

MCDOWELL COUNTY DIGITAL EQUITY FACT SHEET

WHAT IS DIGITAL EQUITY?

Digital equity ensures that all individuals and communities, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, have access to affordable, reliable internet, as well as the skills necessary to fully participate in today's digital society.

Households without Device:

WEST VIRGINIA 11.2%

MCDOWELL COUNTY 17.5%

Households without Broadband:

WEST VIRGINIA 17.3%

MCDOWELL COUNTY 20.9%

Covered Population Demographics

There are **18,911** Residents in
MCDOWELL COUNTY



45.7%

Households with incomes at or below the national poverty level.

23.1%

of the population are aging individuals (65+)



30%

of the population are individuals living with a disability

19.4%

of the population are minorities



Why Digital Equity Matters in MCDOWELL COUNTY



Education:

- Broadband access helps students participate in online learning, complete assignments, and develop digital skills.



Healthcare:

- Telemedicine access can be crucial for rural areas, providing healthcare without the need for extensive travel.



Workforce Development:

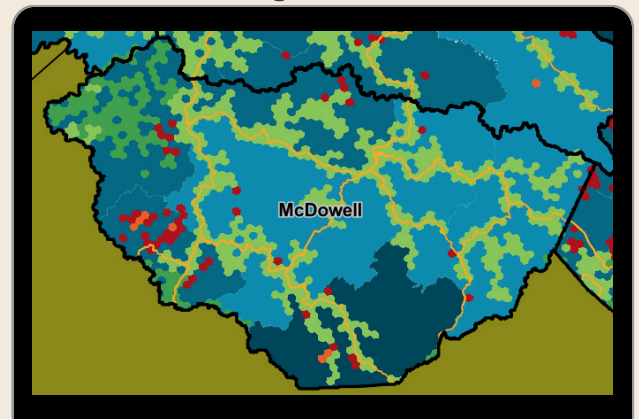
- High-speed internet fosters job opportunities, skills training, and remote work potential in rural communities.



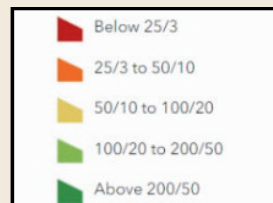
Civic Engagement:

- Broadband helps residents participate in democracy, access public services, and stay informed.

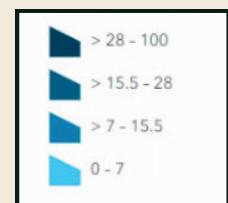
Broadband Coverage in MCDOWELL COUNTY



Claimed Speeds



% of no broadband subscription



BROADBAND

GENERATION^W_V

Digital equity plans were completed by Generation WV on behalf of McDowell County in Fall 2024. GWV hosted community workshop and planning meetings. This factsheet highlights key points from those plans.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS TABLE

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Affordability of devices/technology, and services. Lack of affordable subscriber options.	Advocacy and Funding: Advocacy for funding programs for low-income residents (ACP), Subsidies for devices like mobile hotspots to fill in the gaps.
Lack of education on technology, lack of access to training about using digital resources/tools.	Digital literacy training: Training for the community for device and internet use; Specialized training for those living with disabilities
Device access	Increase device sources for residents Assistive technology support: Speech compatibility on devices for disabilities
Frequent service disruptions due to weather.	Increasing connectivity through existing and new technologies.

What would broadband access mean for McDowell County:



McDowell County Next Steps

- Invite key community leaders and organizations to boost participation.
- Create a strategy to connect with underrepresented communities.
- Apply for grants to support digital equity initiatives.
- Set a timeline and framework for ongoing stakeholder input.

Digital Equity Plan:

The full Digital Equity Plan for McDowell County can be found at <http://generationwv.org/broadband>

