LiveAtUrban**.
- Please complete the survey at the end of the event.

# U.S. Department of Commerce's Internet for All Initiative

*Progress as of September 2024*

- **Tribal Access:** *More than 4,500 Tribal homes (and counting) are newly connected or received reduced internet costs*
- **High-Speed Service:** *Made available to more than 40,000 previously unserved households, nearly 3,000 businesses, and more than 130 community anchor institutions (like schools and libraries) to date through \$282.7 million in awards.*
- **Devices:** *Distributed more than 21,000 devices to students and community members to date.*

National Telecommunications and Information Administration. "Biden-Harris Administration Delivering on Promise to Connect Everyone in America to Reliable High-Speed Internet Service." Web log. U.S. Department of Commerce, September 27, 2024. <https://www.commerce.gov/news/blog/2024/09/biden-harris-administration-delivering-promise-connect-everyone-america-reliable?ref=broadbandbreakfast.com>.

# Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program

*How equitably were funds distributed?*

INDICATOR	EQUITY SCORE
Population density	-0.18 
Broadband speed	 0.57
Internet access	 0.48

Funding source: IIJA

Department: Department of Commerce

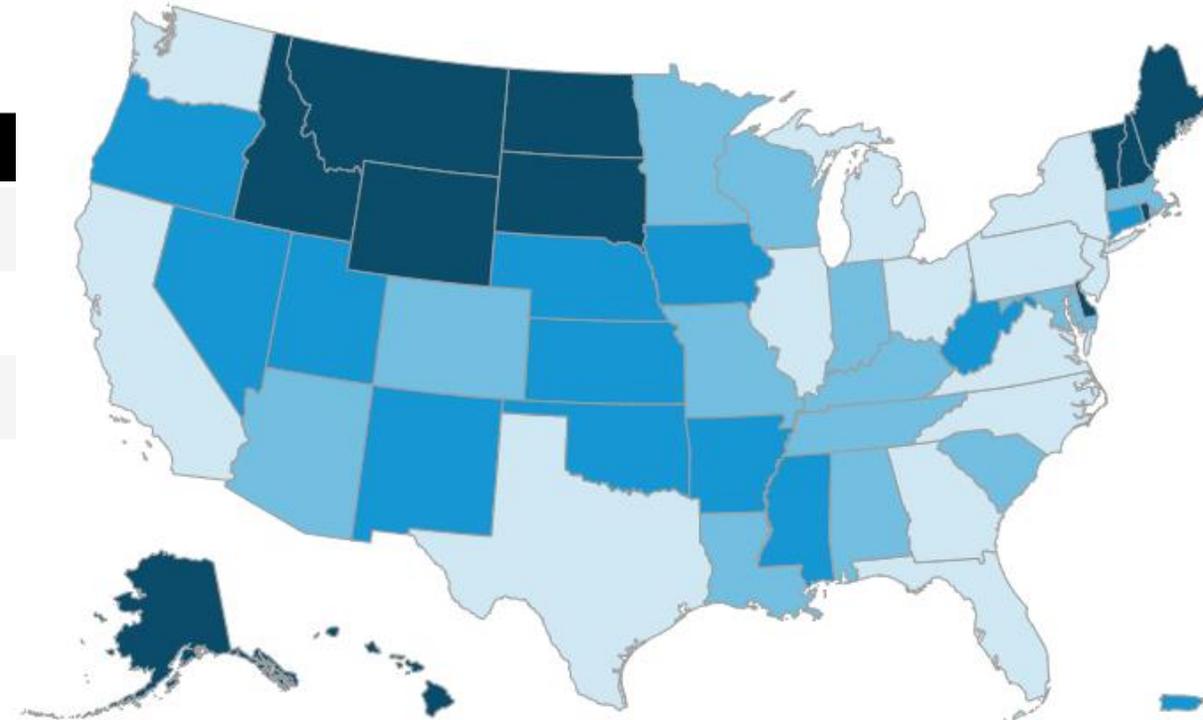
Total Funding Amount in FY22: \$5,200,000,000

Yonah Freemark, et al., "Is Federal Infrastructure Spending Advancing Racial and Economic Equity?," Urban Institute, October 2023, <https://apps.urban.org/features/infrastructure-spending-states-counties/>

## Where Is Funding Distributed?

Funding amount per 1,000 residents

\$0 \$14k \$23k \$56k



# Digital Equity Plans: Setting & Measuring Goals

Department of Commerce's 2023 Equity Action Plan  
(January 2024)

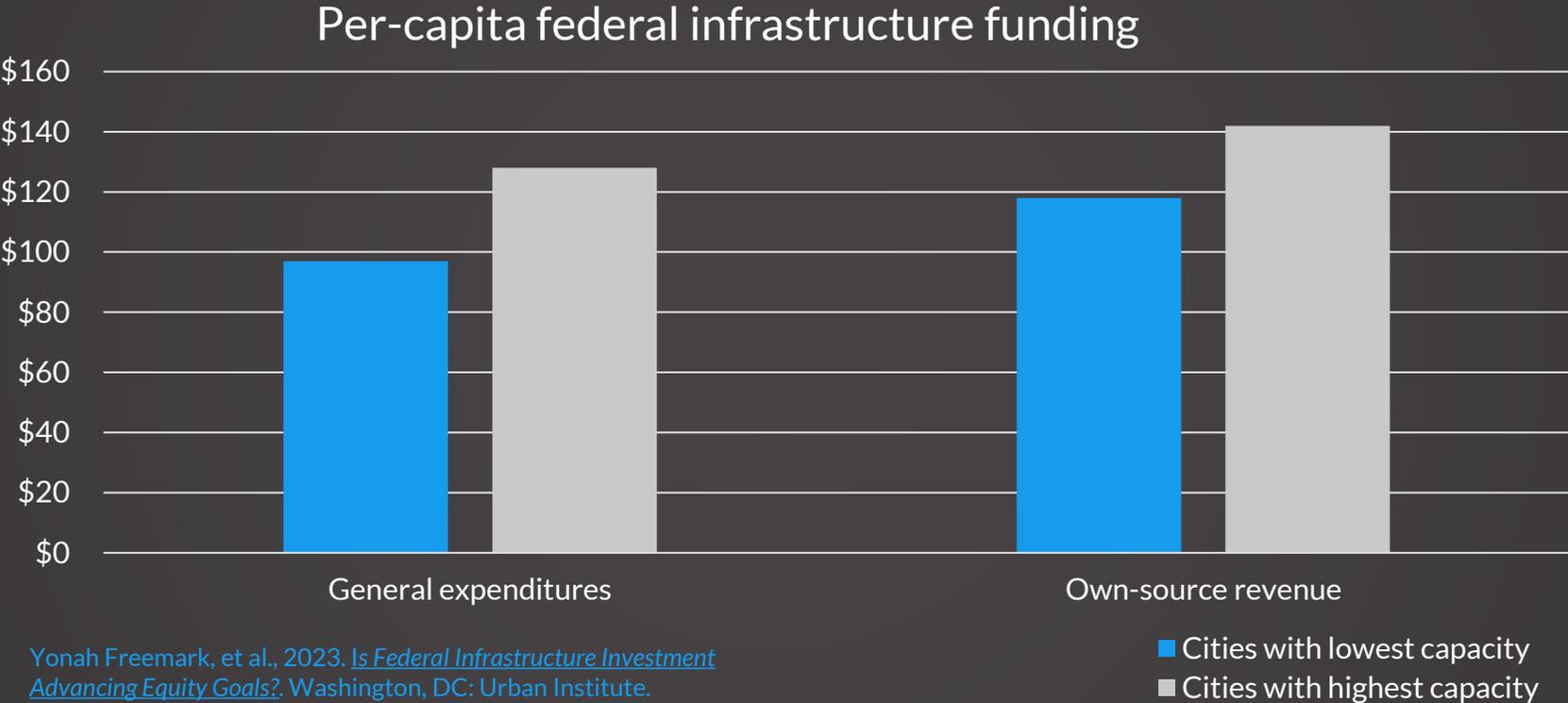
Arkansas Digital Skills & Opportunity Plan  
(February 2024)

- NTIA's Internet for All:
  - Percentage increase in broadband availability and adoption, and socioeconomic outcomes such as jobs created and increased labor productivity, business activity, and positive local and regional economic impacts.
- Number homes and businesses with access to reliable, high-speed internet
  - **Baseline:** Approximately 160k BEAD-eligible locations before the BEAD challenge process
  - **Target:** 100% of homes and businesses by December 31, 2028

<https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/Equity-Action-Plan-January-2024.pdf>

<https://broadband.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Arkansas-Digital-Skills-and-Opportunity-Plan-Final.pdf>

# Cities with Greater Administrative Capacity Were Awarded More Federal Infrastructure Funding



# Audience Reflection Question

*Take a moment to answer these in the Q&A box or share your ideas with us via social media.*

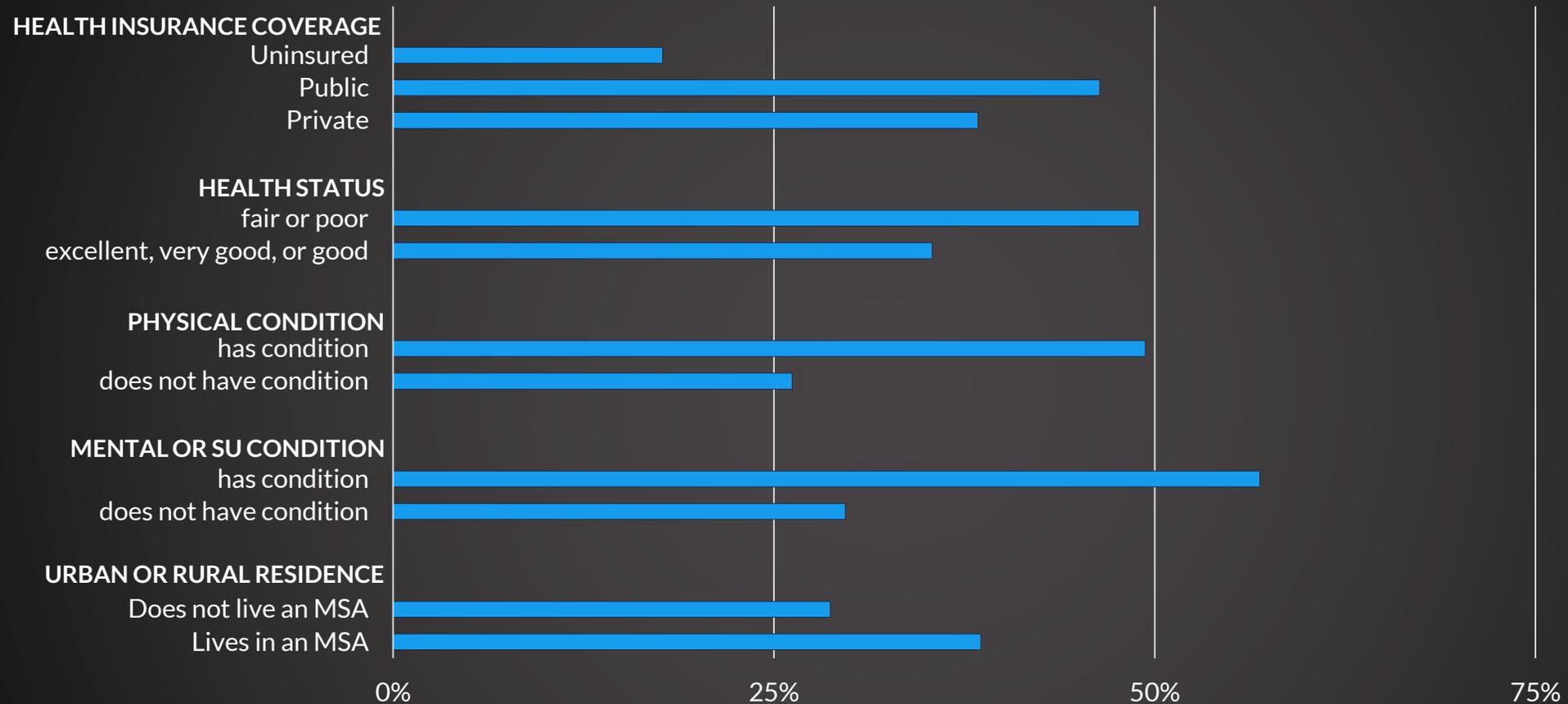
How should policymakers and researchers monitor progress toward making broadband more affordable, available, and usable?

# Community concerns with the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program

- *Health: 75% worried about the loss of online **health** services including prescription refills, ability to make appointments and telehealth*
- *Jobs: 65% of respondents were fearful of **job loss** as internet access was critical to their employment, particularly for remote positions*
- *Education: 81% were scared about their kids ability to **keep up in school** without the ability to access the internet from home*

*Benson Strategy Group 2023. <https://www.bsgco.com/acp-fact-sheet>*

## Share of Adults Ages 18 to 64 with a Telehealth Visit in the Past Months (April 2021)



Laura Barrie Smith, Fredric Blavin et al., *Variation in Patients' Use of Experiences with, and Access to Telehealth during the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, March 2022.



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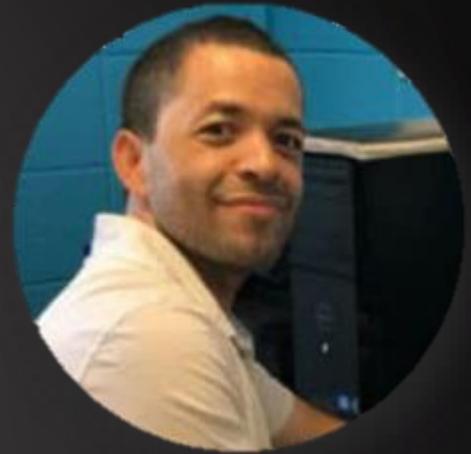
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# Building Digital Skills, Strengthening Digital Resilience

Across  
industries,  
**92%** of  
jobs require  
digital skills

Miguel is starting an online business to transition out of unemployment caused by a physical disability.

*“I only knew how to use Facebook and YouTube. I see the computer in a different way now. I use email, pay my bills online, help my daughter with her computer needs for school. Now I’m on the Internet all the time, and I plan to start an online business.”*



*Miguel Soto,  
Providence Housing  
Authority, Providence  
Rhode Island*

Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, et al., *Closing the Digital Skill Divide*. Washington, DC: National Skills Coalition, February 2023. <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/closing-the-digital-skill-divide/>

Digital US 2023 <https://digitalus.org/>

# Audience Reflection Question

*Take a moment to answer these in the Q&A box or share your ideas with us via social media.*

How are you seeing digital investments change your communities in ways that expand opportunity?

# Audience Reflection Question

*Take a moment to answer these in the Q&A box or share your ideas with us via social media.*

If your community does not feel ready to put these funds to optimal use, what additional information, guidance or support would feel helpful?

# Survey

