

EMPOWERING EDUCATION

Empowering Education Building
Bridges for Digital Inclusion in
Rural Pierce County



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION IN RURAL PIERCE COUNTY



A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network

WorkSource Pierce is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington Relay Service: 711



INTRODUCTION

Education and Employment Department



Encourages Higher Learning Education

Access to Education and Employment Opportunities

Focused Service Engagement to Empower Participants

Leads to Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Inequity



EQUITY IN EDUCATION
COALITION



**“We Exist to Disrupt Generational Poverty and
Cycle of Marginalization. We are Agile.**

**We are Innovative. We Meet People Where They
Are To Bridge Opportunity and Service Gaps.”**



Food
Clothing
Housing
Support Services
Education
Employment
Resources



Digital Divide

['di-jə-tʰl də-'vīd]

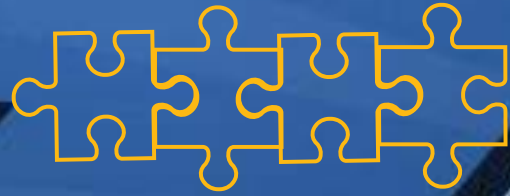
The gap between people who have access to modern information and communications technology and those who don't.





EQUITY IN EDUCATION

C O A L I T I O N



Impacts of the Digital Divide



1 in 3 workers

lack foundational
digital skills

3 in 4 workers

lack the resources to learn the
digital skills to succeed in
workplaces of the future



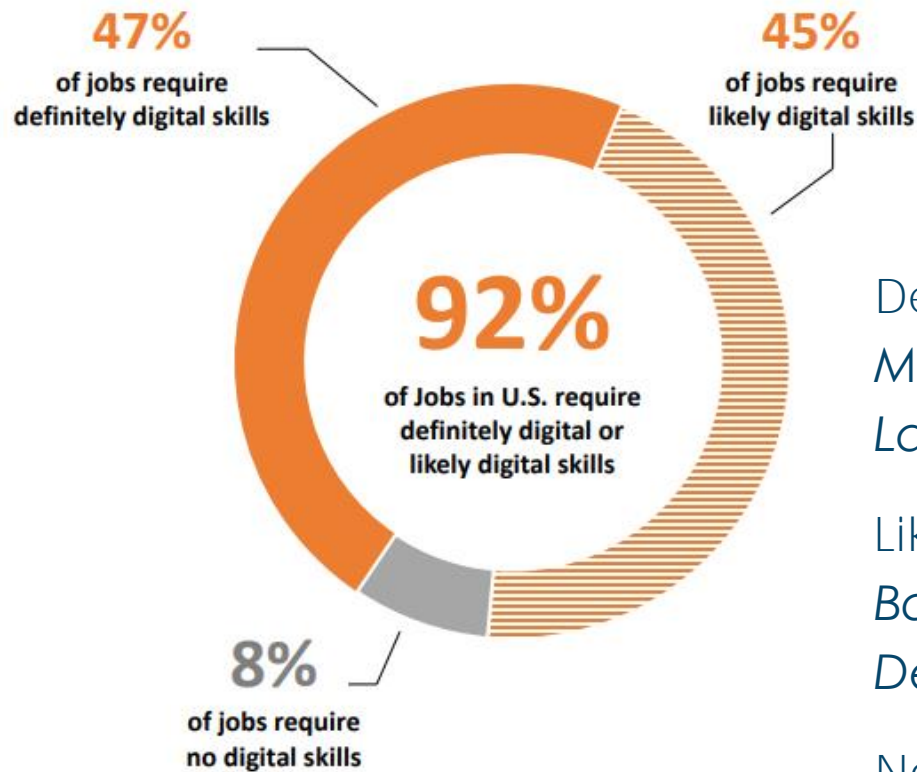
\$11.5 trillion

could be lost across
14 countries if the digital
skills gap isn't addressed



Sources: National Skills Coalition, Salesforce, RAND

Virtually all of today's jobs require digital skills



Definitely digital:
*Microsoft Excel; Python
Language*

Likely digital:
*Bookkeeping; Survey
Design*

Not digital:
Ironing; changing linens

DIGITAL DIVIDE

*Isn't just about
broadband or
hardware -*

*It's also
about skills!*



INTERNET ACCESS



COMPUTER DEVICES



DIGITAL LITERACY

DIGITAL INCLUSION

Laptops, Phone, Tablets

Hotspot/Mi-Fi Devices

Public WiFi Locations

Communications



Affordable Connectivity Program

Northstar DL Program

Basic Technology Navigation

Internet Navigation



INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE



❖ **Mobile Technology Center**

- ❖ Office space in the back for 1 on 1 advising sessions
- ❖ STARLINK satellite internet
- ❖ 10 workstations inside with up to additional 10 more outside, if needed

❖ **Services**

- ❖ FAFSA/WASFA Application Support
- ❖ Direct Referral to EOC for Educational Support Services
- ❖ Direct Referral to MDC and Community Resources for Other Support Services
- ❖ Financial Aid Applications
 - ❖ State Benefits
 - ❖ Student Loans, Opportunity Grants
 - ❖ Tax Credit

❖ **Education**

- ❖ Financial Literacy
- ❖ Digital Literacy
- ❖ Digital Navigation



FAAS LOCATIONS

Main Sites

MDC Learning Center

Puyallup Public Library

Nourish Food Banks

Key Peninsula Civic Center

Red Barn Youth Center

PIERCE COUNTY RURAL RESIDENTS' CHALLENGES

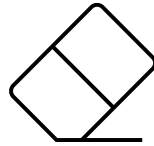
- Rural Access:
 - Average Access Rate: 63%
 - Highest Coverage: Vaughn Area
- Southern Pierce County:
 - Maximum Coverage: 73%
 - Average Coverage: 34%
- Community Outreach Feedback:
 - Residents' Needs:
 - Internet Access
 - Device Provision
 - Computer Literacy
- Notable Disparities:
 - Lakebay, WA:
 - Fixed Broadband:
 - Average Cost: \$50
 - Average Speed: 80Mbps
 - Parkland, WA (Comcast):
 - Cost: \$50
 - Speed: 450Mbps
- Key Issues:
 - ISP Infrastructure
 - Coverage Gaps
 - Pricing Discrimination

IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE ON EDUCATION



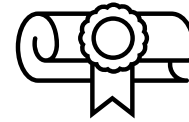
Changing Educational Landscape

- Schools are increasingly interconnected digitally.



Digital Divide Challenges

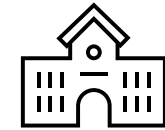
- Adversely affects those without reliable access.
- Hinders access to educational services.



Higher Education

Prioritizes digital methods for:

- Communication
- Recruitment
- E-learning



Ongoing College Needs

Students rely on the internet for:

- Advisor Communication
- Appointment Scheduling
- Accessing college benefits

WHY CONNECTIVITY IS IMPORTANT!

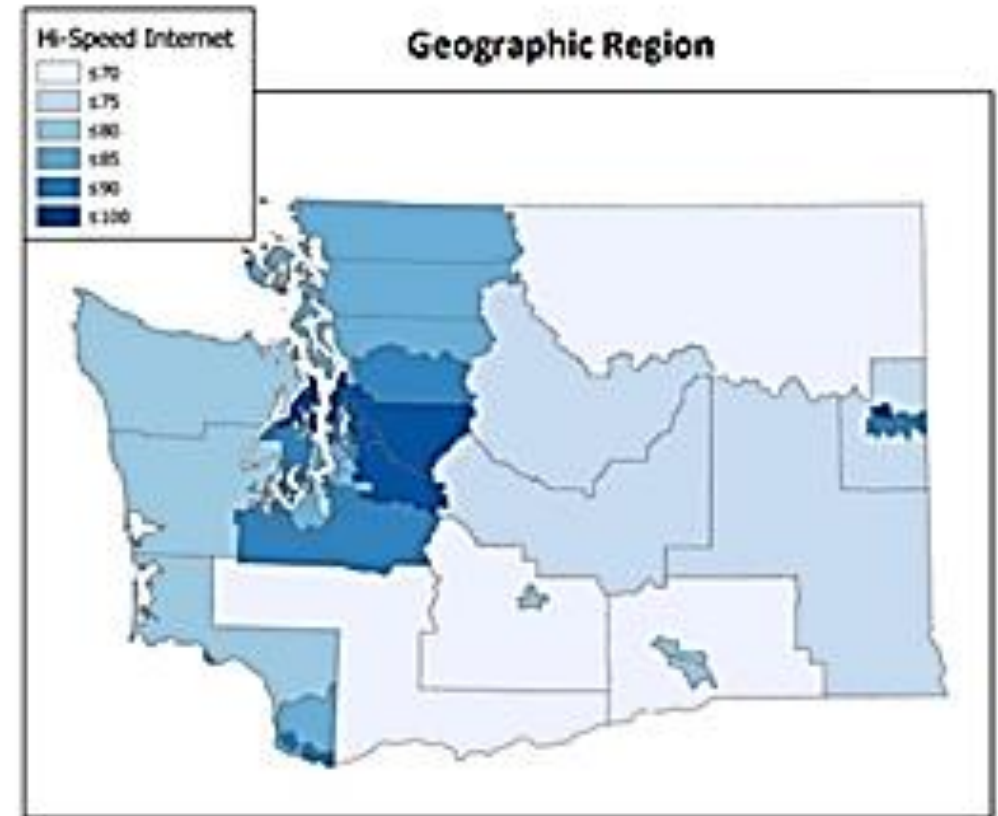
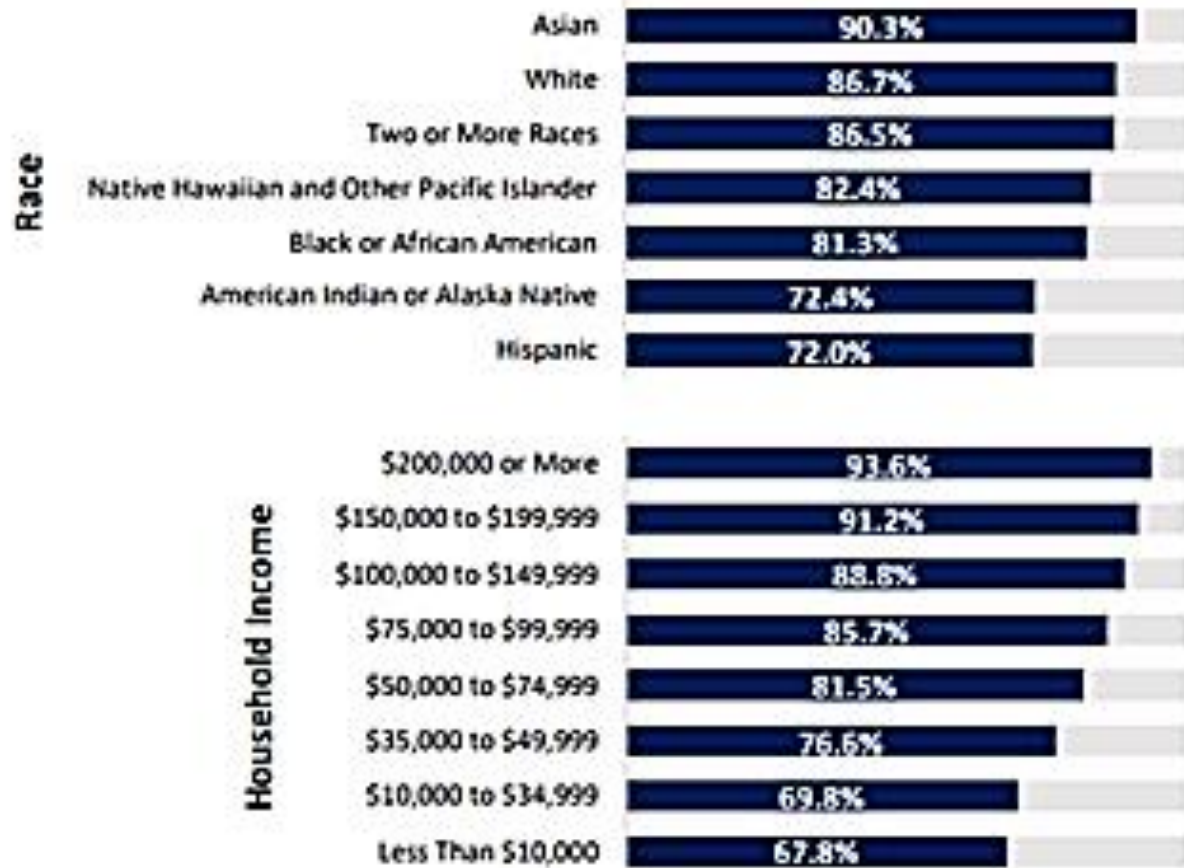
- Issue 1: Educational Advising
- *Digital Interconnectivity*
 - Schools increasingly rely on digital systems.
 - Digital divide affects access to educational services.
- *Higher Education Focus*
 - Colleges prioritize digital methods.
 - Internet essential for communication, appointments, and benefits.

- Issue 2: Internet Access
 - *Vital for Education*
 - Reliable connection crucial for:
 - Online classes
 - Assignments
 - Educational resources
 - Issue 3: Access to Phones
 - *Communication and Information*
 - Mobile phones essential for:
 - Staying connected
 - Accessing educational content

- Issue 4: Access to Digital Literacy
 - *Digital Skill Gap*
 - Digital literacy crucial for:
 - Using online platforms
 - Conducting research
 - Job applications



Access to high-speed internet at home varied by sub-group for students in Washington



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019 PUMS data. Sample excludes students living in group quarters, such as college dormitories or juvenile detention centers.

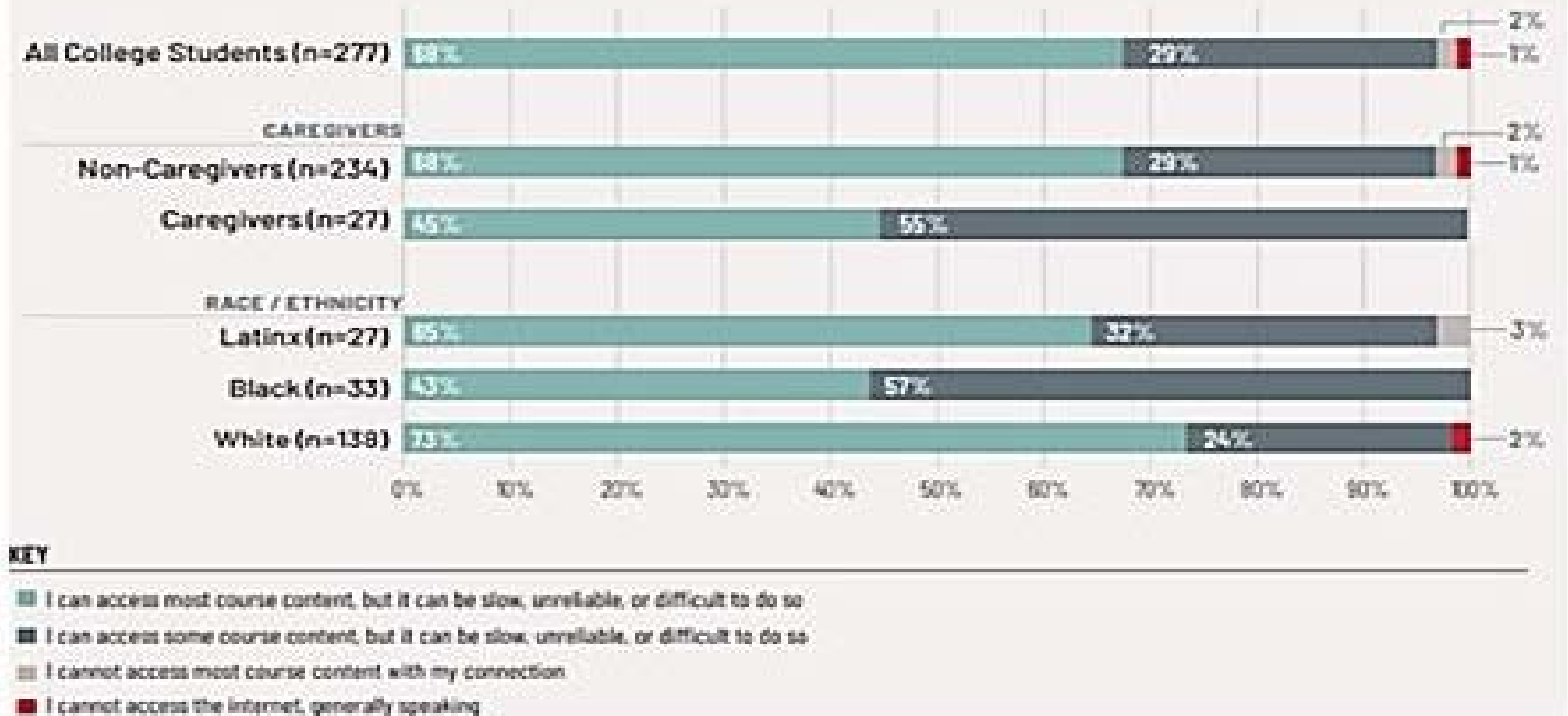
WHAT DOES EDUCATION AND DIGITAL LITERACY HAVE IN COMMON?

IMPACT OF ACCESSIBILITY

"1 in 4 students overall and 1 in 3 low-income students report difficulty connecting to course content due to internet issues" (Ceballos, 2021).

Source: [Florida College Access Network](#)

For Students with Unreliable Internet, Most Can Access Online Content, But It Can be Slow and Difficult





HOW DO WE EMPOWER EDUCATION?



INTERNET ACCESS



COMPUTER DEVICES



DIGITAL LITERACY

DIGITAL INCLUSION

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Internet Navigation





FOCUSED COMMUNITIES

Pierce County Rural Residents

BIPOC

English Learners

Opportunity Youth

Individuals without Access to Technology/Digital Resources

Adult Learners

Individuals with a Disability

Adult Seniors

Individuals without a GED/High School Diploma

Individuals at or below 150% of Poverty

First Generation Students

Individuals experiencing homelessness

And any interested individuals

Our Vision: A Future of Enhanced Access and Opportunities

Continuous Growth

Our ongoing commitment to expanding our knowledge and educating all communities

Meeting the Community Need

Recognizing the increasing demand for after-hours resource assistance

Securing Support

Digital Equity Funding and support of ConnectWA partners

Empowering Through Education

Innovative Approach

Offering mobile computer classes in 3-week courses.

Digital Empowerment

Equipping individuals with technology and essential tech skills.

Intentional Partnerships

Expand reach through community partners and locations

Streamline Education to Employment Pipeline



Be a Part of a Story of Hope

This presentation is to help our community understand MDC and its Education and Employment Department's efforts to building bridges and seeking out forces to join us in being a part of a story of HOPE.

CALL TO ACTION

How could we, collectively, help our community succeed beyond our own spaces to disrupt digital divide, generational poverty and trauma?

How can our organization and department show up in your community, organization and/or programs?

How can your organization and programs help?

How do we provide HOPE together?

Ask, "What narrative am I helping to write?"

THANKS!

Any Questions?



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FAAS CONTACT



Booking Appointment
QR Code



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