Subject:	Congratulations & Next Steps to Receive Funding
Date:	Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 2:46:49 PM Eastern Standard Time
From:	Sierra Harris <sharris@longwood.org>
To:	Michele Moll <MicheleS@rsvpmc.org>
CC:	Lauren Petrusky <lpetrusky@longwood.org>
Attachments:	Longwood Foundation Fall 2024 How to Receive Grant Funds Awarded and Complete Follow Up Requirements.pdf

Hello Michele,

Congratulations to RSVP Volunteers on your recent Longwood Foundation grant award of $75,000! As discussed, attached to this email is a document outlining the next steps you must take to receive funding, as well as information regarding follow-up requirements. Please pay close attention to the outcomes that your organization is committing to as a part of the Grant Agreement, as you will prepare a brief report on these at the conclusion of your grant period.

The attached also includes important information related to Catchafire (a grantee capacity-building resource) as well as our optional Grantee Celebration on Thursday, December 12th at Longwood Gardens. I look forward to the information about your capacity building support programs as well.

You may have already received an automatic email with the Grant Agreement and Electronic Payment Information forms from our Grants Management System, Foundant. If you have received them, please proceed by completing both within the system as soon as possible. If you have not received these forms by the end of the day on Tuesday, November 26th, please contact Lauren Petrusky, Grants Administrator (copied here for your reference).

RSVP Volunteers is eligible to return to Longwood in Spring 2027, or any cycle thereafter. Your organization's Final Report is due on February 1, 2027.

Best Wishes!
Sierra

Sierra Harris
Program Officer, Grantmaking | Longwood Foundation

O 302-683-8200 | E sharris@longwood.org
A 100 W 10th Street, Suite 1109 Wilmington, DE 19801
W https://www.longwoodfoundation.org

FollowUp Form

Terms & Conditions

Project Name
Digital Navigator in the Kennett Area

Amount Awarded
$75,000.00

Outcomes Agreed Upon
• RSVP Volunteers will train 500 community members in digital literacy during the grant period.
• Maintain that 75% of those trained will report increased confidence in using digital tools.
• 75% of clients surveyed will report they have achieved individual goals. (new measure)
• RSVP volunteers will increase fundraising for the Kennett Digital Literacy Program from $99,000 to $175,000 in 2026.

Final Report Due Date
02/01/2027

Grant Cycle Eligible to Return to Longwood
The organization is eligible to return to Longwood with another funding request in the grant cycle selected below.

Spring 2027

Return Date Exception Notes (if applicable)
Explanation if the Eligible to Return date is outside of the typical two year wait.

Spring 2027 to align with outcomes

Additional Notes
If applicable, please take note of the following details related to this Grant Agreement.

GRANT TERMS

1.Grantee will keep its status as a recognized tax-exempt organization current throughout the period of this grant and will comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations that govern the use of funds from private foundations to the Grantee organization.

2.The grant shall be used exclusively for the purposes specified in this Grant Agreement, and any alternative use of funds must be authorized in advance in writing by the Longwood Foundation, or funds must be returned.

3. Any significant change in the project must be reported to the Longwood Foundation as soon as possible.

4. Grantee agrees to complete the online final report at a date predetermined by the Longwood Foundation.

Outcomes, As Agreed Upon by Longwood Foundation

• RSVP Volunteers will train 500 community members in digital literacy during the grant period.

• Maintain that 75% of those trained will report increased confidence in using digital tools.

• 75% of clients surveyed will report they have achieved individual goals through intake. (new measure)

• RSVP volunteers will increase fundraising for the Kennett Digital Literacy Program from $99,000 to $175,000 by 2026.

Note: at initial intake client identifies goals for training which include:
      Increased ability to connect with family/friends/employment/benefits
      More confident with ordering groceries online.
      More confident with connecting with Doctor's via telehealth.
      More confident with finding information online.
      More confident with utilizing the internet for school or work-related activities.
      Better able to communicate with child's teacher.

Select Language ▾

Powered by Google **Translate**

Application

Digital Navigator in the Kennett Area

Process: Longwood Grant - Fall 2024

☒ **Collaborate** 0

| Contact Info | Request | Documents 1 |

Applicant: ✎

Mr Geren Weaver

gerenw@rsvpmc.org

610-834-1040 x132

901 E. 8th Ave Suite 200

King of Prussia, PA 19406 United States

Contact Email History

Organization: ✎

RSVP Volunteers ↗

23-2121691

610-834-1040

901 E. 8th Ave Suite 200

King of Prussia, PA 19406 United States

📄 Eligibility

🖼 Document Viewer   📄 Application Packet   📄 Question List   ⋮

📄 Application

ⓘ Fields with an asterisk (*) are required.

∨ Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Longwood Foundation. Applications for Fall 2024 are due on September 1st. Our mission is to be a catalyst to strengthen nonprofit organizations throughout the state of Delaware, in addition to the area of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania within a four-mile radius around Longwood Gardens. Before submitting an application, please visit Guidestar to either create a profile or review your current profile (updating as necessary). When preparing this proposal, please visit our website: https://longwoodfoundation.org. On this site you will find

guidelines, what to know about the Longwood Foundation's grantmaking, FAQs, information on our grant life cycle, and the opportunity to sign up for Information Sessions and Pre-Meetings.

∨ Executive Summary – Organization & Grant Request

Executive Summary - Organization & Grant Request*

Please include an Executive Summary of no more than 10,000 characters (approximately 1.5 pages). In preparing information for the Longwood Trustees, staff prepare an Executive Summary of each request. This field will serve as the foundation for that document. In this section you should address the following information:

- Organization
  - Organization name and founding year
  - Organization mission
  - Brief (2-3 sentence) organization overview
- Grant Proposal Project or Program
  - Problem statement (what challenge or issue are you working to address?)
  - How do you plan to address this problem (your project overview)? What will grow, strengthen, or improve as a result of this grant?
  - How much are you requesting and what is the total cost/budget of your project?
  - Have you already raised funds for the project? How much and from whom?
  - How will you financially sustain the project when the Longwood grant runs out?
  - How will you measure success (outcomes)?

o   Organization name and founding year

RSVP Volunteers was established in 1973.

o   Organization mission

RSVP improves the lives of vulnerable and underserved populations in the community by focusing on education and wellness and by supporting nonprofits through skill-based volunteer programs.

o   Brief (2-3 sentence) organization overview

RSVP Volunteers is a nonprofit organization that focuses on improving the lives of underserved populations through a variety of programs. RSVP engages over 1,200 volunteers in programs that emphasize education, equity, wellness, and community support. We offer literacy and math support to students pre-k – 12 in addition to adult literacy; nonprofit counseling and consulting services to help other nonprofits and startups in the area thrive and succeed; free Medicare counseling; digital literacy and skills training, and various community support activities, such as volunteer placements in schools and nonprofits, and support for food security initiatives. Our programming positively impacts over 10,000 community members annually!

•   Grant Proposal

o   Problem statement (what challenge or issue are you working to address?)

The necessity of digital literacy training has become increasingly apparent in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed and exacerbated systemic social and economic disparities. Among these, the widening digital divide stands out as a critical issue that underpins several other societal challenges. Addressing the digital divide through comprehensive digital literacy training can provide essential support and mitigate the adverse effects.

The "Digital Divide" refers to the gap between individuals, households, or communities that have access to modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) and those who do not. This divide encompasses disparities in access to essential digital tools such as computers, smartphones, and the internet in addition to, and arguably most importantly, the ability to effectively use these technologies. It can manifest in various forms, including differences in the availability of physical technology like device accessibility and broadband connectivity, which are based on factors like geography, income level, and infrastructure. The digital divide often exacerbates existing social inequalities, limiting opportunities for education, employment, healthcare, and social participation for those on the less advantaged side of the divide.

"Digital literacy" refers to the ability to effectively use digital tools, technologies, and platforms to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information. It involves a range of skills, including basic computer and internet navigation, understanding and utilizing software applications, engaging safely and responsibly online, and critically assessing the credibility and reliability of digital content. Variations in a person's level of digital literacy and their ability to use technology effectively are also influenced by several factors like education, age, and socioeconomic status (SES). People with low levels of digital literacy struggle with every-day things we take for granted like video communication (Teams/Zoom) or email, in addition to more advanced activities like online learning, seeking and applying for employment, and online banking.

Digital literacy has become a necessary and integral component of a modern, functioning, and inclusive society. The Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) emphasizes that information and communications technology (ICT) has become a "foundational literacy" alongside traditional skills like reading, numeracy, and financial literacy. The German Marshall Fund of the US reinforces this by stating that lacking basic digital skills in an increasingly

digitized world is akin to being functionally illiterate. The GMF report, which was used as a Pentagon policy briefing, added that "unequal access to [digital skills] threatens to undermine the ability of Americans to participate in their economy, their communities, and in their democracy." The GMF also noted that without "change in this regard," that is, the digital divide, the US will "have a difficult time rebuilding flowing the coronavirus pandemic" particularly in addressing the "long-standing shortfalls in economic fairness and social justice." Without digital literacy, individuals are unable to participate fully in the economy, their communities, and the democratic process. This lack of digital skills poses a significant barrier to social and economic access, impacting quality of life.

o   How do you plan to address this problem (your project overview)? What will grow, strengthen, or improve as a result of this grant?

•   In response to these challenges, the RSVP Digital Literacy and Equity program is designed to address the root causes of digital inequity. Unlike other initiatives that focus solely on device distribution, this program emphasizes teaching digital literacy skills. The program is also bilingual and accessible for Spanish-speaking program recipients. By establishing a curriculum that RSVP's partnering agencies can learn from and then impart to their constituents, the project creates a network of organizations working together to tackle one of the most pressing social issues of our time. This approach ensures that recipients of the program are not only equipped with devices but also empowered with the knowledge and skills to use them, thereby enabling them to access the social and economic opportunities that are increasingly mediated through digital platforms.

•   This initiative seeks to secure $200,000 in funding to support the hiring of a dedicated Kennett Area Bilingual Digital Navigator as part of the RSVP staff who will work closely with local community groups, partnering agencies, and individuals to deliver a wide range of digital skills training which has become a necessary and vital foundational component of modern society.

•   Having a dedicated digital navigator on staff ensures a higher level of expertise, consistency, and strategic alignment, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable digital literacy and equity outcomes for the community. This navigator will also be bilingual in Spanish and English, which removes the barrier for ESL community members who are in need of this service. The combination of these skills, knowledge, expertise, and accessibility will improve program outcomes and provide a more effective service to the Kennett Area.

o   How much are you requesting and what is the total cost/budget of your project?
•   This initiative seeks to secure $200,000 in funding to support the hiring of a dedicated Bilingual Digital Navigator as part of the RSVP staff who will work closely with local community groups, partnering agencies, and individuals to deliver a wide range of digital skills training which has become a necessary and vital foundational component in socioeconomics and quality of life.

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∨ Current Request Information

Please select the most appropriate Program Area for your PROJECT below. Note that the guidance text shown here does not encompass project types the Foundation accepts proposals for. Rather, it is intended to provide guidance for those initiatives that may be difficult to otherwise categorize.

- Arts and Culture - performing arts, cultural awareness, historical activities, humanities, fine arts, and museums
- Civic and Economic & Workforce Development - libraries, animal shelters, and community and economic development
- Education - early learning centers, preschools, K12 schools, colleges, educator professional development providers, education advocacy
- Environment - natural resources, state parks, and land and water initiatives
- Health and Hospitals - hospitals and medical centers
- Housing - housing and development
- Social Services - before/after school student support organizations, shelter and residential care, special population support, community centers, senior living facilities

Program Area*

○ Arts and Culture
○ Civic and Economic & Workforce Development
○ Education
○ Environment
○ Health and Hospitals
○ Housing
● Social Services
○ Longwood Gardens

Project Name*

Name of project

Digital Navigator in the Kennett Area

Problem Statement*

What is the challenge or problem you are trying to address through this work? If possible, please provide data, research, or information on how you know this problem exists and what the impact of the problem is.

The necessity of digital literacy training has become increasingly apparent in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed and exacerbated systemic social and economic disparities. Among these, the widening digital divide stands out as a critical issue that underpins several other societal challenges, including senior isolation, and the decline in literacy and mathematics scores among schoolchildren. Addressing the digital divide through comprehensive digital literacy training can provide essential support and mitigate the adverse effects of these interconnected trends.

The "Digital Divide" refers to the gap between individuals, households, or communities that have access to modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) and those who do not. This divide encompasses disparities in access to essential digital tools such as computers, smartphones, and the internet in addition to, and arguably most importantly, the ability to effectively use these technologies. It can manifest in various forms, including differences in the availability of physical technology like device accessibility and broadband connectivity, which are based on factors like geography, income level, and infrastructure. The digital divide often exacerbates existing social inequalities, limiting opportunities for education, employment, healthcare, and social participation for those on the less advantaged side of the divide.

"Digital literacy" refers to the ability to effectively use digital tools, technologies, and platforms to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information. It involves a range of skills, including basic computer and internet navigation, understanding and utilizing software applications, engaging safely and responsibly online, and critically assessing the credibility and reliability of digital content. Variations in a person's level of digital literacy and their ability to use technology effectively are also influenced by several factors like education, age, and socioeconomic status (SES). People with low levels of digital literacy struggle with every-day things we take for granted like video communication (Teams/Zoom) or email, in addition to more advanced activities like online learning, seeking and applying for employment, and online banking.

Digital literacy has become a necessary and integral component of a modern, functioning, and inclusive society. The Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) emphasizes that information and communications technology (ICT) has become a "foundational literacy" alongside traditional skills like reading, numeracy, and financial literacy. The German Marshall Fund of the US reinforces this by stating that lacking basic digital skills in an increasingly digitized world is akin to being functionally illiterate. The 2021 GMF report, which was used in a Pentagon policy briefing, added that "unequal access to [digital skills] threatens to undermine the ability of Americans to participate in their economy, their communities, and in their democracy." The GMF also noted that without "change in this regard," that is, the digital divide, the US will "have a difficult time rebuilding flowing the coronavirus pandemic" particularly in addressing the "long-standing shortfalls in economic fairness and social justice." Without digital literacy, individuals are unable to participate fully in the economy, their communities, and the democratic process. This lack of digital skills poses a significant barrier to social and economic justice, and without intervention, the U.S. will struggle to rebuild in the wake of the pandemic.

Senior isolation is another critical issue that has been aggravated by the digital divide. Many older adults lack basic digital literacy skills, leaving them disconnected and isolated, particularly during a time when digital communication has become not only commonplace, but vital.

According to a 2021 Pew Research Center report, 25% of adults aged 65 and older do not use the internet at all, and 42% lack home broadband services. The same Pew report found that only 61% of seniors own a smartphone, compared to 85% of the overall adult population.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 52 million American adults lack basic digital skills. Most importantly, the same study indicated that "even when given devices, they're left disconnected or unused." This aspect is a crucial focal point for our program. The national trend has been almost exclusively "device distribution" focused. Numerous studies and reports have

shown, however, that simply providing digital devices and not teaching the end-user how to operate the equipment is counterproductive. Simply providing devices to these individuals is insufficient; without the skills to use them, these devices remain unused and fail to bridge the gap in digital equity. This highlights the need for digital literacy training that goes beyond device distribution to empower seniors and other digitally excluded groups to fully participate in the modern world.

Seniors are not the only demographic the digital divide impacts, the pandemic significantly deepened the academic achievement gap between middle-class and low-income students, a disparity that has been a long-standing concern. Even as schools have reopened, many districts report that student performance has not returned to pre-COVID levels. According to the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), standardized testing scores for both reading and mathematics are lower for every grade level than they were in 2019. In their 2024 "State of Education" report, the PSBA added that the negative effects the pandemic had on learning "still lingers [with] more than 80% of survey respondents [stating] that their students had yet to recover" from pre-pandemic academic levels of achievement. Furthermore, the pandemic's extended break exacerbated the issue of summer learning loss, which affects more than half of U.S. students. According to Allison Atteberry from the University of Colorado, students suffer an average loss of 39% of their school year gains during the summer. The pandemic amplified this learning loss, making it even more crucial to address the digital divide that hinders students' ability to learn and recover from these setbacks.

The digital divide also disproportionately affects minority populations, with 29% of Black and 35% of Hispanic households reporting unreliable internet access compared to 15% of White households. A study by the National Skills Coalition found that foreign-born adults are more likely to have low levels of digital literacy. Specifically, 31% of foreign-born adults in the U.S. had no digital skills or only basic digital skills, compared to 16% of U.S.-born adults. This gap in digital literacy can make it more challenging for ESL learners to access and effectively use online language learning tools, help their children with their assignments, and communicate with their child's teachers and school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a survey by the Migration Policy Institute found that nearly 50% of adults in immigrant families reported that someone in their household experienced disruptions to education due to a lack of digital access, compared to 21% of U.S.-born adults. This disruption disproportionately affected ESL students who rely on digital resources for language learning and educational progress. The lack of connectivity widens the "homework gap," which refers to the disparity between students who have access to the necessary technology and internet connectivity at home to complete their homework and those who do not. As more assignments, research, and educational resources move online, students without adequate digital access are at a significant disadvantage, leading to gaps in academic performance and widening educational inequalities. The decline in academic performance is closely tied to the digital divide, which disproportionately impacts low-socioeconomic status (low-SES) families. The lack of access to necessary technology, such as computers and reliable internet has left many students unable to complete homework assignments, further widening the opportunity gap.

In response to these challenges, the RSVP Digital Literacy and Equity program is designed to address the root causes of digital inequity. Unlike other initiatives that focus solely on device distribution, this program emphasizes teaching digital literacy skills. The program is also bilingual and accessible for Spanish-speaking program recipients. By establishing a curriculum that RSVP's partnering agencies can learn from and then impart to their constituents, the project creates a network of organizations working together to tackle one of the most pressing social issues of our time. This approach ensures that recipients of the program are not only equipped with devices but also empowered with the knowledge and skills to use them, thereby enabling them to access the

social and economic opportunities that are increasingly mediated through digital platforms. In conclusion, digital literacy training is not just a remedy for the digital divide; it is a foundational step toward addressing broader social and economic disparities. By focusing on digital literacy, the RSVP Digital Literacy and Equity program provides a sustainable solution that empowers individuals and communities to function effectively, and with continued support and training through RSVP's digital literacy program, thrive in a digitized world. The Digital Navigator program is an evidence based best practice model in digital equity and will improve the quality of life of those who are trained in the Kennett Area.

✅ 289 characters left of 10,000

Request Amount (Whole dollars, no cents please. Round up if necessary,)*

Please note the following concerning your request amount:

- **Pre-Meetings are required for requests $500,000 and above**. Please use the link: https://forms.monday.com/forms/0d09be5e7e582ba8a55cbbb5689dab85?r=use1 to sign up if you have not already. Requests will be handled in the order in which they are received.
- **Please note that the last day of Pre-Meetings for the Fall grant cycle is Friday, August 16th**, in order to allow prospective applicants sufficient time to incorporate any guidance provided in the meeting. **Organizations are encouraged to submit a request well in advance of this date as in past cycles all time slots have filled quickly.**
- Requests for $500,000 and above that did not have a Pre-Meeting prior to submitting an application will not be accepted.
- We continue to want to pay no more than 50% of the cash needed to a project or operations over the time period you define.

$ | 200,000.00

Total Project Budget (Whole dollars, no cents please. Round up if necessary,)*

If requesting general operating funds, this is the total operating budget over the period of the grant.

$ | 200,000.00

Project Description*

Include a narrative of your project/program. Who will be served? What impact will this have on the community? What will grow, strengthen, and/or improve as a result of this work? How?

The RSVP Digital Literacy and Equity Program is designed to address digital inequity by providing essential digital literacy training to residents within a four-mile radius of Kennett. RSVP provides essential digital skills training to individuals who are at risk of digital exclusion due to factors like age, income, language barriers, or limited access to technology. This program plays a critical role in bridging the digital divide, empowering participants with the skills needed to navigate an increasingly digitized world. Key benefits include improved technology access, enhanced digital literacy, increased workforce readiness, broader inclusion within society, and better educational outcomes.

RSVP's program leadership has created an evidence based digital literacy curriculum. In close coordination with our partnering agencies (MOU in place with each), like the Kennett Library and Kennett Area Senior Center, in addition with our volunteering individuals, we implemented a "Train the Trainer" aspect of the program. RSVP trained partnering agency staff members and our volunteers then use RSVP's digital literacy curriculum to teach digital skills to program recipients. Through these partnerships, it has been identified that more hours and trainings are needed and requested by the program sites. At this point partners have met and expressed the group desire to take the next step in the program to follow an evidence based Digital Navigator model and implement this in the Kennett Area. This initiative seeks to secure $200,000 in funding to support the Digital Navigator who will connect local community groups, partnering agencies, and individuals to deliver a wide range of digital skills training which has become a necessary and vital foundational component of modern society. This effort will improve quality of life for an estimated 250 + unique individuals in the Kennett Area each year.

What is a Digital Navigator?

Digital Navigators can be volunteers, cross-trained existing staff, or dedicated new hires who offer guidance on connectivity, devices, and digital skills. Typically, at trusted community-based organizations, digital navigators are familiar with their community's resources that relate to digital equity, and they help residents learn to use critical online services. They recommend resources and check back with the client over time to ensure they can reach their goals. With on-demand services or through appointments, digital navigators support both urgent needs and long-term goals. Digital navigators provide general support and offer specialized support for specific topics, such as healthcare, and for specific populations, including people with disabilities, returning citizens, higher education students, and caregivers to K-12 students (NDIA.org).

How will a dedicated Digital Navigator improve the program?

Currently, RSVP's Digital Literacy and Equity program uses our trained volunteers and staff at partnering agencies, like the Kennett Library and Kennett Area Senior Center. Support from the Longwood Foundation will allow the needed expansion of the program to be responsive to the needs of the Kennett Area community and partners (14+) supported by the program A dedicated, bilingual digital navigator, will provide consistent and reliable support to individuals and the community. Unlike volunteers, who may have varying availability, a dedicated staff member ensures that services are available on a regular and predictable schedule.

Expertise

A professional digital navigator is typically trained and experienced in digital literacy education and support. They possess specialized knowledge in the latest digital tools, security practices, and instructional methods, which may not always be the case with volunteers who may have varying levels of expertise. As an employee, a digital navigator is accountable to the RSVP organization, ensuring that RSVP's outcomes and standards are consistently met.

Customized Service

A dedicated navigator can develop and implement customized training programs that address the specific needs of the community, including ongoing assessments and adjustments based on feedback. Volunteers might not have the capacity or continuity to create and follow through with

[...] such personalized services. A staff navigator can build stronger, more lasting relationships with community members, gaining a deep understanding of their needs and challenges.

Bilingual / Culturally Sensitive

A digital navigator, especially one who is bilingual and culturally competent, can offer more nuanced and sensitive support to diverse populations. Volunteers may lack the specific cultural or linguistic skills required to effectively serve all community members.

Strategic Alignment

A staff member is aligned with the organization's long-term goals and strategies, ensuring that the digital navigation services are integrated into broader organizational efforts. Volunteers, who may only be involved temporarily or sporadically, might not have the same level of understanding or commitment to these goals. Over time, a dedicated navigator can help build the organization's capacity to deliver digital literacy training, including creating resources, developing partnerships, and establishing best practices.

In summary, having a dedicated digital navigator on staff ensures a higher level of expertise, consistency, and strategic alignment, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable digital literacy and equity outcomes for the community. RSVP is a National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) affiliate, and we work closely with our trusted local partnering agencies in the Kennet Square area, many of whom are also NDIA-approved, to make the program accessible to a diverse range of community members who are in-need of this support. We also partner with the Chester County Digital Alliance and have worked with United Way of Southern Chester County to provide our digital literacy and equity training services to the Kennett Area community.

Key Program Components:

1. Bilingual Digital Navigator Role

o A digital navigator, a concept developed by the NDIA in 2020, is a professional who assists individuals in developing ongoing, individualized support to learn the necessary digital literacy skills to access and effectively use digital tools and resources.

o The navigator will be fluent in both English and Spanish, ensuring that language barriers do not prevent community members from accessing vital digital resources.

o They will provide one-on-one and group training sessions to help individuals develop digital skills, covering topics such as navigating online health portals, accessing government services, accessing and using educational resources for themselves or their children, navigating safely online, online banking, ordering goods and services online, recognizing spam and phishing scams, and managing online communication tools like email or video comms like Teams/Zoom.

2. Comprehensive Digital Literacy Workshops

o The navigator will conduct workshops, both in-person and virtually, working closely with RSVP's Digital Literacy Coordinator, tailored to the needs of community groups in the Kennett area. These workshops will cover a broad spectrum of digital skills, from basic computer use to more advanced topics like online security, digital financial literacy, and using digital tools for education and employment.

o The Digital Navigator will use RSVP's digital literacy curriculum and interactive learning lesson plans that have been carefully and professionally developed to make acquiring digital skills accessible for all program participants. So far, our curriculum has been well received and has proven to be successful.

o A digital navigator provides essential follow-through by offering ongoing support and guidance beyond initial training sessions. They deliver tailored individual attention based on a thorough assessment of one's unique needs, ensuring that the training is relevant and effective.

3. Onsite and Virtual Support

o The navigator will be available onsite at our varying partner-agencies to assist clients with navigating the health portal system. Additionally, virtual support will be offered to ensure

accessibility for those unable to attend in person.

4. Collaboration with Kennett Library and Other Local Kennett Area Organizations

o   The navigator will partner with the Kennett Library and other local organizations RSVP has established relationships and MOU's (memorandum of understanding) with to offer personalized digital skills training in-person. Sessions will be adapted to the specific needs of individuals, complementing the efforts of current community trainers with a focus on expanding digital literacy and reducing digital inequity.

o   The digital navigator can offer in-person training sessions within the Kennett Area School District, one of RSVP's partnering agencies, so parents can learn to connect more effectively and stay involved with their child's academic assignments and progress.

5. Partnering Agencies / Program Recipients inlcude:

o   Kennett Library

o   The Garage Community and Youth Center

o   Kennett Area Senior Center

o   LCH Health and Community Services

o   Tick Tock Early Learning Center

o   Kennett Consolidated School District

Program Impact

The Bilingual Digital Navigator will play a crucial role in reducing digital inequity in Kennett by empowering residents with the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital world. By providing training that spans various aspects of digital literacy, including health services, the program will enable individuals to access essential resources, improve their quality of life, and participate fully in opportunities.

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Additional Project Details (if needed)

Use this field to type in or upload additional project details.

Please see attached file containing Letters of Support from some program partners in the Kennett Area

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Letter of Support ED of Kennett Library-merged-compressed.pdf   [360.0KiB]   👁

Additional Project Details (if needed)

program flow-merged.pdf   [8.4 MiB]   👁

Overview of the Cash Flow Projection

The cash flow projection (sometimes referred to as a cash flow forecast) is a forward-looking tool that helps us to understand and pressure test your ambition, project plan, and pace of growth against your existing scale and sources of income. This document asks you to predict the revenues and expenses over the length of the grant (typically two years). Note that this differs from the historical cash flow statement that would be included in your financial statements. A cash flow projection serves as a functional reality check for you and for us. We ask that you make some thoughtful and informed assumptions about what will materialize over the grant period, and explicitly articulate those assumptions in the document. These assumptions are the explanation as to how you landed at the revenue and expense projections. We do not expect you to have a crystal ball. We recognize these will not play out exactly as articulated. However, we have found that organizations who have their arms around this tool and who lean into using it are best positioned to weather the uncertainty of nonprofit fundraising as well as set realistic and ambitious goals and operational plans for growth. Given that we are looking to understand how you will sustain this new level of operations and impact after our grant, your cash flow will illustrate how our grant serves as a bridge from your existing state of operations towards your planned future state.

Cash allows you to pay your employees and vendors, and we ask for the granularity of a monthly or quarterly look because it allows us to understand the cash inflow and outflow need that play out over the course of a grant. This document is the glue between your project plan, proposed outcomes/measures of success, and historical financials – and serves as a road map for you to measure your financial progress against your plan if a grant is made.

Two-Year Projected Cash Flow for the Project*

If requesting funding for a specific project or program (as opposed to general operating support), we ask that you please provide a two-year cash flow projection specific to this project/program. Please identify the assumptions you use and note either in the footnotes of the spreadsheet or in the field below. This cash flow should show a future monthly or quarterly two-year projection of the project/program financials. You may use your own format or reference the StrongNonprofits.org toolkit. Please note if using their template, it will need to be modified for two years.

When creating the cash flow, you should assume your request will be funded by Longwood and this line item should be explicitly called out in the cash flow projection. Remember to explain the assumptions used and note these. If a cash flow is not applicable to your specific project or program, please explain why in the field below.

Note -- a two-year cash flow projection for the organization will be addressed later in the application.

If this document was built in Excel, please provide the Excel version (as opposed to PDF).

1,000 characters left of 1,000

Kennett Area Navigator RSVP 2YR Program Budget.xlsx   [10.3 KiB]   👁

Projected Cash Flow Assumptions

If you did not name assumptions made inside of the two-year cash flow document (or spreadsheet) above, please note them here.

This request and budget is specific to much needed digital navigator program for the Kennett Area.

901 characters left of 1,000

Source(s) of Remaining Cost of Project/Program

Provide list of funds promised and funds in hand.

N/A This program budget and request is specific to a much needed digital navigator program for the Kennett Area.

4,886 characters left of 5,000

Fundraising Plans*

If Longwood request amount and funds in hand are not sufficient to complete the project (or to fund your operations), where will you obtain the remaining funds required?

n/a This request fully encompasses the need.

4,956 characters left of 5,000

Sustainability Plans

If the request is for operating or program funding, how will you replace Longwood's funding at the end of the grant period to sustain the operations or program? We recognize that there is rarely a perfect answer to this question, but we would like to understand your plans to replace our funds when they run out.

RSVP will seek ongoing funding to secure. This 2 year funding would allow RSVP to collect data to present to county/regional/statewide/federal offices/funding opportunities for contract funding.

4,805 characters left of 5,000

What are your contingency plans, should your request not be awarded?*

Please address what your organization would do, should your request not be fulfilled.

If this funding is not awarded RSVP will continue to apply for funding. Until the catalyst funding is secured, the much needed, evidence based digital navigator program in the Kennett Area cannot be put in to action. Thank you so much for your time and consideration in this request.

4,717 characters left of 5,000

∨ Proposed Measures of Success (Outcomes)

Proposed Measures of Success (Outcomes) for the Project*

How will you measure the success of this project? Proposed outcomes should be translated into 2-4 bullet points (metrics) that describe (ideally, quantitatively) what will grow, strengthen, and/or improve because of this work. If possible, include your current performance (baseline) on the same metrics. Another way to think about these is to consider what your Board is holding the leaders of your organization accountable for in the next 18-24 months as a result of this grant.

We look to you to define what success looks like through our grant, and quantitatively how you'll know you've achieved it. We do not want you to create or propose outcomes for us that are not important for your nonprofit. These should speak to and resonate with how you think about success. For this reason, many nonprofits are strongly positioned to provide these when they can lift them directly out of their strategic plan.

Be thoughtful when you're drafting these. While we want to see and understand your ambition, we will ultimately be holding you accountable to them. One of our founder's values - and thus our values - is to be responsible and accountable. Through our grantmaking, your performance on these outcomes is one way we think about whether a grant is successful.

Note that should your organization receive a grant, the Longwood Foundation will likely ask that you not return with another request until the time frame for the outcomes of this grant has elapsed.

To that end, if you receive a grant and would like to return to Longwood with another request in two

years, you may wish to choose an outcome timeline ending no later than June 30, 2026.

Please see What to Know About Outcomes at The Longwood Foundation for further information: https://longwoodfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/What-to-Know-About-Outcomes-at-Longwood-August-2024.pdf

# of agency partners in the Kennett Area

8,863 characters left of 10,000

∨ Organization Information

Organization Type*

☑ 501(c)(3) Public Charity
☐ 501(c)(3) Private Foundation
☐ Fiscally Sponsored Organization
☐ None of the Above

Tax-Exempt Status*

Please provide evidence of your tax-exempt status if your organization <u>does not</u> file an annual Form 990 with the IRS. *(If you do file an annual Form 990, enter "not applicable".)*

not applicable

Do you have a fiscal sponsor?

To be eligible for a grant, your organization must have tax-exempt status with the IRS. If you do not, you must answer YES and input your fiscal sponsor's Tax ID and associated information.

Answer NO if your organization has its own tax-exempt status.

Definition: A fiscal sponsorship is an arrangement in which a tax-exempt organization (the "fiscal sponsor") offers its legal and tax-exempt status to another group for a project or an activity related to the mission of the nonprofit organization. If your organization will be utilizing a fiscal sponsor arrangement, we require that the fiscal sponsor be a 501(c)(3) public charity.

○ Yes

◉ No

Background*

Provide a background of your organization. Include date founded, services you provide, and demographics you serve.

In 1969 the national RSVP program was authorized by Congress. Two years later, in 1971, the program was transferred from the Administration on Aging to ACTION, the federal volunteer agency.

In 1973 the program was decentralized resulting in RSVP projects emerging across the country being administered and funded through regional and state offices and sponsored by local private nonprofit or public agencies. Finally, RSVP of Montgomery County was established in January 1973 with support from ACTION and a grant from Family Services of Montgomery County. The year 1979 marked a significant milestone for RSVP of Montgomery County as we achieved the remarkable distinction of becoming one of only 30 RSVPs out of 750 to become self-sponsored and incorporated. This newfound independence granted us the freedom to tailor our programs to address local needs effectively and allowed us to be governed by our own Board of Directors. We updated our organization name to "RSVP Volunteers" officially in 2021 as 'RSVP of Montgomery County' was confusing as we serve greater Philadelphia. RSVP's programs are offered across Greater Philadelphia (Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties) and support the critical needs of disadvantaged pre-school children, students K-12, at-risk youth, families, the elderly, veterans, those with low reading and STEM literacy skills and other nonprofit organizations through rewarding volunteer opportunities.

RSVP Volunteers operates several key programs focused on education, wellness, and community support:

Educational Programs: These include literacy initiatives like America Reads and Family Literacy, as well as digital literacy training aimed at reducing the digital divide. RSVP's "My Free Tutor" program provides virtual math tutoring for students in grades K-12.

Senior Wellness: RSVP offers various programs tailored to older adults, including Medicare counseling, health and wellness classes, and food security initiatives. These services are designed to improve the quality of life for seniors and ensure they have access to necessary resources.

Nonprofit Assistance: Through the Volunteer Executive Consultants (VEC) program, RSVP offers management consulting, educational workshops, and expert office hours to help other nonprofits build capacity and improve performance in areas like strategic planning, fundraising, and marketing.

Community Support: RSVP is involved in various community support activities, such as volunteer placements in schools and nonprofits, and support for food security initiatives.

Demographics Served:
RSVP's programming positively impacts Seniors, students and at-risk youth in grades Pre-k through 12th, including "Head Start" families and students with learning disabilities, Veterans and adults who need digital literacy training, and other nonprofits in the greater Philadelphia area encompassing Chester, Montgomery, Delaware, and Philadelphia counties. Our program recipients are underserved, often low-socioeconomic status families and individuals.

949 characters left of 4,000

Mission Statement*

Mission: RSVP improves the lives of vulnerable populations in the local community by focusing on education and wellness and by supporting nonprofits through skill-based volunteer programs.

RSVP supports the critical needs of disadvantaged pre-school children, students K-12, at-risk youth, families, the elderly, veterans, those with low reading, STEM, and digital literacy skills.

618 characters left of 1,000

Organization Website

⊕ | rsvpmc.org

Name of Executive Director*

If the organization does not have an Executive Director (or leader), please include the name of the Board Chair.

Michele Moll

In what year did the Executive Director join the organization?*

If the organization does not have an Executive Director (or leader), please include the information on the Board Chair.

\# | 2009

In what year did the Executive Director assume this role?*

If the organization does not have an Executive Director (or leader), please include the information on the Board Chair.

\# | 2009

Past Experience of Executive Director

Please share a brief summary of the Executive Director's (or leader's) career experience and highlights/accomplishments. If easier, you may upload a resume instead.

Please see attached resume.

1,972 characters left of 2,000

Resume_Michele_Moll_2024.pdf   [140.0KiB]   👁

Board of Directors*

Type in or upload your current Board of Director information (List of names and their corresponding positions/titles on the board).

Please see the attached pdf.

1,972 characters left of 2,000

18. Board Bios 2024 (7.22.24).pdf   [152.0 KiB]   👁

Information Session Attendance*

The Information Session was refreshed ahead of the Fall 2023 grant cycle to provide greater clarity on Longwood's grantmaking and evaluation process. Even if you attended an Information Session prior to Summer 2023, you may find value in participating. Please note that participation neither improves nor harms an organization's likelihood of receiving funding. If interested, please visit our website to register: https://longwoodfoundation.org/grant-information-sessions/

Has any representative (leader and/or Board Chair) from your organization attended a Longwood Foundation Grant Information Session? These sessions, while not mandatory, are offered every six months and overview the application/evaluation processes used by the Foundation.
- [ ] No
- [x] Yes

Disclosure (optional, if desired and/or necessary)

Is there anything your organization would like to disclose at this time? For example, has there been any recent senior leadership changes or an unusual financial situation that we should be aware of?

N/A

4,997 characters left of 5,000

Strategic Plan*

Does your organization have a current strategic plan?

(•) Yes
( ) No

⌄ Strategic Plan

In what year was your organization's strategic plan created?

\# | 2024

Strategic Plan Upload

If you would like to share a copy of your most recent strategic plan (or plan summary), you may do so here.

RSVP 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Executive Summary.pdf   [627.1 KiB] 👁

⌄ Financial Information

Instructions for Providing Financial Information

In addition to your most recently completed independent audit report, please provide interim current year Statements of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) and Statements of Activities (Profit & Loss Statement) that also contain the same prior year period numbers for comparison purposes.

We expect that organizations whose revenue last year was above $5 million will have audited financials. We would prefer that smaller organizations do as well. If no independent audit is available, please explain why and provide the most recent year-end Statements of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) and Statements of Activities (Profit & Loss Statements) that also contain prior year-end numbers for comparison purposes. The same statements, with comparable prior year numbers, are required for the interim period since your most recent year-end.

During our meeting to discuss your application, we are likely to have questions about your financials. If the Executive Director is not familiar with the organization's financials, please ensure that your financial expert joins the meeting.

Latest Financial Audit*

If a financial audit is not available, please provide the end-of-fiscal-year P&L Statements for the previous two years.

RSVP Fin. Stmt. 12.31.23 (Final).pdf   [212.1 KiB]   👁

If no independent audit is available, please explain why.

Please see the attached pdf of the audit.

4,959 characters left of 5,000

Statement of Financial Position (period ending June 30, 2024)*

Cash.pdf   [137.4 KiB]   👁

Statement of Activities/Profit & Loss Statements (period ending June 30, 2024)*

Statement of Activities.pdf   [137.4 KiB]   👁

Overview of the Cash Flow Projection

The cash flow projection (sometimes referred to as a cash flow forecast) is a forward-looking tool that helps us to understand and pressure test your ambition, project plan, and pace of growth against your existing scale and sources of income. This document asks you to predict the revenues and expenses over the length of the grant (typically two years). Note that this differs from the historical cash flow statement that would be included in your financial statements. A cash flow projection serves as a functional reality check for you and for us. We ask that you make some thoughtful and informed assumptions about what will materialize over the grant period, and explicitly articulate those assumptions in the document. These assumptions are the explanation as to how you landed at the revenue and expense projections. We do not expect you to have a crystal ball. We recognize these will not play out exactly as articulated. However, we have found that organizations who have their arms around this tool and who lean into using it are best positioned to weather the uncertainty of nonprofit fundraising as well as set realistic and ambitious goals and operational plans for growth. Given that we are looking to understand how you will sustain this new level of operations and impact after our grant, your cash flow will illustrate how our grant serves as a bridge

from your existing state of operations towards your planned future state.

Cash allows you to pay your employees and vendors, and we ask for the granularity of a monthly or quarterly look because it allows us to understand the cash inflow and outflow need that play out over the course of a grant. This document is the glue between your project plan, proposed outcomes/measures of success, and historical financials – and serves as a road map for you to measure your financial progress against your plan if a grant is made.

Two-Year Projected Cash Flow for the Organization

Please provide a two-year projected (forward-looking) cash flow for the organization (presented either quarterly or monthly). We recognize there is a great deal of uncertainty, so we know it won't be perfect. Please keep track of the assumptions you use and note either in the footnotes of the spreadsheet or in the field below. You may use your own format or reference the StrongNonprofits.org toolkit. Please note if using their template, it will need to be modified for two years.

If your prior year revenues were above $20 million, you do not need to complete a two-year cash flow for the organization.

If this document was built in Excel, please provide the Excel version (as opposed to PDF).

Kennett Area Navigator RSVP cash projection.xlsx   [34.4 KiB]   👁

Projected Cash Flow Assumptions

If you did not name assumptions made inside of the two-year cash flow above, please note them here.

See the notes in attachment. Conservative assumptions (relatively flat due to unknowns) are made in regards to revenue/expenses each year. Expenses and revenue are reviewed monthly by board and leadership. All internal documents are updated in progress towards budget and interconnected shifts in income/expense.

Please note this spreadsheet is an RSVP internal organization document and is confidential.

4,593 characters left of 5,000

Organization's Annual Budget*

$ 1,137,171.00

Fiscal Year*

Provide FY start and end months, e.g. Jan to Dec or July to June.

Jan to Dec

Most Recent Tax Year Total Revenue*

$ | 1,140,195.00

Most Recent Tax Year Total Expenses*

$ | 1,009,319.00

Most Recent Tax Year Liabilities*

$ | 127,036.00

Most Recent Tax Year Total Assets*

$ | 761,633.00

Net Assets End of Year

$ | 634,597.00

∨ Applicant Meeting Location Preference

As part of our application process, we schedule site visits with all applicants to discuss their proposals. Our preference is to have an in-person meeting at your site, or in-person at our offices should you not have a site. However, if you prefer to connect remotely instead, we also offer Zoom meetings.

Should you choose an in-person visit, you will be prompted to provide the location name and address. Again, our preference is to come to you. However, if you do not have a site available, we will meet you at our offices in Wilmington instead.

Organization Name*

RSVP Volunteers

Your First and Last Name*

Geren Weaver on behalf Michele Moll, Executive Director

Your Email Address*

✉ Gerenw@rsvpmc.org

Best Telephone Number to Reach You*

A cell phone number is preferred. This number will be used only for scheduling purposes and will not be shared outside of the Foundation.

\# 2674751436

How would you prefer to meet to discuss your organization's grant application?*

Please select from the options below. Note, if you select "In Person - At my organization's site or office," you will be prompted to provide a location name and address on the next screen.

- 🔘 In Person - At my organization's site or office
- ⚪ In Person -At the Longwood Foundation office (Wilmington, DE)
- ⚪ Remotely via Zoom

⌄ In Person – At your organization's site or office

Name of your site or office*

RSVP Volunteers

Street address for your preferred location*

Provide the street address for your organization's site or offibe

901 E. 8th Ave. Suite 200

City and State for your preferred location*

Provide the city and state where your site or office is located

King of Prussia, PA

Zip Code for your site or office*

Provide the zip code for your site or office

| 19406

Special Instructions

If there are any special instructions that would be helpful for our team to know about your organization's site or office, please provide them. This may include details such as where to park upon arrival, which entrance to use, etc. This information will be shared with our team member visiting your site. If there are no special instructions, please skip this question.

Alternatively, program staff, partners, and/or board members are happy to come to you, meet via zoom, or meet at the Library in Kennett to discuss the program and application. Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

23 characters left of 250

Additional Project Details (if needed)
Letter of Support ED of Kennett Lib...

Additional Project Details (if needed)
program flow-merged.pdf

Two-Year Projected Cash Flow for the Project
Kennett Area Navigator RSVP 2YR ...

Past Experience of Executive Director
Resume_Michele_Moll_2024.pdf

Board of Directors
18. Board Bios 2024 (7.22.24).pdf

Strategic Plan Upload
RSVP 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Ex...

Latest Financial Audit
RSVP Fin. Stmt. 12.31.23 (Final).pdf

Statement of Financial Position (period ending
June 30, 2024)
Cash.pdf

Statement of Activities/Profit & Loss
Statements (period ending June 30, 2024)
Statement of Activities.pdf

Two-Year Projected Cash Flow for the
Organization
Kennett Area Navigator RSVP cash...

Kennett Library

Begin your journey here

320 E. State St.
PO Box 730
Kennett Square PA 19348

3/4/24

As a public space that is a pivotal center for the community and a site that provides digital access and literacy training, the Kennett Library supports this grant for providing of digital access and training to patrons of our libraries. In support of this initiative, the Kennett Library will provide access to rooms and areas where trainings can occur and will make our patrons aware of these services.

We acknowledge the need for these services in our areas and are excited about the ability to offer this heightened program in our libraries. With our library receiving nearly 1,000 visits per day and 4,000 wifi uses per month, the need for digital access and training is paramount.

Sincerely,

C M Manna

Chris Manna
Executive Director
Kennett Library
484-730-8421
cmanna@ccls.org

February 29, 2024

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to support the request for digital literacy funding for the public libraries and RSVP proposed model in Chester County, PA.

I believe RSVP Volunteers is an exceptional candidate for funding because I have used their "Train the Trainer" model. I am one of the trainers they trained and I moved forward with what I learned and taught it to our community members with much success. I would like to share some of those success stories.

I had an 84-year-old woman attend one of my training sessions. She was talked into buying a cell phone and a tablet by her friends so she could keep in touch with them. They showed her some of the features and how to do it, or they did it for her, but she said they didn't teach her how to use it, which she found to be a distraction. She attended each session of the six-week course and was taught how to *use* it.

I received a phone call from one of her friends telling me my student learned so much from the class that she can now text, email, delete unwanted emails, access her voicemail, as well as add and remove applications. She is hard of hearing and has some difficulty using the telephone. She is now connected to friends and family.

Another example is an 80-year-old woman who attended my class to improve the digital literacy skills she already had. She had a lot of fun learning how to access emojis, change her Wallpaper, sent photos via text and email, and created folders for the applications on her home page. She was excited to share her new skills with her family and send emojis to her grandchildren. She thought herself to be a little more "hip."

The students come into the class with devices they don't know how to use. They leave the class with a little more knowledge, a little more pride, and a little more dignity, and that is why this program needs to continue.

Sincerely,

Lori Holcombe
Information & Assistance/Member Services Coordinator
Kennett Area Senior Center

February 28, 2024

To whom it may concern:

This letter gives my strongest support for the request for digital literacy funding for the public libraries and RSVP proposed model in Chester County, PA.

Despite its wealth, Chester County has pockets of serious poverty with digital literacy needs that start at a very basic level. Many low-income residents whom LCH serves have limited access to digital resources. Many have smartphones but do not know how to use them to improve their access to resources.

The disparity in digital literacy among Chester County citizens became a stark reality during the pandemic when a group of residents (Chester County Digital Alliance) organized to actively work on finding creative ways to bridge the gap.

Creating a model of "Train the Trainer" for non-profit organizations that serve this vulnerable population was the first step. The training by RSVP, a non-profit that trains volunteers to teach digital skills, provided digital skills training for the employees, who in turn teach their clients. This has a track record of success and will continue.

Currently, a partnership with the local libraries and RSVP has developed a model that will include digital navigators with volunteers; training sessions; and support in gaining Internet access and computers. This is anticipated to serve as a ground-level effort to reach those most in need. For our patients, this means increasing access to healthcare utilizing tools like patient portals and telehealth.

With digital literacy being the new public utility in the future, this vulnerable group is being left behind in workforce development; educational opportunities; access to telehealth/health resources as well as a multitude of social engagements that help a citizen grow and become an active contributor in his/her community.

The Chester County Digital Alliance is committed to supporting these needs by increasing digital literacy. I am happy to support their efforts.

Warmly,

Kate Wickersham, CFRE
LCH Director of Development

April 16, 2024

To whom it may concern,

This gives my endorsement of the Chester County Digital Alliance (CCDA), an advisory committee, also endorsed by the Chester County Commissioners, doing important work across Chester County to advocate and inform everyone about gaining access to high-quality and affordable Internet service, devices, and digital literacy.

Even with its wealth, Chester County has pockets of serious poverty where there is no broadband or limited coverage, and the digital literacy needs start at a very basic level. Migrants serving the agricultural industry, as well as low-income seniors at best have an I-phone with no computers in their homes.

CCDA is currently collaborating with anchor institutions of RSVP non-profit, and the Chester County libraries to secure funding for digital literacy classes, devices and Spanish-speaking digital navigators.

With digital literacy being the new public utility in the future, this vulnerable group is being left behind in work force development; educational opportunities; access to telehealth/health resources as well as a multitude of social engagements that helps a citizen grow and become an active contributor in his/her community.

I offer my strong support to the work being initiated and accomplished by the CCDA in Chester County, PA.

Sincerely,

Senator John I. Kane

square roots collective

April 5, 2024

To whom it may concern:

Square Roots Collective is a collection of social enterprises that are working together so that all residents of our community have the opportunity to thrive. Our initiatives are wide-ranging – from hospitality businesses like The Creamery beer garden and Artelo hotel to non-profits that we helped found and are actively involved in, including Kennett Trails Alliance and Voices Underground.

While the issues of digital access and literacy have long been a community need, the pandemic helped reveal how significant that need is. In particular, as students had to take classes from home, it became essential that students had access to high speed internet and that they and their parents knew how to navigate digital tools.

In the absence of such access and capability, students faced the potential of irreparably falling behind in their studies. As education is central to laying the foundation for employment, falling behind creates the possibility of all manner of difficulties, including the ability to afford basic needs like housing, transportation and food.

While education is perhaps the best example of the critical importance of digital access and literacy, there are other issues as well that are of similar importance. For example, increasingly, affordable healthcare is offered over the internet via telemedicine. Those without access to these tools face increased difficulty availing themselves of care that may be central to wellbeing.

In light of these critical needs, we are pleased to endorse the work of the Chester County Digital Alliance (CCDA), a committee that is working to advocate for public policies aimed at addressing these concerns through education and advocacy. Addressing these concerns will necessitate substantial expenditures from the public, and we would like to express our support for this important work.

Best regards,

Luke Zubrod, Chief of Staff

To whom it may concern:

This letter gives my strongest support for the request for digital literacy funding for the public libraries and RSVP proposed model in Chester County, PA.

In spite of its wealth, Chester County has pockets of serious poverty with digital literacy need that start at a very basic level. Migrants serving the agricultural industry, as well as low-income seniors at best have an I-phone with no computers in their homes.

The disparity in digital literacy among Chester County citizens became a stark reality during the pandemic when a group of residents (Chester County Digital Alliance) organized to actively work on finding creative ways to bridge the gap.

Creating a model of "Train the Trainer" for non-profit organizations, who serve this vulnerable population was the first step. The training by RSVP, a non-profit that trains volunteers to teach digital skills, provided digital skills training for the employees, who in turn teach their clients. This has a track record of success and will continue.

Currently, a partnership with the local libraries and RSVP have developed a model that will include digital navigators with volunteers; training sessions; and support in gaining Internet access and computers. This is anticipated to serve as a ground level effort that will reach those most in need.

With digital literacy being the new public utility in the future, this vulnerable group is being left behind in work force development; educational opportunities; access to telehealth/health resources as well as a multitude of social engagements that helps a citizen grow and become an active contributor in his/her community.

The Chester County Digital Alliance is committed to the long haul and share the belief that your financial investment will help bring about valuable returns.

With community caring,

Joan Holliday/Chester County Digital Alliance

Digital Literacy and the Train the Trainer model

As the director of the Adult Literacy Program at the Kennett Library, my staff and I deliver classes in 5 different levels of English as a Second Language, and also classes which prepare our students for testing for GED and American citizenship. We also often help students one-on-one with computer issues both within the library and within our program, but I wanted to offer more in the way of specific digital literacy classes.

As members of the Chester County Digital Alliance, my assistant and I attended a series of workshops held by RSVP called "Train the Trainer", which dealt with exploring various digital literacy topics and then training others, in turn, to also aid our clients. I could not have guessed how valuable these workshops would be to both me and my staff as we approached the Spring of 2020!

The onset of the pandemic halted our weekly classes and caused us to pivot to using Zoom to deliver them. It also spotlighted a dire necessity for many of our students: digital literacy.

My staff and I worked tirelessly to aid our students through their nervousness and taught them via telephone how to connect to Zoom, how to establish and check emails each week, and how to manage their email accounts. This mini crash lesson allowed the students to connect to class and continue with their studies, but left much to be desired in the way of truly being digitally savvy and able to use the computer fully for necessary tasks.

As the pandemic eased and we returned to in-person classes, we added digital literacy to our repertoire so we could have our students practice using the computer for everyday life skills. They learned seemingly simple but important skills such as: to navigate the Internet safely; to search for and apply for jobs; to order groceries, food, and medicine; to open medical portals and fill out doctors' forms and schedule telehealth appointments; to connect with family members; to conference with their children's teachers and to navigate the online portals of their children's school; to use various online sites to continue to study; to take practice tests for their citizenship test and for the high school subject tests for the GED.

Digital literacy classes are held from September to May and then as one-on-one tutoring sessions during the summer at the Kennett Library. The Train the Trainer workshops have given us the skills and materials to approach these topics without fear of overwhelming our students, while giving them the information and practice they need to use the computer safely and efficiently.

Filomena Elliott, Adult Literacy Director,
Kennett Library, 320 E. State St.,
Kennett Square, PA 19348
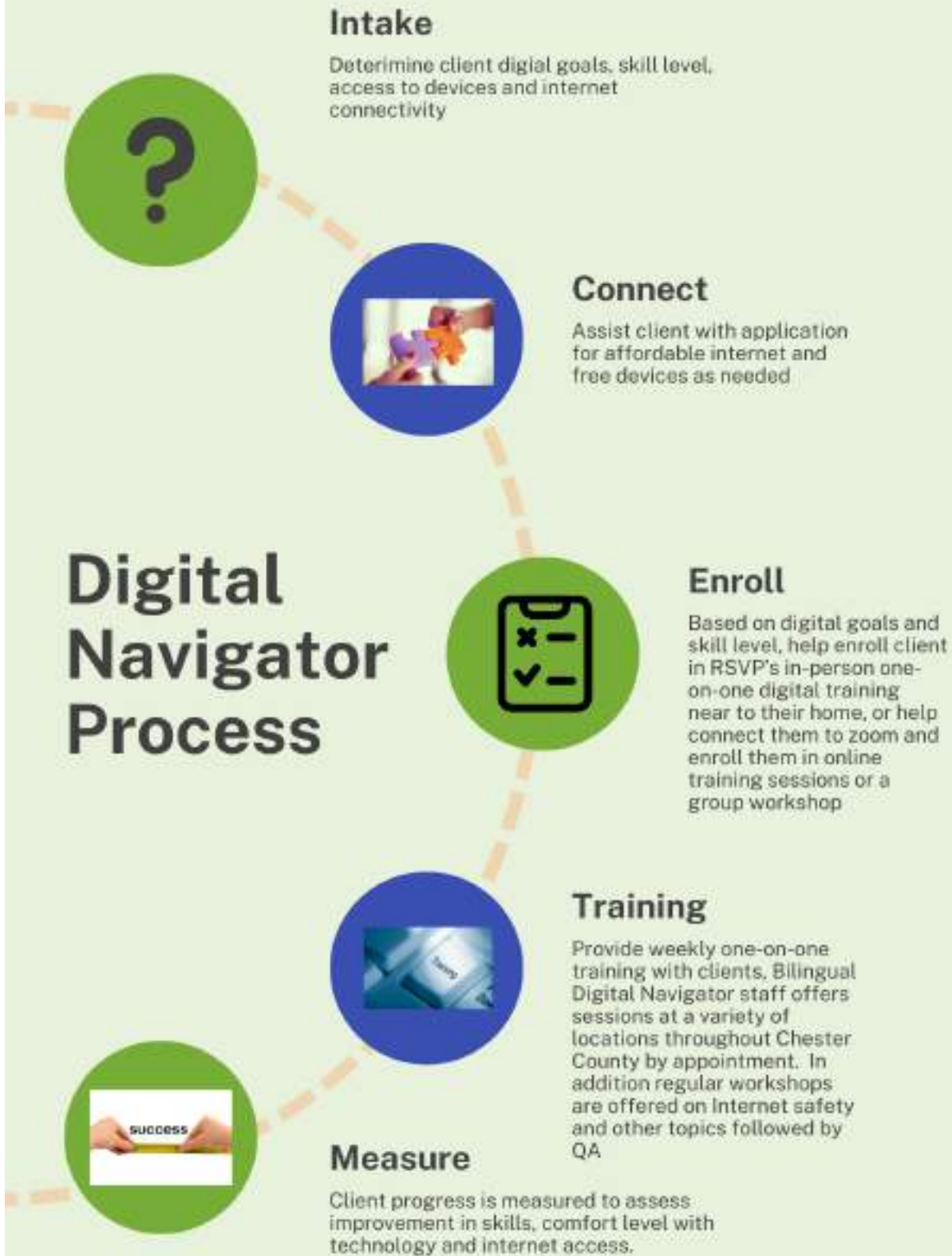
Intake

Deterimine client digial goals, skill level, access to devices and internet connectivity

Connect

Assist client with application for affordable internet and free devices as needed

Digital Navigator Process

Enroll

Based on digital goals and skill level, help enroll client in RSVP's in-person one-on-one digital training near to their home, or help connect them to zoom and enroll them in online training sessions or a group workshop

Training

Provide weekly one-on-one training with clients, Bilingual Digital Navigator staff offers sessions at a variety of locations throughout Chester County by appointment. In addition regular workshops are offered on Internet safety and other topics followed by QA

Measure

Client progress is measured to assess improvement in skills, comfort level with technology and internet access.

Digital Navigator Program- updated 2/23/24

Partnership with Kennett Area Library and RSVP Volunteers

Mission to empower vulnerable community members with the digital skills and resources needed to improve their lives opening up opportunities for communication, education, health access and employment.

Target population: Vulnerable community members including seniors and low-income individuals.

Both agencies will collaborate to help promote and market the program to clients and volunteers throughout the service area.

Specific roles:

RSVP Volunteers will leverage its connection with nonprofit agencies that serve the target demographic to create a network. Sites will offer training by appointment; training will be offered by RSVP Digital Literacy Navigator Staff Member and supplemented by a team of screened and trained Volunteer Digital Literacy trainers.   Community volunteers will increase the capacity to serve clients exponentially offering not only skills, energy but an understanding of local cultur, helping build strong trusting relationships with vulnerable clients. RSVP has 50 years of experience recruiting and managing senior volunteers in Greater Philadelphia. They have the existing infrastructure to recruit, screen and train community volunteers and the highly developed, evidence-based technology curriculum.

Kennett Area Library- is a trusted resource in the community and a gathering place for individuals in need of resources, with over 1,000 visitors a day! This is a new library. Read more about it here: The Library will host the Digital Navigator staff person, who will facilitate the client "intake" including initially gathering client contact information and demographics and entering into the Case Management system; assessing individual client skill levels to determine appropriate training, determining if the client is in need of a device. They will work with each client to determine their specific goals surrounding technology. Are they looking for a job? Do

they know how to set up an email address and check it? Do they want to participate in Telehealth/communicate through doctor's portal, help support their child/grandchild's education, use email to connect, use technology to grow their business? This information will be used to assess the type of training that is required. The Digital Navigator will use RSVP's published training schedule and book the client for a training session at a location near to their home or with a virtual trainer. If the library's Maker Space can assist with client goals they will be referred there as well.   Training will be multi-lingual. Training will be offered onsite at the library and some days the staff person will be scheduled to be onsite at local partner sites such as the LCH office to offer training for patients to access the health portal.

Staff will enter data into the shared Case Management system to track client training and progress towards goals which will help facilitate outcomes reporting.

Respectfully requesting funding in the amount of $20,000 from AARP to launch the Digital Navigator Program Partnership.

February 28, 2024

To whom it may concern:

This letter gives my strongest support for the request for digital literacy funding for the public libraries and RSVP proposed model in Chester County, PA.

Despite its wealth, Chester County has pockets of serious poverty with digital literacy needs that start at a very basic level. Many low-income residents whom LCH serves have limited access to digital resources. Many have smartphones but do not know how to use them to improve their access to resources.

The disparity in digital literacy among Chester County citizens became a stark reality during the pandemic when a group of residents (Chester County Digital Alliance) organized to actively work on finding creative ways to bridge the gap.

Creating a model of "Train the Trainer" for non-profit organizations that serve this vulnerable population was the first step. The training by RSVP, a non-profit that trains volunteers to teach digital skills, provided digital skills training for the employees, who in turn teach their clients. This has a track record of success and will continue.

Currently, a partnership with the local libraries and RSVP has developed a model that will include digital navigators with volunteers; training sessions; and support in gaining Internet access and computers. This is anticipated to serve as a ground-level effort to reach those most in need. For our patients, this means increasing access to healthcare utilizing tools like patient portals and telehealth.

With digital literacy being the new public utility in the future, this vulnerable group is being left behind in workforce development; educational opportunities; access to telehealth/health resources as well as a multitude of social engagements that help a citizen grow and become an active contributor in his/her community.

The Chester County Digital Alliance is committed to supporting these needs by increasing digital literacy. I am happy to support their efforts.

Warmly,

Kate Wickersham, CFRE
LCH Director of Development

LCH HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

KENNETT SQUARE | OXFORD | WEST GROVE

Kennett Library
Begin your journey here

320 E. State St.
PO Box 730
Kennett Square PA 19348

3/4/24

As a public space that is a pivotal center for the community and a site that provides digital access and literacy training, the Kennett Library supports this grant for providing of digital access and training to patrons of our libraries. In support of this initiative, the Kennett Library will provide access to rooms and areas where trainings can occur and will make our patrons aware of these services.

We acknowledge the need for these services in our areas and are excited about the ability to offer this heightened program in our libraries. With our library receiving nearly 1,000 visits per day and 4,000 wifi uses per month, the need for digital access and training is paramount.

Sincerely,

C.M. Manna

Chris Manna

Executive Director

Kennett Library

484-730-8421

cmanna@ccls.org

Kennett Area Senior Center
427 S. Walnut Street
Kennett Square, PA 19348
Phone: (610) 444-4819
Web: www.kennettseniorcenter.org
FB@ KennettSeniorCenter

March 1, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to give my wholehearted support of the request for digital literacy funding for an AARP grant through RSVP Volunteers and the Kennett Library.

I am the Program Coordinator for the Kennett Area Senior Center ("KASC"). Prior to my employment here at KASC, I had been involved in the information technology field, at one point providing corporate training on a number of different applications. In the corporate environment, computer training was a required part of being able to efficiently and confidently perform one's job. It benefited everyone for the greater good. In today's world, there is an unspoken requirement that a person is savvy enough to use a computer or more commonly, a smart phone, but that is not a true statement for the senior population. The inability to do so by so many brings about feelings of inadequacy and oftentimes, isolation.

The majority of marketing and general information provided by KASC is either placed on our website, sent via email or posted to social media. Day in and day out, I see members of our senior community whose only means of consuming important information is via our information table, where hard copies of programming and KASC information resides. From programs for body and mind, to lunch menus, to guest speakers, this is information that could and should easily be obtained from any place. The ability to educate senior members of our community to use the very basics of technology just paves the foundation for a wealth of information at their fingertips, both here at KASC and beyond! Knowledge has always been power and empowering our senior community to connect with both information as well as friends and family via technology is essential and life changing.

The Kennett Area Senior Center is committed to this cause and can speak confidently to the benefits that your financial investment will bring to a community eager to be educated and oftentimes left behind.

Sincerely,

Debra S. Parrish
Program Coordinator, KASC

cc: Stephanie K. D'Amico
      Executive Director, KASC

March 1, 2024

To Whom It May Concern;

The Garage Community & Youth Center wholeheartedly supports the funding request of the RSVP Digital Literacy project in Chester County, PA. In spite of its wealth, Chester County has digital literacy needs within subsets of our population, specifically low-income seniors and Migrant workers serving the robust local agricultural industry.

The disparity in digital literacy among Chester County residents became exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic when schools, public services, private businesses, and many local governments were forced to provide online education and services. Many residents without technology or digital literacy skills were simply left without. During that time, a group of residents formed the Chester County Digital Alliance to organize and actively work on finding creative ways to bridge the gap.

Chester County Digital Alliance followed a model of "Train the Trainer" for several non-profit organizations who serve this vulnerable population. The training by RSVP, a non-profit that trains volunteers to teach digital skills, provided digital skills training for non-profit partner employees, who in turn teach their clients within the target population. This has a track record of great success and will continue to reach residents in need of digital literacy skills with your financial support.

Currently, a partnership with the local Chester County libraries in our community and RSVP have developed a project that will continue to increase the services provided to residents in need of digital literacy skills. This includes digital navigators; training sessions; and support in gaining internet access and computers for a completely unreached portion of the population. This is anticipated to serve as a ground level effort that will reach those residents most in need. With digital literacy being the new public utility in the future, this vulnerable group is being left behind in the workforce; educational opportunities; access to telehealth/health resources as well as a multitude of social engagements that helps a resident grow and become an active contributor in their community. The Chester County Digital Alliance is committed to this long-term project and shares the belief that your financial investment will help bring about valuable returns.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to adding you to the network of supporters of this most important initiative.

Warmly,

Kristin Proto
Executive Director

February 29, 2024

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to support the request for digital literacy funding for the public libraries and RSVP proposed model in Chester County, PA.

I believe Chester County Digital Alliance is an exceptional candidate for funding because I have used their "Train the Trainer" model. I am one of the trainers they trained and I moved forward with what I learned and taught it to our community members with much success. I would like to share some of those success stories.

I had an 84-year-old woman attend one of my training sessions. She was talked into buying a cell phone and a tablet by her friends so she could keep in touch with them. They showed her some of the features and how to do it, or they did it for her, but she said they didn't teach her how to use it, which she found to be a distinction. She attended each session of the six-week course and was taught how to *use* it. I received a phone call from one of her friends telling me my student learned so much from the class that she can now text, email, delete unwanted emails, access her voicemail, as well as add and remove applications. She is hard of hearing and has some difficulty using the telephone. She is now connected to friends and family.

Another example is an 80-year-old woman who attended my class to improve the digital literacy skills she already had. She had a lot of fun learning how to access emojis, change her Wallpaper, send photos via text and email, and create folders for the applications on her home page. She was excited to share her new skills with her family and send emojis to her grandchildren. She thought herself to be a little more hip.

The students come into the class with devices they don't know how to use. They leave the class with a little more knowledge, a little more pride, and a little more dignity, and that is why this program needs to continue.

Sincerely,

Lori Holcombe
Information & Assistance/Member Services Coordinator
Kennett Area Senior Center

Broadband Feasibility Study
Southern Chester County

Magellan ADVISORS

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Executive Summary

Magellan Advisors was selected by an Evaluation Committee of community stakeholders, led by the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU), to conduct a comprehensive broadband market analysis to examine the level of broadband coverage and the relevant market characteristics including social and economic barriers across the communities served by four school districts in the southern portion of the county: Kennett Consolidated, Oxford Area, Avon Grove, Unionville-Chadds Ford. The study was funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry through the Chester County Department of Community Development.

These four school districts are located in some of the most rural, economically distressed regions of Chester County, if not the entire state of Pennsylvania, where the quality of life of its residents is negatively impacted by the lack of robust, high-speed broadband access.

Based on the geographic and socio-economic realities facing students and their families who live in the communities served by these four school districts, Chester County stakeholders chose to pursue a data-driven approach to determine the availability of reliable broadband access services in their region.

The data collected and the subsequent analysis performed by Magellan provides useful insights into the existing level of coverage and speeds based on community input and survey data. This study underscores the importance of making sure residents, businesses, and institutions throughout the footprint of these school districts have access to affordable and reliable high-speed broadband service regardless of income, language barriers or rurality.

Overview of the broadband coverage survey

Magellan's broadband coverage analysis is based on the collection of broadband user experience survey data provided by local residential, business, agricultural and anchor institution customers throughout the four school districts. The experience of every community member regardless of geography and income must be included in its analysis to ensure the results are as inclusive and comprehensive as possible.

The broadband coverage and adoption survey is part of a larger examination of the actual level of broadband coverage and availability currently experienced by families, businesses and anchor institutions (healthcare providers, community-based organizations, farms, law enforcement and local government entities).

The results of this survey can be used to guide local, County, State and National leaders and interested stakeholders in determining how best to expand affordable and reliable broadband access to underserved communities in rural Southeastern Pennsylvania.

In early March of 2022, the Southern Chester County stakeholders distributed a broadband coverage and adoption survey (in both English and Spanish) to families, township officials, and businesses including farms and nonprofit organizations throughout the four school districts.

Over 1,000 respondents completed the broadband coverage survey, and their results were geocoded and added to a geospatial map to illustrate where the gaps in broadband coverage exist throughout the region. The survey results indicate several areas where broadband service is insufficient, causing economic and social dislocation to families and businesses. The survey results were also examined within the context of federal socio-economic data pertaining to poverty levels in each township and borough. Magellan's broadband feasibility analysis included the following core workstreams that contributed to the key findings and conclusions of this study.

- **Stakeholder engagement:** In partnership with the CCIU and local broadband digital literacy advocates from the Southern Chester County Opportunity Network, Magellan had the opportunity to conduct the extensive stakeholder outreach performed for this study. Magellan conducted interviews with over 40 individual organizations, institutions and businesses including local townships, and county and state officials to gather input about their broadband usage and connectivity needs.

- **Broadband coverage and user experience survey**: Magellan developed its survey in both English and Spanish and the Southern Chester County stakeholders distributed it widely to residents and businesses throughout the region to identify areas where coverage is insufficient. Data collected from the survey served as the baseline for the level of coverage available in the region. Survey results were then compared with advertised coverage purported by commercial providers and federal agencies, such as the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

- **Boots on the ground field validation:** Survey findings were further analyzed by Magellan's field team who conducted field validation of a sampling of addresses in each school district. These addresses were located where survey respondents reported little to no coverage and where school district technology directors suggested field validations occur.

- **Market analysis:** Magellan evaluated the current market conditions for expanding broadband service and coverage, including barriers facing communities throughout Southern Chester County. This segment includes a deep evaluation of provider websites, advertising materials and other publicly available materials from the industry.
- **High-level network options and cost analysis:** Magellan identified the associated network construction and deployment costs to meet the coverage needs and requirements and developed a conceptual design of a fixed wireless last mile network to serve core areas of need identified in this study.
- **Recommendations, funding opportunities and next steps:** Based on the evidence collected from end user surveys, stakeholder input, local broadband market analysis and broadband mapping data, the recommended next steps towards the end of this study should serve as a roadmap for local leaders in the region to pursue various strategies to improve broadband access and adoption among residential and business customers.

This study also includes recommendations regarding various state and federal funding opportunities that can support projects that deploy cost-effective broadband networks in unserved areas throughout the four school districts.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Poverty and the lack of affordability are significant barriers to families in the region. The average monthly bill for residential broadband service is $111.36 per month and the average cellular phone bill of $172. These costs make mobile and fixed broadband out of reach for most residents.
- Participation rates in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) are low, despite the fact that most consumers in the region are eligible. According to the FCC's ACP participation data collected from January – May 2022,[1] only 3,160 qualified low-income consumers are receiving the benefit and 29 consumers are claiming the benefit for eligible devices across all of Chester County.
- FCC and NTIA broadband mapping data shows the entire area as being well served with over 100Mbps download. However, these maps contrast with survey results and consumer feedback collected by Magellan outlined in this study.
- Several middle-mile and long-haul fiber facilities are present throughout Southern Chester County which can be leveraged by any last-mile provider to

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[1] ACP-Households-and-Claims-by-County-January-May-2022.xlsx (live.com)

offer competitive offerings to end users. However, last-mile broadband infrastructure (connectivity to the end user) remains the core challenge for the region. Most large incumbent broadband providers who serve the region have some infrastructure present in residential areas as noted by Magellan's field team. Yet, the majority of low-income households and mushroom farms remain unserved with affordable and reliable last-mile infrastructure.

- To achieve 100% last-mile broadband coverage to the entire region, Magellan recommends a fixed wireless network design that would provide connectivity to residential consumers and mushroom farms. This technology approach would be less costly, more reliable and faster to deploy than any other technology platform (fiber, cable and satellite). Tower facilities are located throughout the region and could be leveraged to provide coverage to all of Southern Chester County.

- It is strongly recommended that local leaders establish a governance structure to pursue broadband grant opportunities at the state level with public or private partners. The data in this study provides a basis for building a network in the southern portion of the county.

WHY AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE BROADBAND MATTERS TO FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES IN SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY

Like electricity in the 1930s, broadband is an essential utility and vital to the economic growth and survival of rural, agriculturally based communities throughout Pennsylvania. Rural households and businesses throughout Southern Chester County continue to struggle with inadequate bandwidth, costly service plans and spotty coverage. Due to the demographics of the region, a significant percentage of low-income residents live in sparsely populated areas. Yet, incumbent broadband providers have not demonstrated a willingness to invest in network upgrades given the low average revenue per user (ARPU) generated by consumers in these areas.

Despite the availability of federal broadband subsidies over the last 20 years to offset fiber last-mile deployment costs of incumbent wireline providers in underserved communities, the lack of adequate broadband service remains unchanged in these communities.

ACTION IS NEEDED

In the absence of action, rural households and businesses throughout Southern Chester County continue to endure extraordinary social and economic hardship due to the lack of reliable and/or affordable broadband connectivity. The situation was made worse during the COVID-19 pandemic when telework, distance learning, telehealth and public safety services were out of reach for most households in these remote communities.

This socio-economic deficit must be brought to the attention of state and federal officials who are preparing to allocate federal Infrastructure Act funds statewide to help rural Pennsylvania communities transform their local communities with affordable high-speed broadband network facilities.

Magellan encourages local leadership to continue to make inroads with officials in Harrisburg and in Washington, D.C. to ensure it is not left behind in the distribution of Infrastructure Act funds as well as all other federal funding opportunities distributed at the local, county and state level.

Magellan applauds the County for supporting steps toward evaluating broadband projects in the Request for Proposals issued in late February 2022 soliciting potential broadband projects for funding using a portion of the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation. Applications were due March 16 and awards are expected to be announced summer of 2022.[2]

IDENTIFYING THE LEVEL OF NEED IN THE REGION

The townships and boroughs throughout Southern Chester County are some of the most rural and ethnically diverse communities in the entire state of Pennsylvania. The nation's supply of mushrooms is produced in Kennett, Avondale, West Grove, Landenberg and portions of Oxford. The mushroom industry is the backbone of the region's economy and a vital part of the state's agricultural leadership in value added crop production. Southern Chester County is the nation's largest producer of mushrooms and requires year-round labor to support the demand for mushroom production.

Migrant farm workers from Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador have come to this region to work on mushroom farms year-round, ultimately becoming permanent

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[2] American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) | Chester County, PA - Official Website (chesco.org)

residents. However, most migrant families remain in chronic poverty and have little to no English proficiency or basic reading skills. Most do not own a computer and only use their cell phone for internet access.

Below is a socio-economic summary of the challenges facing residential households in this region.

Widespread poverty and food insecurity throughout the four school districts

The prevalence of persistent poverty and food insecurity among Hispanic migrant farm workers is well known and directly correlated with low broadband adoption and computer usage in the region. Over 22%[3] of Oxford families live below the federal poverty rate vs. 6.9%[4] for the rest of Chester County. Poverty in Avondale is 43%[5] with over 35.4%[6] without health insurance coverage. These percentages are staggering and underscore the economic hardship experienced by residential consumers in these communities.

According to numerous interviews with community advocates and case workers who work closely with the migrant farm worker community, over 400 families visit local food banks in Oxford, Kennett and West Grove each week. Monthly costs for broadband are simply out of reach for most low-income families.

Inadequate fixed and mobile broadband coverage on mushroom farms

Residents and businesses in Kennett, Avondale, Oxford, Landenberg, New Garden, Avon Grove, West Grove, Nottingham and East Marlborough also indicated that both cell and fixed broadband coverage is spotty and unreliable. During an in-person field visit in April 2022 to several farming operations along Kaolin Road in Kennett Square, less than one bar of cell coverage was available both in farm offices as well as outside the farm facilities near farm entrances.

During in person meetings with mushroom farm owners from Kennett, Avondale, Oxford and West Grove hosted by the American Mushroom Institute (AMI), all indicated they had minimal broadband coverage and experienced frequent internet service outages in their home and in their farm office.

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[3] 22.0% Poverty Rate in Oxford borough, Pennsylvania (welfareinfo.org)

[4] [1] 6.9% Poverty Rate in Chester County, Pennsylvania (welfareinfo.org)

[5] Demographic Data (chescoplanning.org)

[6] [1] DP03: SELECTED ECONOMIC... - Census Bureau Table

The lack of reliable and robust connectivity on these farms became a health risk during the pandemic where remote access to health care and mental health counseling was unattainable.

Lack of fixed and mobile broadband access in the home and its impact on remote learning

Most school age children from farm worker families have no broadband access in their residential premises needed to complete homework assignments and engage in remote learning on a desktop or laptop computer. Instead, like most farming communities in the U.S., school children complete schoolwork on their mobile phone by creating a mobile hotspot that they either pay for or through a hot spot device provided by their school.

These and many other socioeconomic factors contribute to the unique and persistent challenges facing the region in attaining affordable, high quality broadband coverage in their home and at their place of employment.

Many of the meetings were organized by local broadband and digital literacy and inclusion advocates, who committed their personal time in connecting Magellan's team with many of the stakeholders listed below. The next section documents the qualitative research performed by Magellan's project team that supplements the mapping and market analysis portions of this study.

Stakeholder Engagement

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Magellan conducted extensive interviews, in person meetings, focus groups and weekly meetings over a six-month period with over 40 individual residential and business consumers, community leaders, municipal officials, commercial entities, farmers, farm workers, state legislators and local law enforcement officials about their experience with broadband service in their homes and work locations.

Their comments indicate that despite the publicly available federal broadband mapping data and carrier reported advertising that suggests the availability of sufficient fixed and mobile broadband service, communities throughout Southern Chester County attest to a far different reality on the ground. Most local and regional stakeholders uniformly affirm that existing broadband coverage and service is well below the standards advertised and reported by the FCC.

Common themes and key observations from all stakeholder meetings and interviews.

The following themes were shared during interviews and meetings with Magellan Advisors since December 2021 regarding the level of broadband coverage in the region and its impact on local communities across the Oxford Area, Kennett Consolidated, Unionville-Chadds Ford and Avon Grove school districts.

- Southern Chester County <u>residents feel forgotten and excluded from the rest of the County</u>, largely due to poor internet coverage that is exacerbated by economic dislocation, rurality and cultural differences. These residents live in geographically remote communities with low population density and high percentages of persistent poverty. Many of these families also do not speak or read English and most work in the mushroom farming sector year-round.

- The <u>lack of sufficient broadband access</u> in Oxford, Kennett, Avondale, New Garden and Avon Grove has become a major barrier to economic development and investment in these communities. Opportunities to attract high wage, knowledge-based jobs to the region are limited as a result.

- Many <u>families with school age children do not have adequate fixed or mobile broadband connectivity in the home</u> to complete school assignments or to

access health care, job applications, federal benefit enrollment forms, workforce development training or to inquire about municipal or social service resources.

- <u>Affordability is a major barrier for families and school children needing internet access in the home</u>. Most families have no means to afford even the basic service offerings or the resources to purchase a computer for in home use. This challenge is magnified due to a lack of basic computer skills. Many rural low-income family members do not have email addresses. Rather, they mostly use pre-paid cell phones to conduct homework and communicate with their employers and case workers.

- <u>Migrant families from Mexico and Central America are reluctant to discuss household matters such as the quality of broadband access they receive in the home for fear of retribution</u>. Most families who live and work in the region are from cultures where employers and authorities impose punishments on those who speak publicly about quality-of-life concerns like access to electricity, water, affordable housing and broadband services.

- <u>First responders cannot fulfill mission critical activities due to a lack of robust broadband and cellular coverage.</u> Police/Fire/EMS cannot do their jobs and respond to crime events to connect with the Chester County 911 dispatch without sufficient broadband access.

INPUT FROM COMMUNITY-BASED STAKEHOLDERS

Below is a summary of Magellan's outreach to various segments of community-based social service stakeholders who work closely with the most unserved low-income families in the region. The key points raised during in-person and web-based meetings are outlined below.

Southern Chester County School District Technology Directors, December 13, 2021 (Kennett Consolidated, Oxford Area, Avon Grove, Unionville-Chadds Ford school districts)

Magellan conducted weekly meetings with the school district technology directors in all four school districts as well as administrators with the CCIU. Throughout these

weekly meetings, the following themes emerged, which tracked closely with the comments and observations made by almost every other stakeholder.

Most migrant farm worker families struggle with language barriers and literacy challenges. They also lack basic computer skills. Many do not own a computer in the home and their children often use cell phones to download homework assignments.

Affordability is a significant barrier towards adoption. Students in the region struggled during the pandemic due to a lack of affordable and reliable broadband service in their home. Cell phone coverage is also spotty and unreliable but was the only means for accessing school assignments.

The region is extremely rural with an extensive agricultural history. Areas around the Kennett Consolidated School District are remote and have no connectivity. The same is true for areas outside of Oxford, Nottingham, Avondale, West Grove, as well as the areas between Jennersville and Cochranville. These areas are completely unserved and economically distressed.

In person and virtual meetings with the following community stakeholders/social service benefit navigators.

- **Hispanic Health Ministries on January 27, 2022**
- **La Communidad Hispana on January 28 and February 3, 2022**
- **Kennett Area Community Service on April 20, 2022**
- **Oxford Neighborhood Services on April 20, 2022**

Social service workers and public benefits navigators are frustrated by the lack of affordable and reliable broadband in the home. The Kennett Area Community Service agency and the Oxford Neighborhood Services organization indicated that most families in Kennett and Avon Grove have only a cell phone for internet access rather than a computer due to cost and low digital literacy comprehension.

Many low-income migrant community members do not have basic computer skills. Affordability was also raised as a major barrier to adoption. In Oxford, Hispanic low-income students often sit outside of the Wendy's fast food restaurant to do their homework. They simply cannot afford monthly service in their home.

Accessing the internet and knowledge of its use often ranks lower in the priority scale for these families when compared to access to food and housing. Access to affordable transportation is another barrier, leaving families without the ability to receive remote counseling or specialized health care services.

Most of these families live in trailer or mobile homes. Some live on mushroom farms, while others who reside in Avondale or West Grove live in old houses with multiple families living in the same home. Many landlords who rent to migrant workers also want broadband but have not been successful in getting it to their premises.

Each organization listed above suggested that the best way to reach migrant families in the rural portions of each school district, particularly in Oxford, Avondale and Kennett is through case workers who interact with this population frequently. They also indicated that having access to affordable, high-quality broadband is vital for their clients who rely on social service and public benefits which can only be applied for and tracked online and require internet access and a computer to complete enrollment forms and verification documentation for upload.

La Communidad Hispana indicated that the lack of broadband was also a major challenge for their case workers and clients. They could not launch a new patient portal because their clients could not access it in their homes due to not having a computer or adequate broadband services available.

A significant number of migrant families have children with special needs who need remote medical and occupational care and other services to manage their developmental needs. Broadband is essential for these families and was an even bigger struggle during the pandemic.

- **Mighty Writers on January 25 and April 21, 2022**
- **The Garage Community and Youth Center on January 27 and April 21, 2022**

During our in-person and virtual meetings with the directors of both the Mighty Writers and the Garage Community and Youth Center, similar themes concerning the lack of affordability, persistent poverty, language barriers and poor broadband coverage were reiterated.

The areas in and around Landenberg, Avondale and West Grove were reported to have minimal broadband access causing many school age children to fall behind academically since the start of the pandemic. Chronic poverty experienced widely among migrant farm worker families increased the likelihood of having no internet access in their home.

The children who spend their afternoons at both Mighty Writers and the Garage complete homework assignments at their facilities because they have no internet access or a computer in their homes. These children also tend to use Wi-Fi hotspots

through Mi-Fi devices provided by the school district or their cell phone to complete homework assignments at home.

INPUT FROM THE LOCAL MUSHROOM FARMING SECTOR

- **In person meeting with members of the American Mushroom Institute (AMI) on April 21, 2022**

Over 26% of the nation's mushrooms are produced in New Garden township. All mushroom farms need broadband access to improve logistics and manage input costs. Yet, both cellular and fixed broadband coverage is inadequate for most mushroom farms in Southern Chester County. Broadband service goes down frequently which causes disruptions for farms during financial transactions with vendors and customers.

The pandemic created huge challenges for mushroom farm managers who needed to notify workers about vaccines, stay at home orders and testing. Farm workers were solely relying on their employers for COVID information but there was no easy way to notify them. Farm workers need essential information but the only way they get information is through their cell phones, even though signal quality is poor.

INPUT FROM LOCAL TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS (PAST AND PRESENT)

- **Chester County Association of Township Officials (CCATO) on February 1, 2022**
- **Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs (ACOLA), Kennett Borough on January 17, 2022**
- **Office of the Fire Chief, Kennett Township on April 20, 2022**

In our meetings with local township officials, both past and present, the major concern focused on the lack of quality fixed and mobile broadband coverage to support first responders, health care workers and hospitals.

Local township officials also indicated that last mile broadband access is lacking in the region, leaving most rural and economically distressed communities with no options other than to continue with their existing cellular or fixed broadband service provider.

Township officials also noted that cell phone coverage is spotty throughout Kennett, causing major problems for first responders. Firefighters often encounter dead spots on route to or at the scene of an emergency. They also emphasized that paramedics cannot do their jobs properly due to a lack of connectivity.

The lack of affordable access to health care is also a major challenge. There are reports that two big hospitals in Southern Chester County are closing due to financial hardships. Communities throughout the region served by these hospitals must now drive over 40 minutes away to receive emergency care. Telehealth is needed but lacking due to poor internet access.

INPUT FROM LOCAL AND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

- **Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC) on December 22, 2021 and January 11, 2022**
- **Chester County Planning Commission on January 11, 2022**
- **Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce on January 17, 2022**

These officials reiterated a common theme: Southern Chester County is struggling economically and compared it to "the last frontier." The region simply cannot grow economically without access to affordable broadband.

These officials also indicated that Oxford Area and Avon Grove are the top two school districts that are in dire need of help from the county or state agencies due to their income status, low English proficiency and a lack of stable housing. Most families have no ability to drive to where they can get access because they do not own a car or have sufficient resources to purchase alternative forms of transportation. Broadband is vital for these communities to survive.

INPUT FROM BROADBAND INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

- **Comcast on December 14, 2021**
- **Upward Broadband on December 30, 2021**
- **Chesconet on January 4, 2022**
- **Armstrong on January 6, 2022**
- **Crown Castle on January 7, 2022**
- **Verizon on March 2, 2022**

Middle mile fiber access is more available throughout Southern Chester County than last mile services to end users. Some of the existing providers suggested that additional public investments were needed to offset the costs of deploying fiber to the home in the more remote areas, but none provided any information to Magellan about their future deployment and or investment plans in the region.

More consumers subscribe to cable video services than a video/data bundled package due to cost. Local fixed wireless offerings are available and may be expanding but will take time to reach across the entire region and require additional capital and tower and backhaul access which can be costly.

Crown Castle owns and operates a significant amount of middle mile fiber facilities in the region that provide connectivity to multiple county agencies, schools, libraries and other public facilities. Their fiber assets could be leveraged in some meaningful way to help increase competition for last mile services.

Magellan requested information from all internet service providers (ISP) regarding the location and availability of their current infrastructure and offerings. Crown Castle was the only ISP that shared this data.

INPUT FROM STATE LEGISLATIVE AND AGENCY OFFICIALS

- **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture on January 22, 2022**

Broadband is needed on farms across Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture understands the needs of mushroom farms and the economic benefits it generates for the state. Pennsylvania is the largest organic producer of produce on the east coast. This market cannot be accessed without broadband.

Farm worker mental health is another major priority for the state. Telehealth is critical to this effort but there is a lack of affordable broadband throughout the state to provide these services remotely.

Magellan also visited with the following officials in Chester County and the state regarding this study and the broadband needs in the region.

- **Chester County Board of Commissioners**
- **Chester County Department of Human Services**
- **Chester County Library System**
- **Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission**
- **Office of State Senator John Kane**

Broadband Coverage Survey

Magellan Advisors administered a broadband coverage survey to residents and businesses throughout the four school districts selected for this study: Kennett Consolidated, Unionville-Chadds Ford, Avon Grove and Oxford Area. Magellan worked closely with the technology directors for all four school districts to ensure their students and families were provided with the survey and instructions for completion. (Appendix 5)

Awareness about the importance of this survey was raised widely throughout each community in the four school districts. Advocates from Southern Chester County Opportunity Network helped improve the quality of the survey data collected by connecting Magellan to several local community support organizations such as the Garage Community and Youth Center, Mighty Writers and La Communidad Hispana who shared the survey with their case workers who interact directly with low-income families both in the field and at their facility.

The survey was also widely distributed by the American Mushroom Institute (AMI) who sent the survey to its membership, and to all the community stakeholders identified in the stakeholder engagement and outreach section of this study.

Magellan also participated in a virtual meeting with the Chester County Association of Township Officials (CCATO) to raise awareness about the survey among township managers. Magellan also consulted at length about the survey with library officials in Oxford, at the county level and with local law enforcement leaders.

The survey was provided to the public to complete either online or in paper form and was available in both English and Spanish. Magellan kept the survey open from February through May 13, 2022. Magellan also used community translators to assure the Spanish communication was colloquial and at the level of the client comprehension.

ANALYSIS OF BROADBAND SURVEY RESULTS FOR SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY

The final results of the survey are as follows: over 1,310 residential surveys were taken and over 1,064 completed the survey correctly. There were over 246 invalid or partial results that could not be counted toward the final total. Roughly 77% of all survey respondents completed the English version of the survey whereas less than 6.4% of respondents took the survey in Spanish.

The table below illustrates the final breakdown of respondents who completed the survey correctly as well as those who took the survey in English and Spanish.

Table 1 - Final Broadband Survey Results Summary

Final Broadband Survey Results		
Total Surveys Taken	1,310	100%
Valid-Complete	753	57.48%
Valid-Partial	311	23.74%
Total Valid	**1,064**	**81.22%**
Invalid/Test/Dups	246	18.78%
Valid Surveys by Language Type		
English	818	76.88%
Spanish	68	6.39%
School District Provided Data	178	16.73%

Percentage breakdown of survey respondents by school district

Below is the breakdown of all survey respondents by school district. As stated earlier, the technology directors for each school district (Avon Grove, Kennett Consolidated, Unionville-Chadds Ford and Oxford Area) were instrumental in getting this survey distributed throughout their entire school district and surrounding communities.

The results in the table below underscore the engagement of all four technology directors that helped increase survey participation. These results also validate the concerns among the technology directors regarding the lack of qualified broadband access in their communities as evidenced by the level of interest in this topic.

Table 2 – Broadband Survey Respondents Breakdown by School District

School District	Count	Percentage of total respondents
Avon Grove	410	38.53%
Kennett Consolidated	232	21.80%
Oxford Area	125	11.75%
Unionville-Chadds Ford	174	16.35%

Cultural and language barriers facing the sample population

Due to the cultural and language barriers facing many families in Southern Chester County, Magellan encountered some resistance from non-English speaking survey respondents regarding the use and purpose of the survey itself. Language barriers caused some challenges in getting the survey completed among farm workers who either do not speak English or in many cases, do not speak Spanish.

Most families who reside within the four school districts are either of Mexican or Central American descent (Guatemalan), where Spanish is not spoken. Farm worker families from Guatemala only speak local dialects that are dissimilar to Spanish. Therefore, many survey respondents were somewhat dependent on a caseworker or family member to help translate the survey and explain each question.

Migrant farm workers throughout the region also come from cultures where it is not customary to provide information about activity in the home – even if it is regarding

a third-party service like broadband – to outside entities. A general lack of trust exists toward anyone seeking information about their personal experiences in the home.

Magellan also encountered some reluctance among mushroom farm owners and managers to provide farm worker housing data for broadband mapping purposes. Regardless of these challenges, Magellan, in partnership with the CCIU, local volunteers, the Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce, the American Mushroom Institute and several community-based organizations, was able to obtain a robust sample size of surveys for this study.

We learned that any future surveys would get a more robust response if they were administered in the field and managed by field representatives who can visit with respondents in person and discuss each question to obtain a larger completion rate.

Breakdown of Existing Service Providers' Speeds and Costs

Below is a breakdown of each provider that serves survey respondents. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, Verizon serves over 40% of respondents (789 total) whereas Comcast serves 31%. These results mirror the market data collected for the communities in all four school districts which confirm the marketshare percentages listed below.

Verizon is the leading incumbent fixed wireline broadband provider in Chester County by marketshare, followed by Comcast and Armstrong cable. Verizon wireless also serves over 14% of survey respondents which is sizable relative to Armstrong cable which serves only 9% of survey respondents and provides multichannel video and broadband services mainly in the Oxford Borough.

Figure 1 - Internet Service Provider Distribution Among Broadband Survey Respondents

Internet Service Providers Based on 789 Respondents

Legend:
- Verizon / Fios
- Xfinity / Comcast
- Verizon
- Armstrong
- Others
- Frontier / Frontier Communications
- T-Mobile Home Internet

Pie chart values: 41%, 31%, 14%, 9%, 3%, 1%, 1%
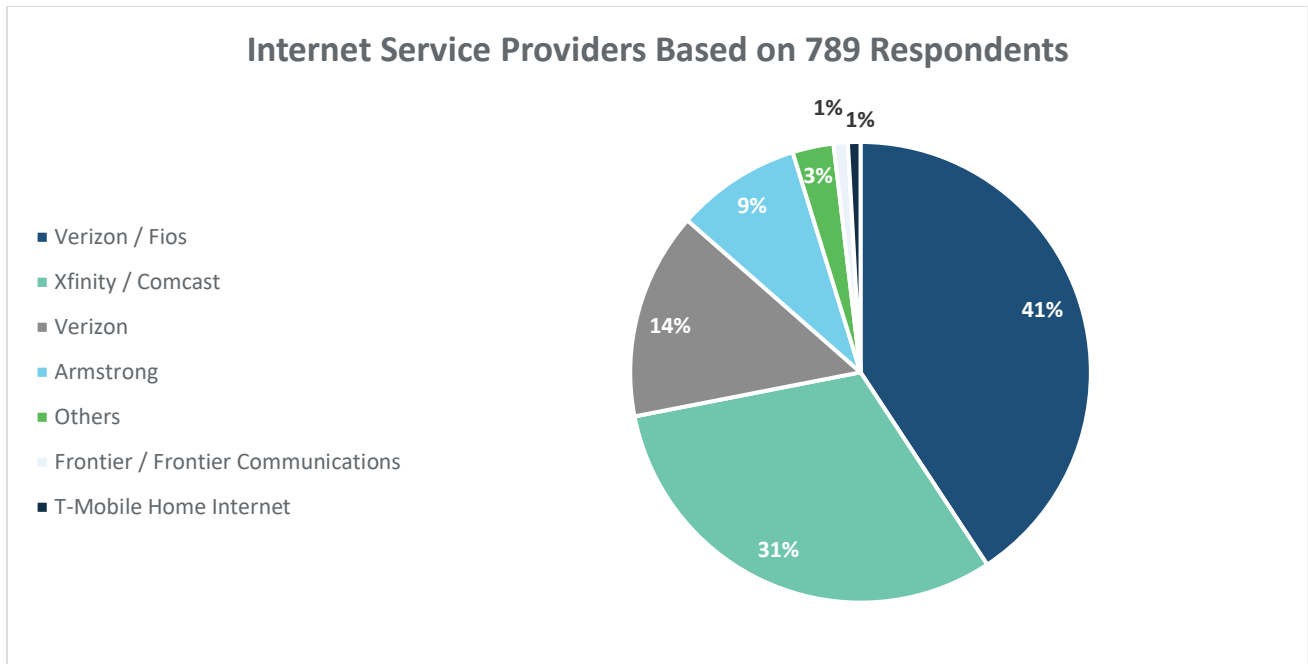
Among the 1,064 survey respondents, only 614 took the actual speed test embedded in the survey. Among those who took the speed test, roughly 55% reported having speeds of less than 50 Mbps download which is classified as underserved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

The survey data also indicate that over 200 (roughly 20%) respondents did not take the speed test because they lack internet access. These results underscore the connectivity challenges facing residential consumers in Southern Chester County.

Figure 2 below illustrates the speed test results for the zip codes identified for this study. The majority of zip codes where respondents live, reported median download speeds in excess of 100 Mbps with the exception of Kennett Square, Cochranville and Nottingham.

However, in many zip codes respondents chose not to take the embedded speed tests in the online survey either because they only wanted to take the paper version or they chose to skip the speed test entirely.

Figure 2- Summary of Broadband Survey Speed Test Results per Zip Code and Mbps Upload and Download Speeds

Speed Test	Download (in Mbps)	Upload (in Mbps)	Latency
Southern Chester County			
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	1,063	621	58%
Average	196	74.09	17
Median	108	32	13
Min	0.78	0	0
Max	914	1.2 Gbps	993
Zip Code 19348 (Kennett Square)			
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	130	233	56%
Average	171	69	14
Median	78	38	12
Min	0.93	0.03	0
Max	896	630	72
Zip Code 19363 (Oxford)			
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	52	105	50%
Average	127	39	49
Median	136	10	29
Min	0.78	0	0
Max	457	379	993
Zip Code 19330 (Cochranville)			

Speed Test	Download (in Mbps)	Upload (in Mbps)	Latency
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	7	13	54%
Average	123	83	13
Median	96	89	11
Min	21	1.63	10
Max	309	212	29
Zip Code 19362 (Nottingham)			
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	9	17	53%
Average	89	12	29
Median	47	10	28
Min	19	1.8	1
Max	241	20	66
Zip Code 19352 – (Lincoln University)			
	72	97	74%
Average	221	96	17
Median	107	38	13
Min	4.52	0.32	6
Max	878	926	91
Zip Code 19350 (Landenberg)			
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	88	128	69%
Average	175	41	17

Speed Test	Download (in Mbps)	Upload (in Mbps)	Latency
Median	109	23	14
Min	1.32	0.21	2
Max	905	779	71
Zip Code 19311 (Avondale)			
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	55	122	45%
Average	206	68	13
Median	125	33	12
Min	2.5	0.75	1
Max	617	505	47
Zip Code 19317 (Chadds Ford)			
Number of Surveys / Speed Tests	29	37	78%
Average	231	83	9
Median	137	50.5	9
Min	11	5.5	5
Max	914	378	19

While high speed service is available in selected parts of the region, its only offered in isolated pockets. The fiber mapping data based on the Fiber Locator tool[7] indicates that both Verizon's FIOS and Comcast's Xfinity do not have middle mile fiber routes in the area and have few fiber connections to households..

[7] Solutions - FiberLocator

Due to the remoteness of the boroughs in each of the four school districts, affordable and reliable broadband access is not widely available to most residential locations.

Figure 3 - Overview of Respondents' Contracted Download Speeds

Download Speeds in Mbps	
Total respondents	488
Average	577
Median	500
Min	0
Max	2,000

The average monthly bill for residential broadband service among survey respondents is roughly $111.36 per month as illustrated in Figure 4 below. Some respondents indicated they pay close to $500 per month. Affordability remains a barrier among families living in poverty and low-income families are often unable to afford a computer or internet enabled devices (and speeds) needed to participate in remote learning, job training, job searches, telehealth and other critical activities.

*Figure 4 - Overview of Respondents' Monthly Internet Cost*

Respondents Monthly Internet Cost	
Average	$111.36
Min	0.00
Max	$510.00

Type of devices used by respondents who took this survey

As illustrated in Figure 5 below, over 39% of survey respondents used their smartphone and/or a mobile device to complete the survey whereas over 40% took the survey on a laptop. The laptop segment likely took the survey on a computer

located at either a community-based organization or with a case worker at a customer's residential premises or at a farm location. These scenarios also apply to the 21% of respondents who took the survey using a desktop computer.

*Figure 5 - Types of devices Used to take the Broadband Survey*
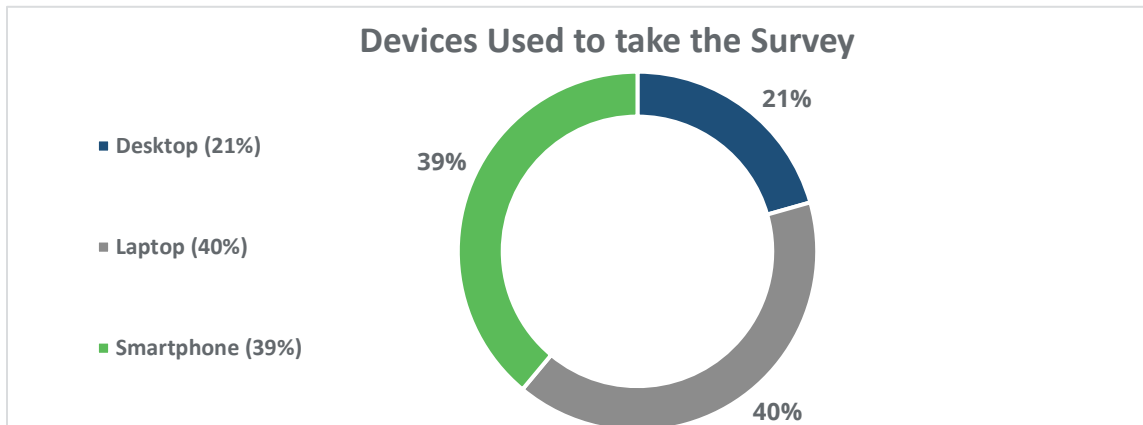
Demographic characteristics of survey respondents

Survey results indicate that the median ages of those living in households ranged from the youngest of 11 years old to the oldest of roughly 46 years old which is illustrated in Figure 6. It's important to note that most migrant family households consist of several families living in different rooms in one house or apartment dwelling. Therefore, the dispersion of ages across the sample population exists where multiple family members are living side by side with several families in a single residential premise.

The median number of school aged children reported per household was roughly 3 although as indicated above, most households have multiple families under one roof that also include school aged children per family.

Figure 6 below shows the age dispersion of family members and school age children per household who took the survey.

WWW.**MAGELLAN-ADVISORS**.COM 29

Figure 6 - Median Age per Household
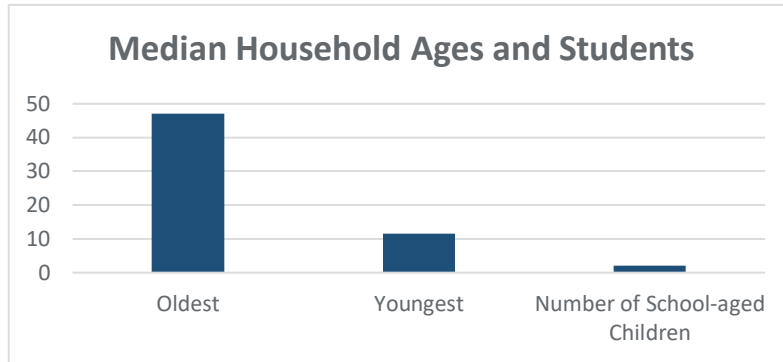
Education levels among survey respondents

In Figure 7 below, the percentage of respondents attending a college or university is less than 25%. Approximately 75% of the entire survey population reported having no college level education. These statistics are consistent with the information gathered from local community-based support organizations who work with families with minimal to no English reading comprehension.
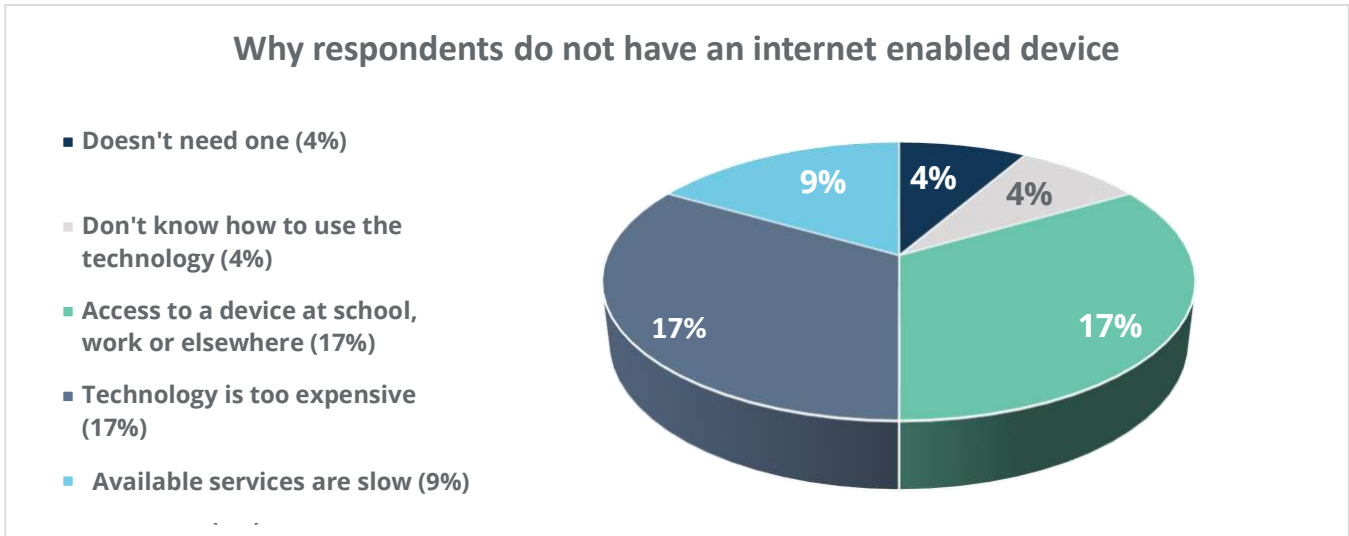
The results reflected in Figure 7 below also underscore the social and economic challenges facing migrant farmworkers and their families who have limited employment prospects and remain at or below the federal poverty levels.

Figure 7 - Percentage of households with members who have some form of Higher Education

Poverty is a likely cause for why respondents do not have a computer or internet enabled device in their home.

Figure 8 - Reasons for Not Having a Device Reported Among Survey Respondents

Why respondents do not have an internet enabled device

- Doesn't need one (4%)
- Don't know how to use the technology (4%)
- Access to a device at school, work or elsewhere (17%)
- Technology is too expensive (17%)
- Available services are slow (9%)
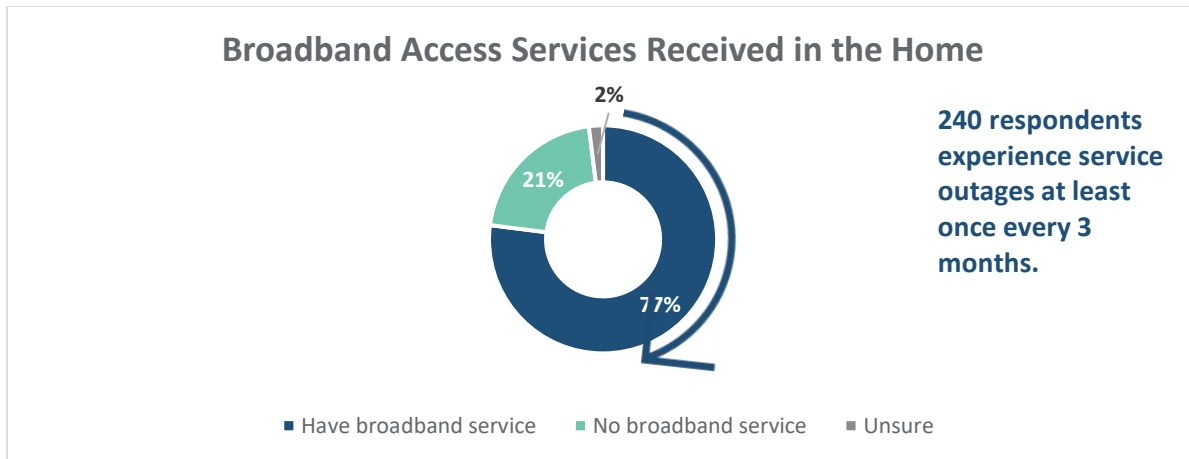
Pie chart segments: 9%, 4%, 4%, 17%, 17%

*The remaining 49% of the respondents who do not have internet enabled devices did not state the reason for not having it.

As the chart above in Figure 8 illustrates, over 17% of respondents said they do not have an internet enabled device at home such as a computer or tablet, mainly due to cost or because they can access the internet at their school or community center outside of the home. This result underscores the comments shared by multiple community-based organizations who confirmed that chronic poverty is pervasive, especially among farm worker families who cannot afford fixed broadband service and or a device needed to access the internet for a wide variety of critical uses.

Percentage of high-speed broadband access services received in the home

Over 77% of respondents indicated they receive some level of broadband access in their home while only 21% say they do not receive any broadband service in their home as illustrated in Figure 9 below.

Broadband Access Services Received in the Home

240 respondents experience service outages at least once every 3 months.

■ Have broadband service   ■ No broadband service   ■ Unsure

Roughly 240 respondents reported experiencing internet service outages intermittently, and at least once a quarter. When comparing monthly reoccurring prices to the level of service quality provided, consumers are not receiving internet access services sufficient to provide access to telehealth, distance learning, precision agriculture and other important use cases in the home and on their premises.

Percentage of internet enabled activities performed in the home daily and weekly

As illustrated in Figure 10 below, survey respondents indicated the type of activities they engage when using the internet. As the chart below illustrates, roughly 100% of respondents depend on internet access for social media and communications needs such as email and entertainment such as video streaming.

The cost of monthly cable television service is often out of reach for most low income families in the region which is a likely reason why they depend on internet access to stream television, videos and other entertainment programming.

Over 65% of respondents also indicated that they depend on some form of internet access almost daily to perform school work or engage in remote learning. This percentage increases to 80% when adding respondents who indicated they depend on internet access to engage in online training, whether it be work related or personal development, on a weekly basis.

Over 78% of respondents also indicated they use the internet to obtain and complete federal benefits applications like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Another revealing data point is the low percentage of survey takers who engage in teleheath services in their home which is less than 10% on a weekly basis. Again, this result is strongly correlated to the lack of affordable and reliable highspeed broadband access available in the home. This percentage would jump considerably if such connectivity was available to families with school age children including disabled family members who cannot travel on their own to see a doctor.

Figure 10 - Frequency of Internet Usage of Respondents per Classification

Current Internet Uses among Respondents

Legend: Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Yearly, Never
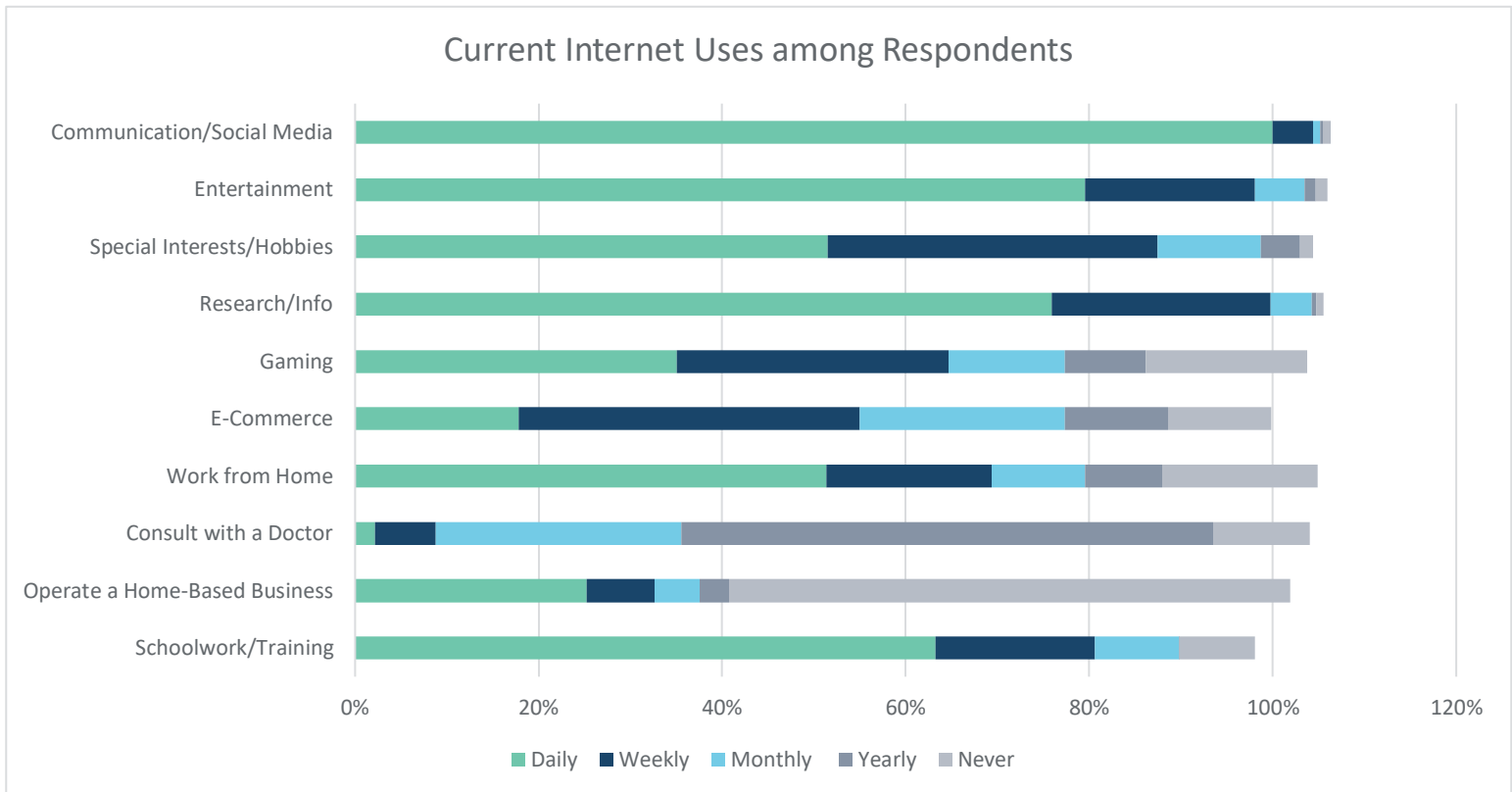
ANALYSIS OF CELLULAR SURVEY RESULTS FOR SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY

The final survey results for those who took the survey using their cell phone are as follows: over 927 cellular surveys were taken and 472 completed it correctly. There were over 455 invalid or partial results that could not be counted toward the final total. Roughly 43% of the results could be utilized for this analysis. The chart below illustrates the final breakdown of respondents who completed the cellular survey.

Table 3 - Summary of Results for Cellular Survey

MAGELLAN CELLULAR SURVEY		
Total Surveys Taken	927	100%
Valid-Complete	**399**	**43.04%**
Valid-Partial	73	7.87%
Total Valid	472	50.91%
Invalid/Test/Dups	455	49.09%

Percentage breakdown of survey respondents by school district

Table 4 below illustrates the breakdown of all survey respondents by school district. As stated earlier, the technology directors for each school district (Avon Grove, Kennett Consolidated, Unionville-Chadds Ford and Oxford Area) were instrumental in getting this survey distributed throughout their surrounding communities.

Table 4 – Cellular Survey Respondents Breakdown by School District

School District	Count	Percent
Avon Grove	**138**	**31.44%**
Kennett Consolidated	**101**	**23.01%**
Unionville-Chadds Ford	**96**	**21.87%**
Oxford Area	**63**	**14.35%**

The results in Table 4 above underscore the engagement of all four technology directors across the school districts that helped increase survey participation. These results also validate the concerns among all four technology directors regarding the lack of qualified broadband access as well as reliable cell phone coverage in their communities as evidenced by the level of interest in this topic.

Cellular providers based on reported speeds and cost

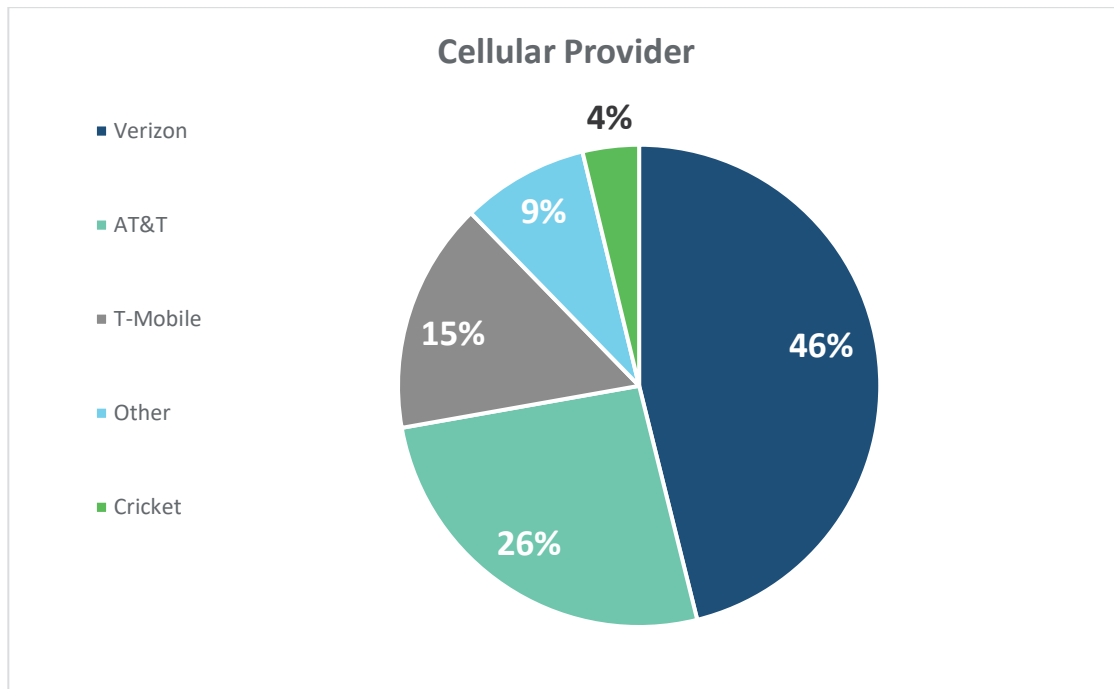*Figure 11 - List of Top Cellular Providers Who Serve Survey Respondents*

Figure 11 above shows the breakdown of each cellular provider in the region that serves survey respondents with cellular services. As illustrated above, Verizon serves 46% of respondents (230 total) where as AT&T serves 26%. These results mirror the market analysis data for the study collected confirming the incumbent providers in the area and their corresponding market share. Similar to the fixed broadband survey results outlined above, Verizon Wireless remains the dominant wireless provider, followed by AT&T and T-Mobile.

Cellular survey respondents also reported average download speeds of 150 Mbps with a maximum of 865 Mbps. The median speed was less than half of the average (74 Mbps). In many communities in and around Kennett Township, Avondale, Oxford and West Grove, consumers reported speeds much lower than the median. Inadequate cell coverage in these areas was a reoccurring theme throughout the duration of Magellan's engagement and is consistent with the reported survey results. Coverage concerns were also raised during most stakeholder engagement meetings with first responders, low-income benefits case workers, mushroom farms as well as with school district technology directors.

Table 5 - Summary of Cellular Survey Speed Test Results

Speed Tests	Download (in Mbps)	Upload (in Mbps)	Latency
Average	150	38	21
Median	74	12	15
Min	0.09	0.01	0
Max	865	498	174

Survey respondents reported an average cellular phone bill of $172, a median of $169, and a maximum of $500. Due to the average and median being less than $10 apart, monthly end user bills are high and not commensurate with the level of service quality, coverage and speeds they are paying for. This data is supported by the stakeholder input provided during interviews.

Table 6 - Summary of Cellular Survey Monthly Internet Cost Results

Cellular Cost	
Average	$172.28
Median	$169.00
Min	$0.00
Max	$500.00

Coverage and service quality concerns

Over 200 out of 399 respondents stated that their cellular service either slows down or is out of service during various lengths of time on a daily basis, which equates to nearly 50% of the survey respondents. The chart below (Figure 12) demonstrates how respondents experience various levels of intermittent cellular service quality.

*Figure 12 - Frequency of Spotty Internet Service in the Home*
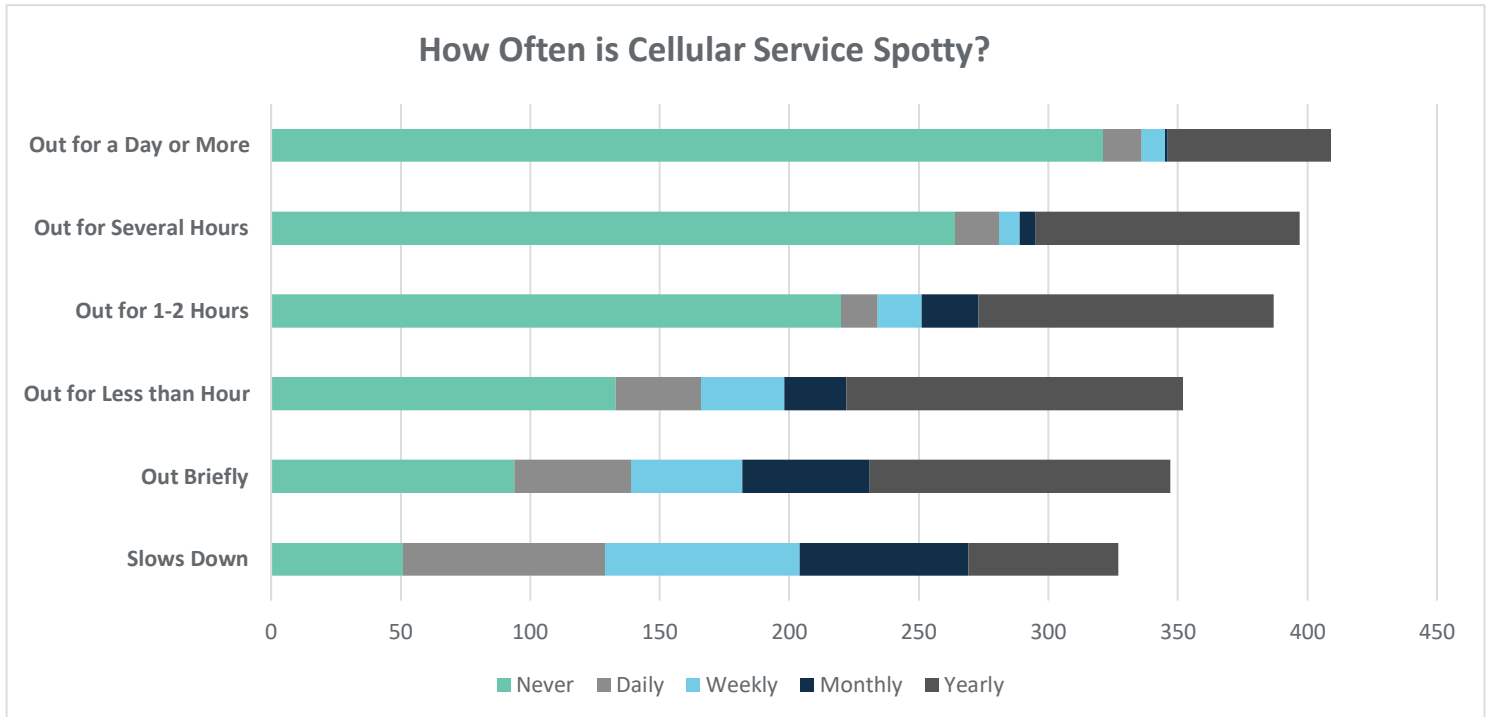
Demographics of Survey Respondents

Cellular survey results also indicate that the median ages of survey respondents range from the youngest of 11 years old to the oldest of roughly 46 years old, which equates to the same range as in the broadband survey.

The median number of school aged children reported per households among cellular survey respondents was roughly 1.5, although most households have multiple families under one roof that also include school aged children per family. Respondents who took the fixed broadband survey reported approximately 3

children per household. The chart in Figure 13 shows the dispersion of ages of family members and school age children captured by cellular survey respondents.

Figure 13 - Median Age per Household Among Cellular Survey Respondents
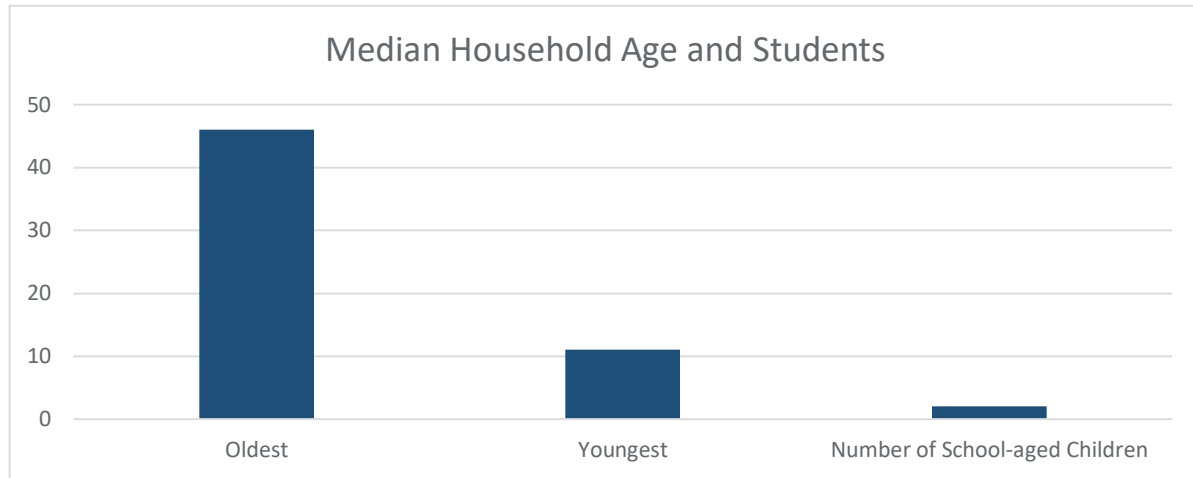
Educational levels among survey respondents

The chart below (Figure 14) illustrates the percentage of respondents who attend college or university. Approximately 77% of the entire survey population reported as not having a household member with a secondary or advanced degree which is consistent with the information gathered from the fixed broadband survey and from local community-based organizations. This data also underscores the social and economic challenges facing the low-income farmworkers and their families who are limited in their employment prospects, and at or below the federal poverty levels.

Figure 14 - Percentage of Households Where One or More Residents Have a College Degree.
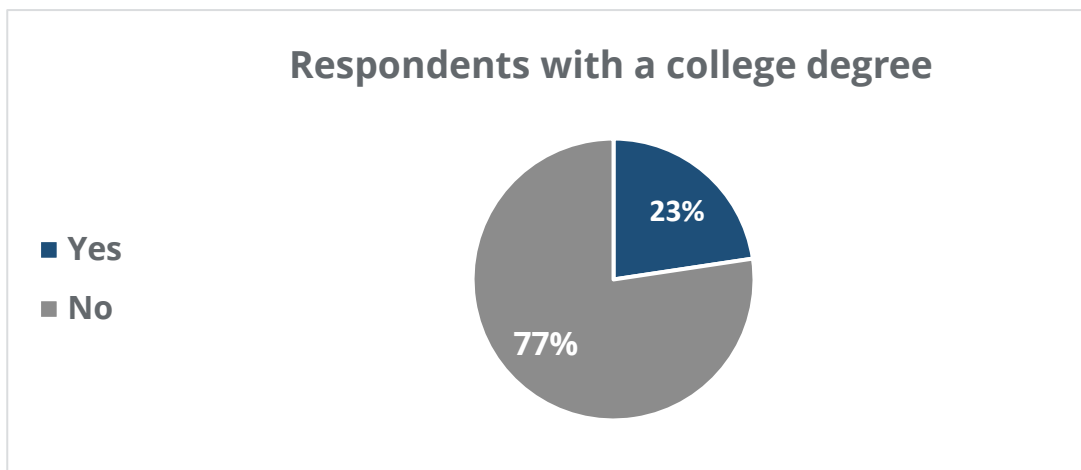
## Percentage of Internet enabled activities performed in the home among cell phone respondents

Similar to the results for the same question among those who responded as having fixed broadband in the home, over 60% of cellular survey respondents indicated they conduct schoolwork using a cell phone daily rather than a computer or tablet. This percentage jumps to 80% when combined with those who study doing it weekly.

This response rate validates the input received from dozens of community leaders and benefits counselors regarding the struggle facing migrant farmworker families in helping their children access high speed broadband both easily and affordably to complete schoolwork online and engage in distance learning.

## Average number of devices in the home by type

The data in Figure 15 below indicates that majority of survey respondents own 3 or more smartphones, followed by smart TVs and laptops that may have been provided by the school district. The average number of total devices per household is 6 which suggests that respondents are heavily dependent on their cell phones to conduct schoolwork.

Figure 15 - Distribution of Devices Used Among Cellular Survey Respondents

Average Number of Devices per Device Type
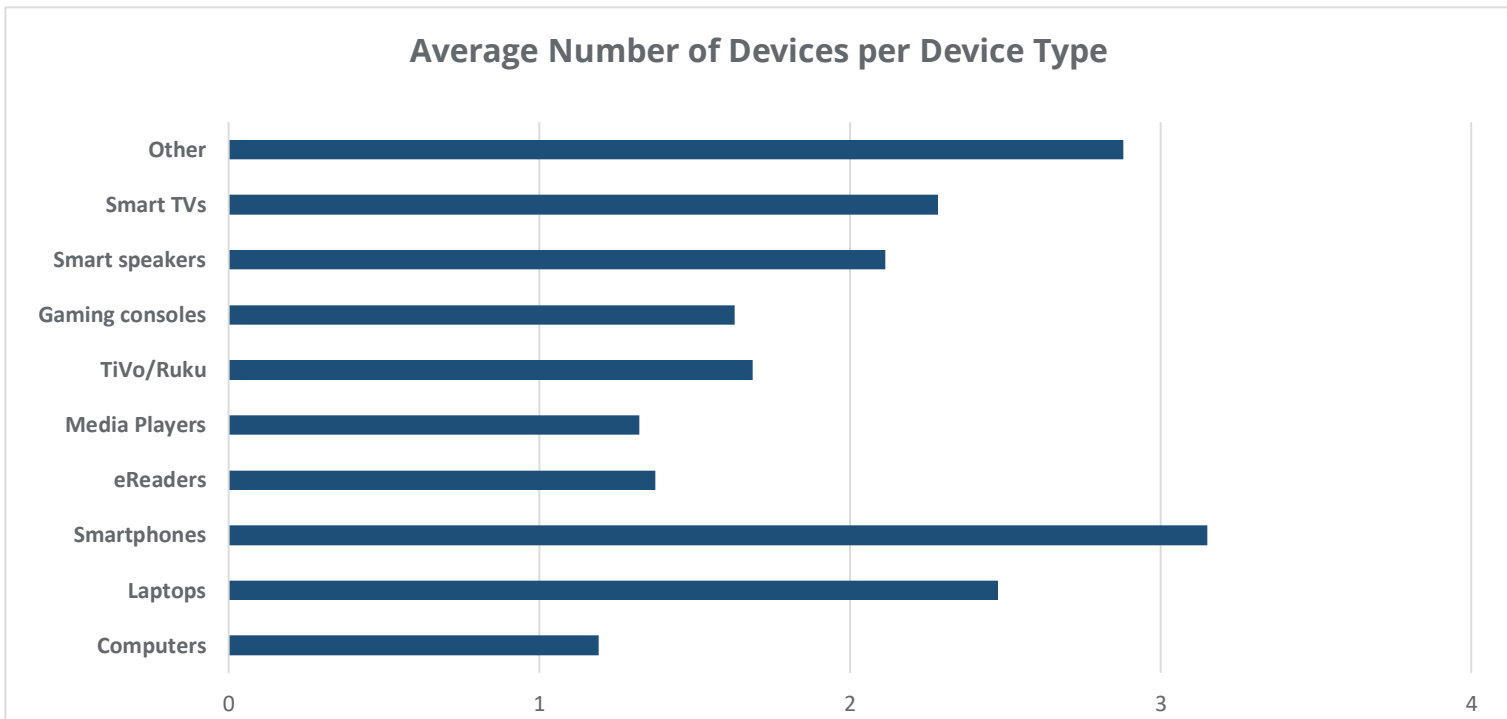
As the graph below (Figure 16) illustrates, roughly 100% of cellular survey respondents depend on internet access for social media and communications needs such as email and over 80% for entertainment such as video streaming.

Figure 16 - Frequency of Internet Usage of Cellular Survey Respondents per Activity or Use Case

Current Internet Uses Reported

Legend: Daily: | Weekly | Monthly | Yearly | Never
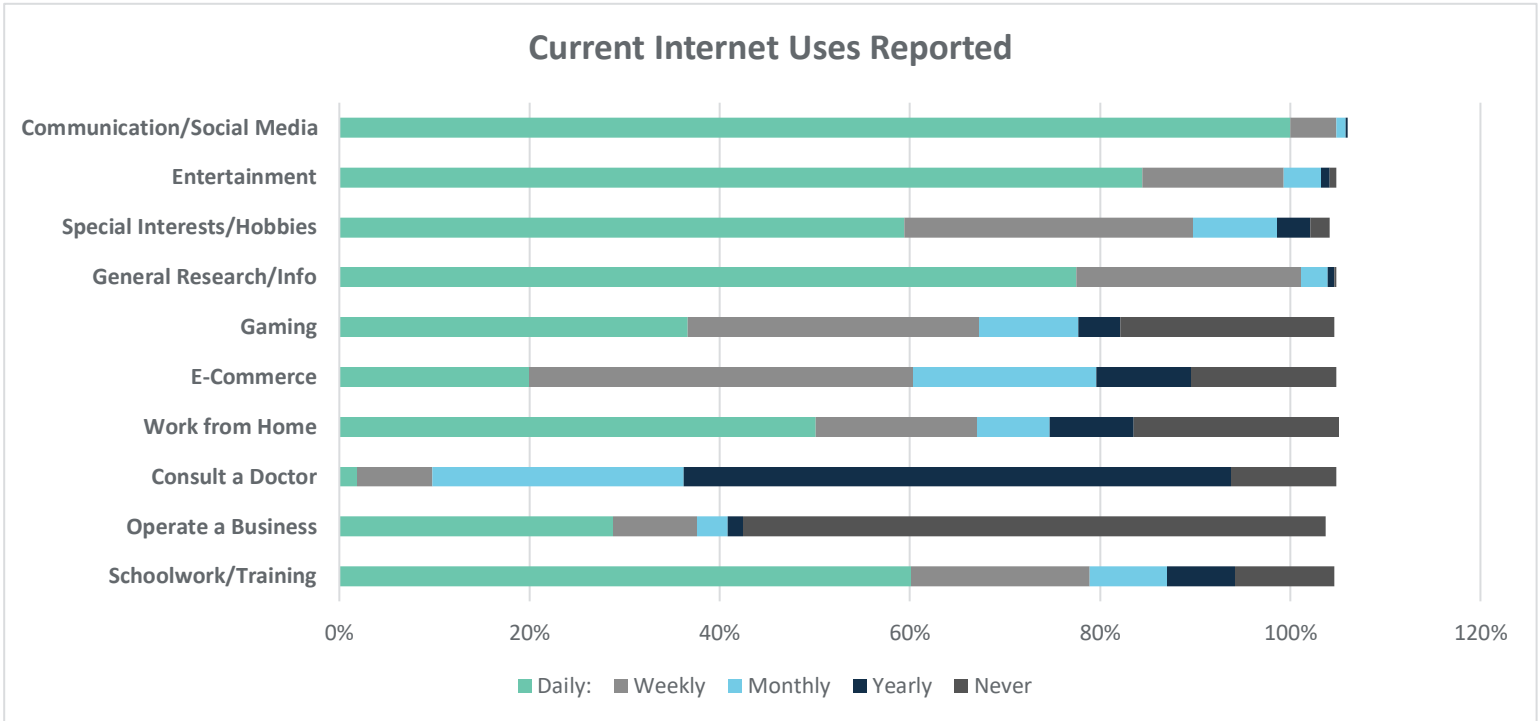
Conclusion

Based on the survey responses to all the survey questions summarized in the graphs above, the majority of survey respondents utilize their cell phone for a variety of basic needs including homework and school assignments. Yet, their level of service quality is intermittent and unreliable in the home.

Consumers are paying on average of $169 per month for cellular services which is in addition to what they are paying for internet access in the home. It is unclear whether these price points factor any reductions from the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) monthly subsidy to the end user bill.

Either way, respondents use their cell phone for most needs either because they do not have adequate internet access in their home and do not have a computer for personal/school use or because they cannot afford to have both. Affordability and access are significant barriers for these users in Southern Chester County.

BROADBAND MARKET ANALYSIS

Magellan conducted a market analysis of existing last mile and middle mile providers in the region and documented their existing coverage, download speeds and pricing tiers. Magellan supplemented its market research with qualitative data collected from one-on-one meetings (remotely and in person) with state, local, and federal officials as well as key stakeholders throughout Southern Chester County.

A comprehensive list of each provider's service offerings and their advertised price and download speeds were also collected and compared to a random sampling of residential and business end user locations across Southern Chester County to verify the accuracy of carrier reported and advertised offerings.

The qualitative and quantitative research results revealed a significant disparity between advertised service offerings and the actual level of coverage received by residential, business and anchor customers. As documented in this section, consumers are not receiving the level of coverage, speeds and prices advertised or as reported by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) or the NTIA.

Due to the absence of competitive pressure on existing incumbent providers, measures to improve coverage and existing service quality is not likely to occur.

Key findings from market research, mapping analysis and qualitative inputs

- The actual speeds available as reported by residential, business, nonprofit and municipal customers are vastly different from what existing providers in the region are reporting to federal agencies (NTIA and FCC). For example, in Appendix 2, Verizon offers seven different service offerings in Oxford with download speeds ranging from 15 to 1,000 Mbps. However, based on Verizon's public facing website, they offer only one package to the selected residential address in this area with download speeds of roughly 7 Mbps.

- Verizon and Comcast are the two largest providers serving residential and business consumers throughout the four school districts, with the exception of Armstrong cable which mainly serves the Oxford Borough and township.

- Last mile connectivity is limited given the cost of deployment to rural unserved households and farms in the region. Incumbent providers with whom we spoke indicated that the cost of deployment could be an additional $4,000 to $7,000 per home passed. Middle mile connectivity is less of a concern due to the availability of diverse fiber routes in and around Oxford, Kennett, Avondale and

Toughkenamon served primarily by Crown Castle and others (see Fiber Locator data[8]).

- The actual level of affordable, high quality broadband coverage in the region is far less than what is advertised according to interviews with over 40 stakeholders. For example, as illustrated in Appendix 2, Verizon reports providing over 99.4% coverage in Avondale, but based on the carriers' website, none of their services are available.

- Some of the monthly recurring rates for residential and business services are higher than those advertised for the top three providers in the region (Verizon, Comcast, Armstrong cable). Despite the availability of federally subsidized programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) used by all providers in the area, monthly rate plans for broadband service are out of reach for most low-income families.

- Cellular and fixed broadband coverage on mushroom farms are poor; some farms get less than one or no bars of coverage (based on in person speed and service testing).

- For business and enterprise services, only Comcast is available in all the selected business addresses (See Appendix 2 for the broadband provider's service offerings' availability per business address' zip code). The FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefit is used by all providers in the area[9].

- None of the service providers we interviewed shared any information about their future buildout plans in Southern Chester County. Therefore, this study contains no information about potential future broadband projects in the region.

Market Research Methodology

Magellan utilized a specific sample of zip codes in each school district to identify the actual level of speeds, service offerings and coverage levels for this study. Magellan then pulled advertised coverage and pricing data for each provider in each zip code in the BroadbandNow.com market analysis tool. Southern Chester County is made

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[8] https://www.fiberlocator.com/

[9] Companies Near Me - ACP - Universal Service Administrative Company (affordableconnectivity.gov)

up of 14 zip codes and several addresses were chosen in each area as mapped in Figure 17, to check the service availability of each provider.

Figure 17 - Location of Residential and Businesses Addresses Used to Evaluate Market Conditions
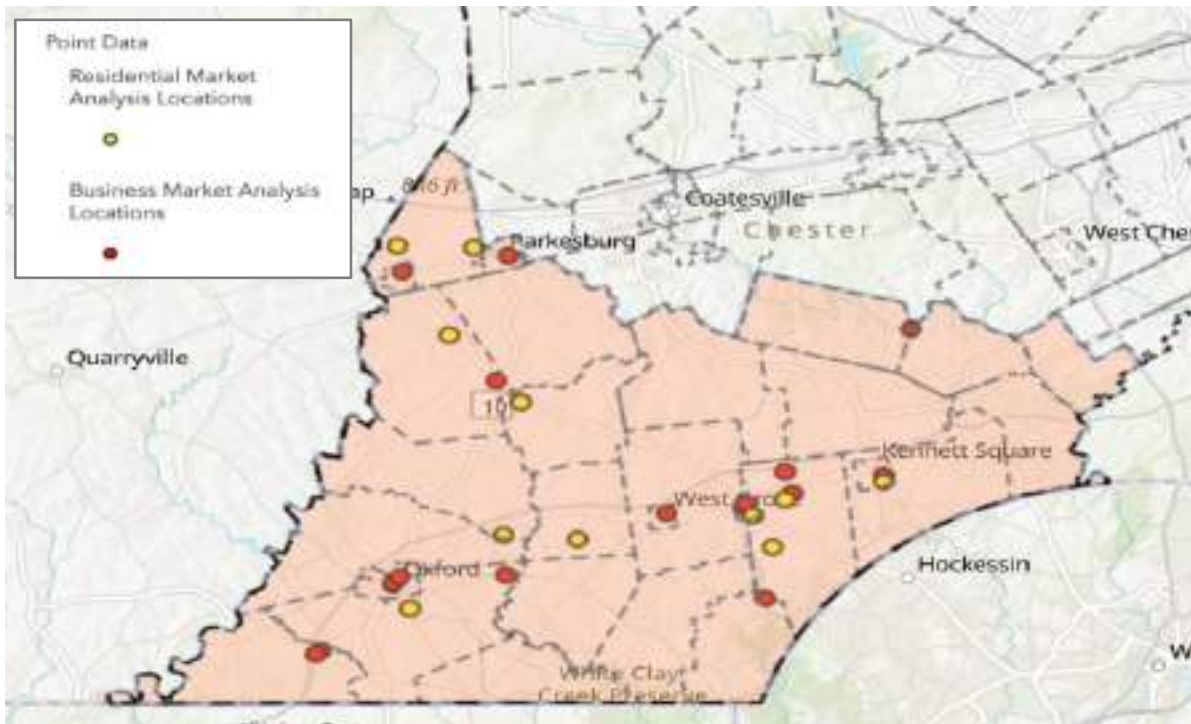
Magellan examined the speeds and pricing for each provider including the specific broadband technology platform (DSL, fixed wireless, satellite, wireless, fiber to the home and cable modem service).

Magellan then gathered the actual broadband service offerings (not including other services such as voice, video and other bundled services to compare fairly the prices and corresponding speeds offered by different providers) provided to residential and business addresses in each zip code (see Figure 18).

These locations were randomly selected to ensure a wide and diverse sample size. Other service details such as price increases over a 3 to 24-month period, inclusion of long-term contracts, inclusion of data caps, the specific retail brand of each package and the variance on download speeds throughout a service contract period were also collected and examined.

Figure 18 -Zip Codes Used to Evaluate Market Conditions in Southern Chester County

Zip Codes	
19390 West Grove	19382 West Chester
19311 Avondale	19317 Chadds Ford
19348 Kennett Square	19365 Parkesburg
19363 Oxford	19374 Toughkenamon
19362 Nottingham	19350 Landenberg
19352 Lincoln University	19330 Cochranville

Retail service offerings listed on BroadbandNow.com[10], as well coverage data generated by the FCC and NTIA were used as comparison points to the advertised speeds and pricing reported by end user customers. The following fixed broadband service providers listed in Figure 19 are recorded as offering some level of high-speed broadband service in Southern Chester County.

Figure 19 - Internet Service Providers (ISPs) Identified as Serving Residential and Business Customers in the Region

Residential	Business
Verizon	Verizon
Xfinity	Comcast Business
Viasat	Crown Castle
HughesNet	CenturyLink Business
Armstrong Cable	Armstrong
Frontier	Frontier

[10] https://www.broadbandsearch.net/.

Upward Broadband	Windstream
T-Mobile (Ultra Home) 5G Internet	

Using the FCC's broadband coverage and speed data as a baseline for comparison

The FCC's most recent fixed broadband coverage map[11] as of December 2020, shown in Figures 20, 21, 22 and 23 are based on self-reported data from existing broadband providers. Carrier reported coverage data is used widely but can be somewhat misleading due to the historical studying requirements based on service availability within a census tract. Most importantly, an entire tract is deemed served if one household receives coverage which is usually not the case in rural communities and in Southern Chester County in particular.

Directed by the Broadband Data Collection (BDC) framework authorized under the DATA Act of 2020[11] the FCC adopted a new broadband coverage and service area validation process called the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric. The Fabric is a common dataset of all locations in the U.S. where fixed broadband internet access service either exists at the time of the studying deadline or can be installed.

All broadband providers are required to file their most recent coverage data with the FCC and its mapping vendor CostQuest no later than Sept 1, 2022[12]. The FCC may not release its revised broadband maps until Q4 of 2022 at the earliest. In the meantime, communities must continue to rely on the current FCC mapping data as shown below.

Magellan encourages local and county leaders to follow the FCC's actions regarding broadband mapping as it will have a direct impact on whether portions of the region will be eligible for federal grant funds discussed later in this study.

The existing FCC data and maps below indicate that most of Southern Chester County is well served with robust competition and the revised maps that will be published in Q4 may be the same. See Figure 20 below.

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[11] FCC Map for Chester County - https://go.usa.gov/xud6v

[12] How Fixed Broadband Service Providers Can Access the Location Fabric – BDC Help Center (fcc.gov)

Figure 20 - FCC's Coverage Map Showing the Number of Fixed Residential Broadband Providers by Speed Category
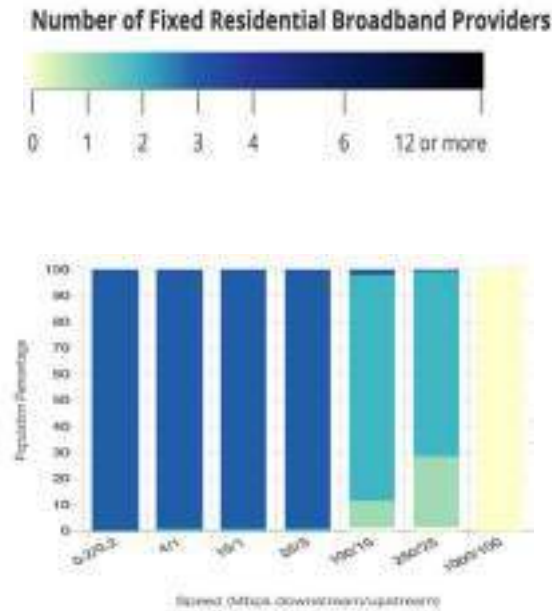
In Figure 20 (above) the black and darker shading on the right side of the legend represents 12 or more ISPs in the region (see list of ISPs in Figure 19). The lighter colors, such as yellow indicate there are no providers offering that class of service in those areas in Southern Chester County.

As illustrated in Figure 21 below, FCC mapping data shows there are **4 ISPs -** Verizon, Comcast, Viasat and HughesNet[13] providing at least **25/3 Mbps** service across 99% of Chester County.

Figure 21 - FCC Map Indicating the Availability of 25/3 Mbps Speeds in the Region

[13] FCC website: https://go.usa.gov/xud6v
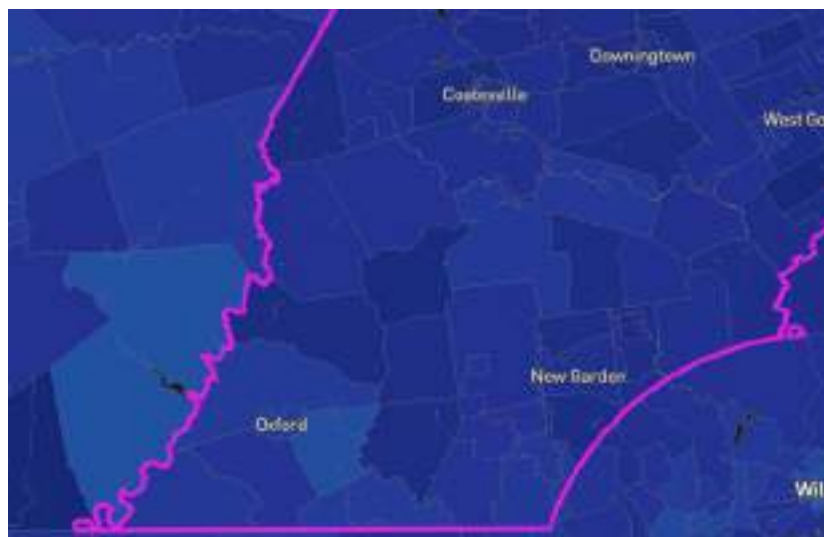
FCC mapping data as illustrated in Figure 22 below, indicates that **only 2 ISPs** – Verizon and Comcast[14] provide at least **100/10 Mbps** of service that cover 86% of the entire county. This map also indicates that the Oxford, Nottingham and Upper Oxford areas are served by only one provider or, in some cases, no providers which correlate closely to the input received by stakeholders in the region.

Figure 22 - FCC Map Showing the Availability Of 100/10 Mbps Speeds
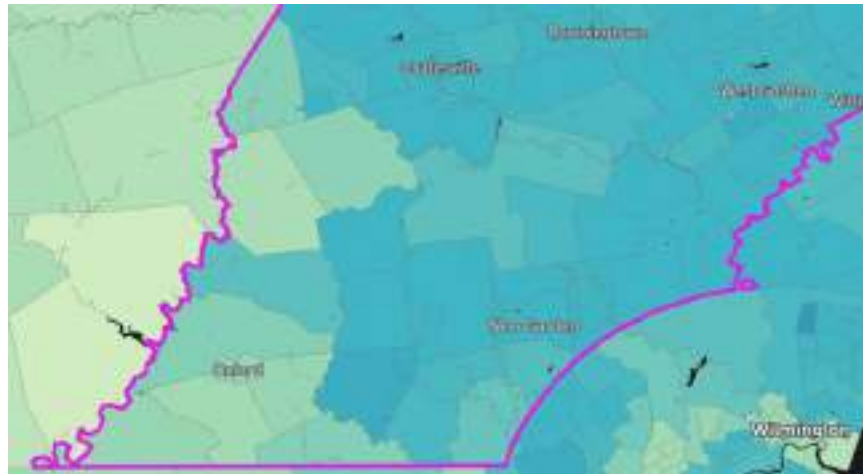
As illustrated in the FCC map depicted in Figure 23 below, there is only **1 ISP** that provides **1000/100 Mbps** service which is Armstrong Cable.[15]

Figure 23 - FCC Map showing the availability of 1000/100 Mbps speeds

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[14] FCC website: https://go.usa.gov/xudFY

[15] FCC website: https://go.usa.gov/xudFZ

ANALYSIS OF CELLULAR COVERAGE IN SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY BASED ON FCC REPORTED DATA

Magellan used coverage data reported by the three largest mobile wireless providers in Southern Chester County based on their FCC Form 477 filings which are captured in the FCC's existing broadband map listed on the FCC's website. Magellan also used Ookla recorded performance data to assess the coverage and speed of each provider.

FCC Form 477 data is based on a predictive map using a standard propagation tool. The solid colors indicate at least 5 Mbps/1 Mbps speed levels. This is the result of a propagation simulation; no real test data is provided.

All carriers indicate blanket, regionwide coverage except for the southern part of the county, as indicated by T-Mobile's map (Figure 26). Verizon (Figure 25) reports the most coverage, AT&T (Figure 24) and T-Mobile, respectively show more areas not covered.

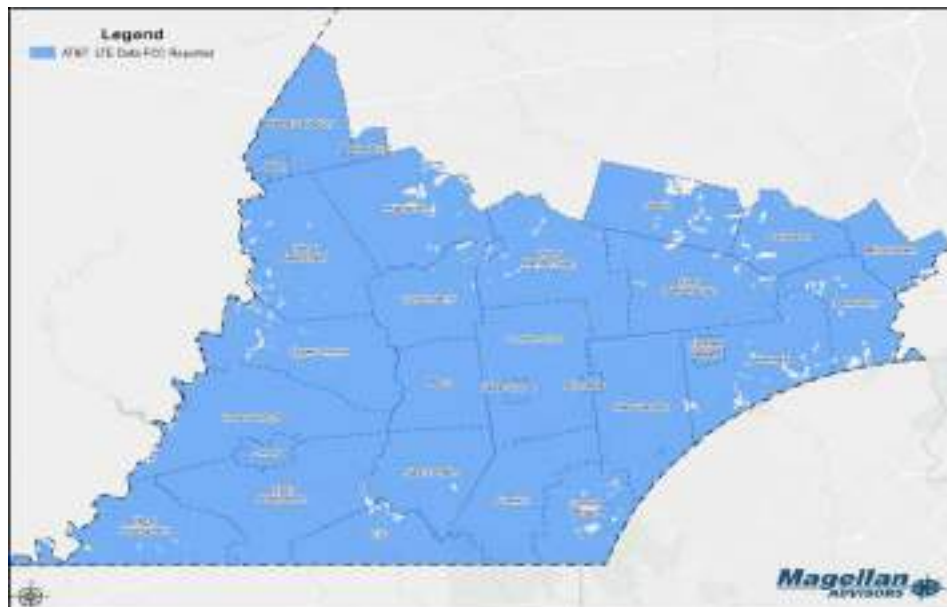*Figure 24 - AT&T's FCC Reported LTE/Cellular Coverage Map*

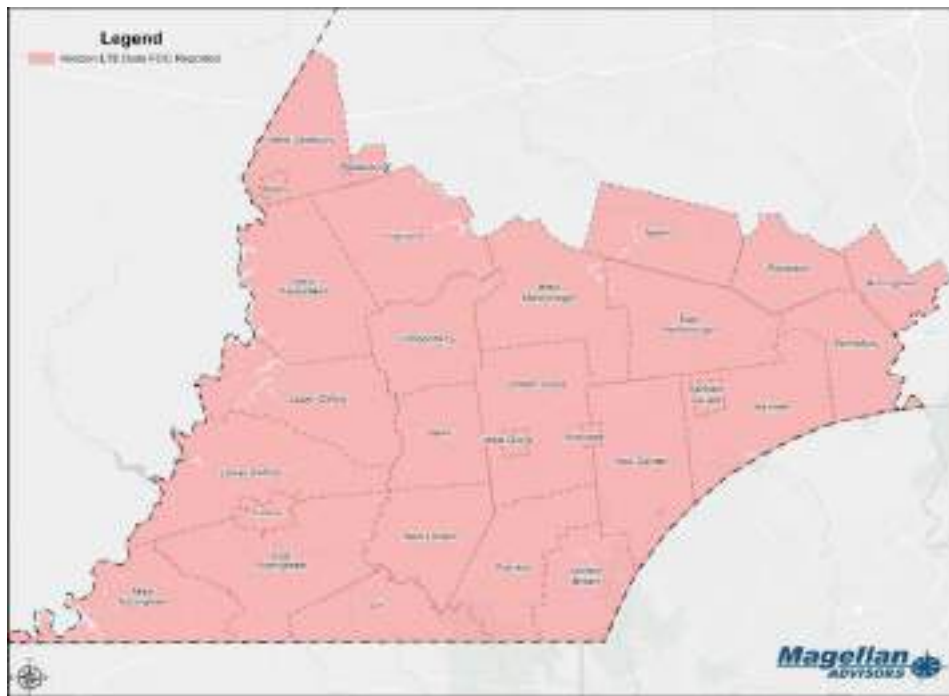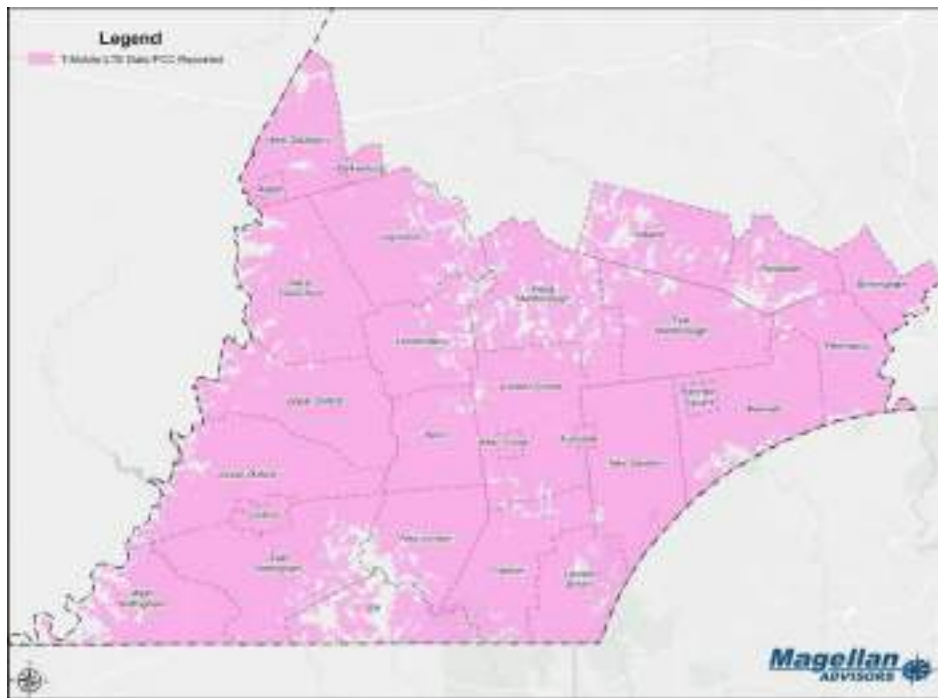*Figure 25 - Verizon's FCC Reported LTE/Cellular Coverage Map*

Figure 26 - T-Mobile's FCC Reported LTE/Cellular Coverage Map

BROADBAND COVERAGE SURVEY SPEED TEST RESULTS

The map below shows the broadband speed test data recorded from the Magellan broadband coverage surveys. The dots represent speed test results from respondents indicating they are either unserved (<25 Mbps) or underserved (25-100 Mbps). The data points are evenly dispersed across the four school districts which suggest the unserved households exist throughout each school district in this region.

Figure 27 - Broadband Survey Speed Test Results in Southern Chester County by Speed Range
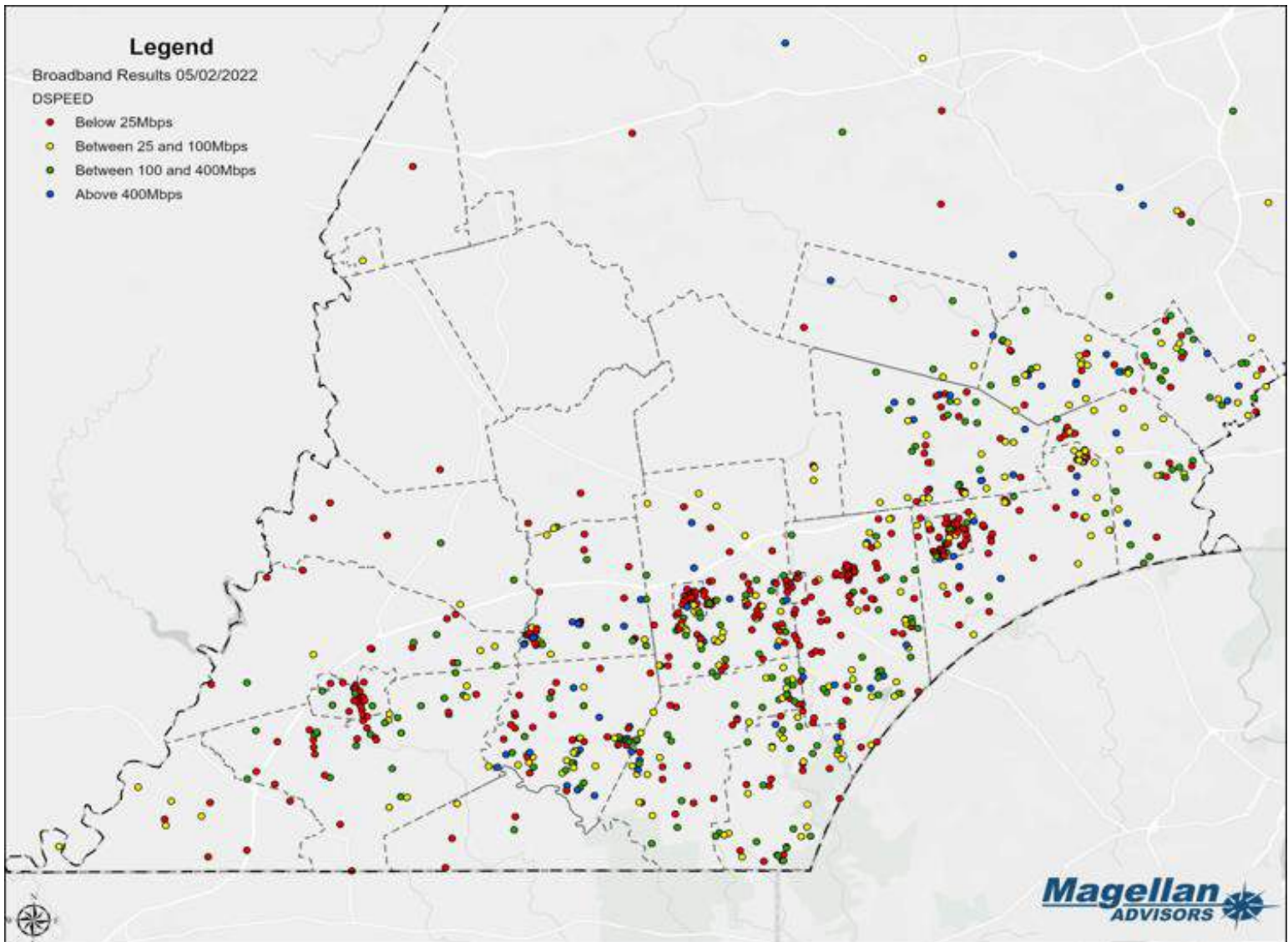
SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY CELLULAR SPEED TEST RESULTS FROM SURVEY RESPONDENTS.

The map below (in Figure 28) illustrates that among the cellular survey respondents, the majority of reported speeds at residential premises were less than 100 Mbps which is indicated in the yellow and red dots. The respondents who recorded speeds of 400 Mbps or more were the outliers in the survey sample.

Figure 28 - Cellular Survey Speed Test Results in Southern Chester County by Speed Range
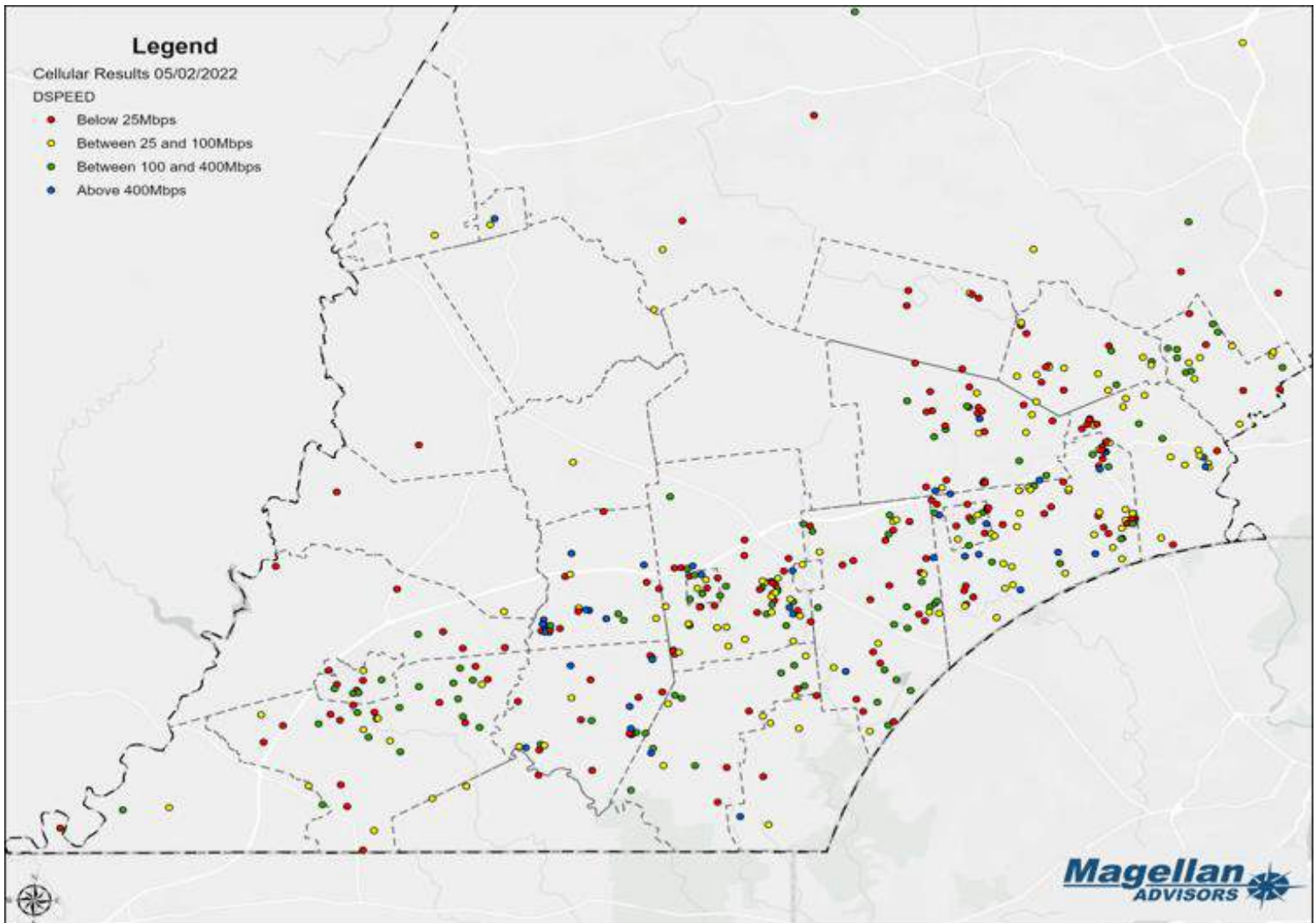
The Magellan broadband coverage survey results illustrated above contrast significantly with FCC and NTIA broadband mapping data which indicates the area has robust fixed and mobile broadband services and corresponding speeds. The coverage survey clearly indicates that consumers are not getting the speeds and

coverage levels depicted on the federal maps. These results provide stakeholders with an independent data set reported by actual consumers that can be used to demonstrate need and coverage challenges that have not been addressed.

CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, the FCC's broadband maps are just one of many inputs used to evaluate the level of coverage in any community and not an authoritative indicator. FCC and NTIA mapping data clearly suggests that the region is well served with affordable and reliable broadband services to homes and business. The coverage depicted on these maps does not align with the user experience reported among survey respondents or community stakeholders.

Despite carrier advertised offerings in these areas, consumers have reported a far different experience as illustrated in Appendix 2. Based on the randomly selected residential addresses selected by Magellan in Oxford, consumers only have access to one out of seven advertised offerings from Verizon (with 88% reported coverage in the area). The selected residential address in Avondale has access to 0 out of the 7 advertised offerings by Verizon (with a 99.4% reported coverage in the area).

A revised set of broadband maps will be published by the FCC in the 4th quarter, which could be more accurate. However, Magellan encourages stakeholders to conduct their own independent broadband mapping analysis and continue evaluating the coverage and service levels provided to consumers in order to tell their own story.

NTIA BROADBAND MAPPING DATA

Similar to the FCC's broadband maps, the NTIA's National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM) shown below suggests that most of Southern Chester County has a median speed of roughly 400 Mbps download. Ookla's speed test data is one of the mapping layers embedded in the NTIA's National Availability Broadband map. This data is not commensurate with Magellan's survey results, market analysis or stakeholder feedback.

OOKLA¹⁶ MOBILE AND FIXED BROADBAND SPEED TEST DATA

*Figure 29 - Ookla Mobile Speed Data and Hotspot Counts*
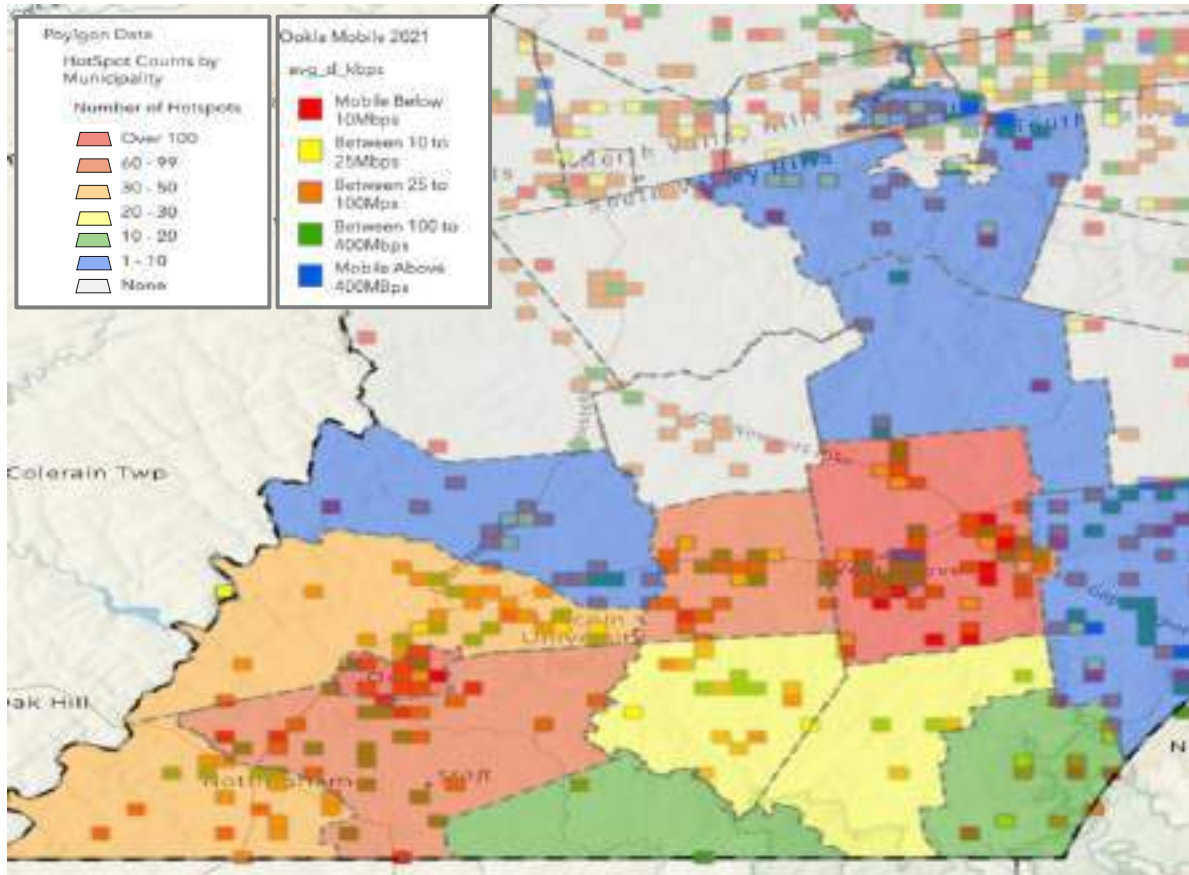
Magellan mapped the locations of over 100 hotspots that were distributed to students in the Oxford Area, Avon Grove, Kennett Consolidated and Unionville-Chadds Ford school districts. The Ookla Speed Test data for mobile connections in Figure 29 above, shows numerous spots in these same areas receiving less than 25 Mbps down. This data provides a useful comparison point to the broadband mapping data illustrated by the FCC and NTIA.

Ookla's publicly available broadband speed test for mobile use as shown in Figure 30 below, indicates that speeds are well below 10 Mbps in areas where hotspots are used by students around Southern Chester County.

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¹⁶ Speedtest by Ookla - The Global Broadband Speed Test

Figure 30 - Low Mobile Speed Test Data and Area with >100 Hotspots Distributed

Around Elk- Oxford   Oxford Area   Around West-Grove Avon Grove
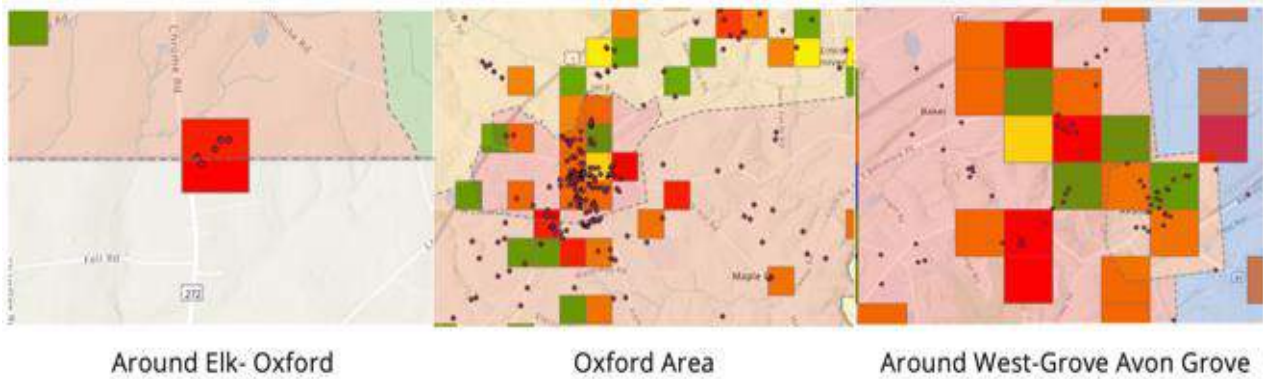
Ookla's data for fixed broadband connections in Figure 31 below, also shows that most households in Southern Chester County have reported a wide dispersion of download speeds at their home. Most reported speeds of at least 10 to 25 Mbps down. Few consumers reported speeds of 400 Mbps and above.

Figure 31 - Ookla Fixed Broadband Speed Test Data
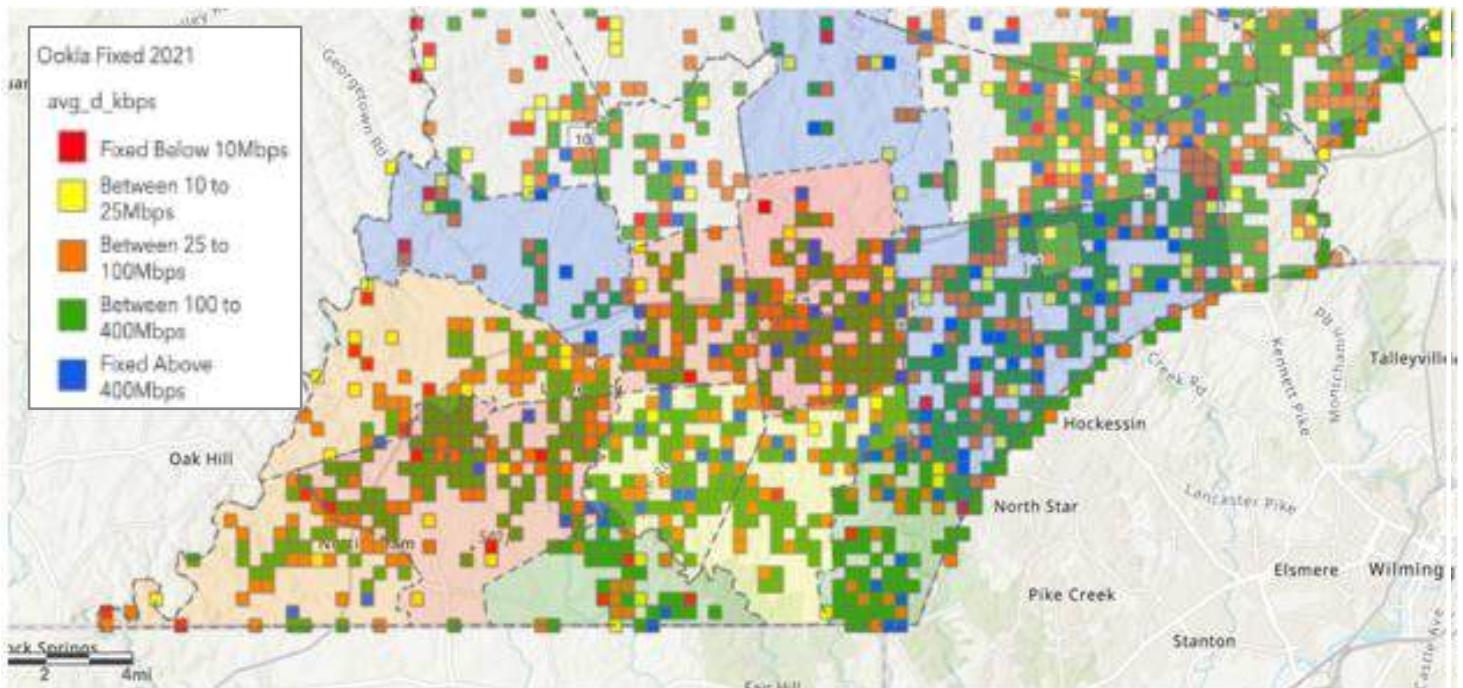
Not all locations in the same census block can access the same level of service. To reiterate, federal mapping data as well as advertised speeds and availability claims can be overstated and not supported by stakeholder testimonials and other

independent, publicly available data pertaining to end user speeds and service availability as illustrated in the next section below.

INCUMBENT BROADBAND SERVICE PROVIDER MARKET DATA IN SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY

The analysis outlined below is from data pulled from the websites of each Internet Service Provider (ISP) in Southern Chester County as well as from several independent broadband market research tools[17].

Based on these inputs, the two major wireline service providers in Southern Chester County are Verizon and Comcast's Xfinity broadband offering. Both vary in their percentage of coverage across the Southern Chester County market depending on the geographical location. The region is also served by six other providers: HughesNet, Viasat, T-Mobile 5G Home Internet, Windstream, Frontier and Upward broadband. All providers listed below, with the exception of fiber backbone providers, offer a discounted service tier to qualified low-income households under the Affordable Connectivity Program which is discussed in further detail later in this study. Below is a summary of each provider and their corresponding market share.

Xfinity, Comcast's retail broadband service offering, is reported and advertised as serving over 83% of all households throughout Southern Chester County (see Figure 32 for the list of advertised service offerings). Twelve of the 14 residential locations selected are shown as covered by Xfinity with multiple packages available according to their website[18]. However, stakeholders in the region indicate that Xfinity service and coverage is inadequate in these areas.

Comcast's Xfinity is less prevalent in Oxford (zip code 19363), serving less than 3% of households, and in Cochranville (zip code 19330), serving less than 6.1% of all households. Prices also vary per location. These are locations where Armstrong cable is the dominant provider. All of Xfinity's advertised pricing is introductory and increases incrementally year after year depending on the package, which varies depending on the location.

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[17] Broadbandsearch.net- a data resource that aggregates data from the FCC, NTIA and the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, and performs data confirmation with each of the providers https://www.broadbandsearch.net/

[18] https://www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service