

DIGITAL EQUITY IN ARLINGTON



ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA

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WHY IS DIGITAL EQUITY IMPORTANT?

Access to the internet and digital connectivity enables residents to:

- Complete schoolwork online
- Access healthcare resources
- Communicate with friends and family
- Research and apply for jobs
- Work remotely or operate a business
- Make appointments
- Public safety awareness
- Participate in civic engagement
- Pay bills online



DIGITAL DIVIDE IN ARLINGTON

16 PERCENT of households do not have access to a fixed home broadband internet connection (cable, fiber optic or DSL).



72 PERCENT of households that lack access to broadband internet connection (which includes cable, fiber optic, or DSL; a cellular data plan; satellite; or a fixed wireless subscription) earn \$75,000 or less annually.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau's [2015-2019] American Community Survey 5-year estimates

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

DIGITAL EQUITY IN ARLINGTON JUNE 2020

87% pay
\$50+ for
internet

52% use
computer
or tablet
39% use
cell

74% have
4+ devices

50% w/
students
have
connection
issues

43% want
better pricing
32% want
better quality

ARLINGTON'S VISION FOR DIGITAL EQUITY

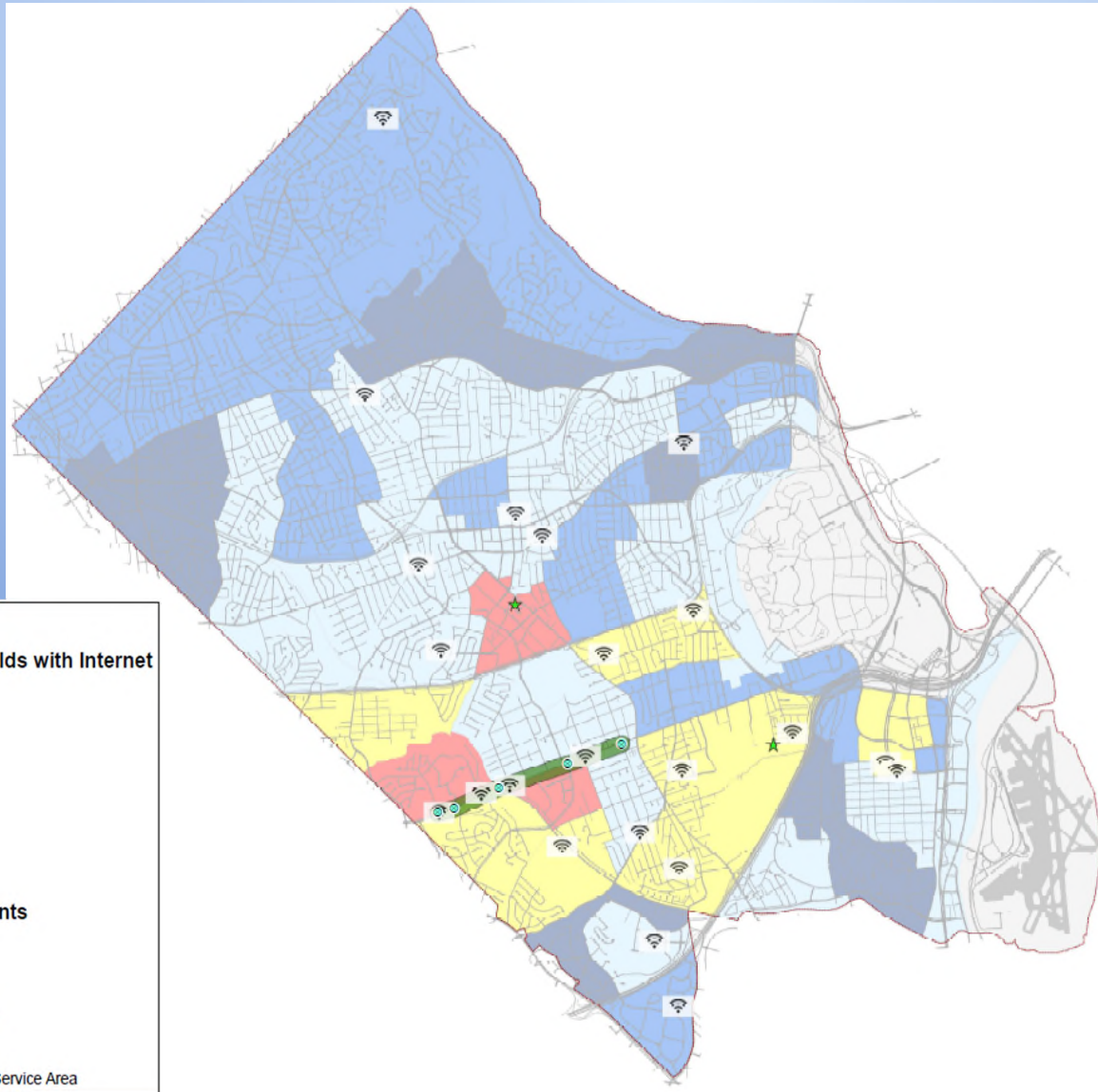
- All Arlingtonians have the information technology capacity needed to fully participate in the community and economy.

Strategies will address:

- **CONNECTIVITY:** Arlington residents are able to connect to affordable broadband internet.
- **ACCESS:** All residents can access the internet with a device.
- **USABILITY:** Residents have the appropriate digital skills necessary to be successful on the internet.
- **PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY & COMMUNITY CAPACITY:** Arlington's strategies to achieve its digital equity goals are sustainable and the community is engaged on the issue.



AREAS OF INTERNET ACCESS AND COUNTY INTERNET SERVICES



- **Who benefits?** Residents with stability to pay for high quality internet service.
- **Who is burdened?** Lower income County residents
- **Who is missing?** Families and individuals who may not have stable housing.
- **How do we know?** American Community Survey data, historically burdened areas in Arlington County, anecdotal feedback
- **What do we do about it?** Using County resources to support reducing the barrier to make internet a utility available for all residents.

PROGRESS UPDATES SINCE COVID

1,600
Patients

**Free Clinic
Connection to
Hospital**

Platform to
improve outcomes
for individuals
w/o Medicaid

Avg 370
Connects
per week
@ 22 sites

**County Wi-Fi
Hotspots**

Extend Wireless
Connectivity and
provided Digital
Resource map

~1800
Students

**Comcast Internet
Essentials, MiFi**

Participate in
distance learning
and support
family needs

34 school
sites &
4
intersections

**Pop Up Wi-Fi
Hotspots**

Bring Wi-Fi
options closer to
residences

INFORMING TO CARRY US THROUGH COVID

Affordable Housing Studies

Provide a framework and cost models of providing broadband connectivity to affordable housing properties

123 Connect Me

Evaluate a new technology to create a private LTE network to provide APS students along Columbia Pike broadband access in their homes

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Arlington still has an **underserved** community even though 100% of Arlington has access to broadband services. 72% of households impacted by lack of connection make under \$75K. Understanding the **disaggregate data** is necessary.
- Initiatives executed during Covid will provide insights to **inform the next steps** related to broadband connectivity for residents.
- The County will continue to **evaluate and prioritize** efforts through an **Equity Lens**.