

# WETZEL 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:



#### Households without Broadband:



### Covered Population Demographics

There are **14,431** Residents in WETZEL COUNTY



**25.7%**

Households with incomes at or below the national poverty level.

**22.8%**

of the population are aging individuals (65+)



**20.4%**

of the population are individuals living with a disability

**7%**

of the population are veterans



### Why Digital Equity Matters in Wetzel 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:

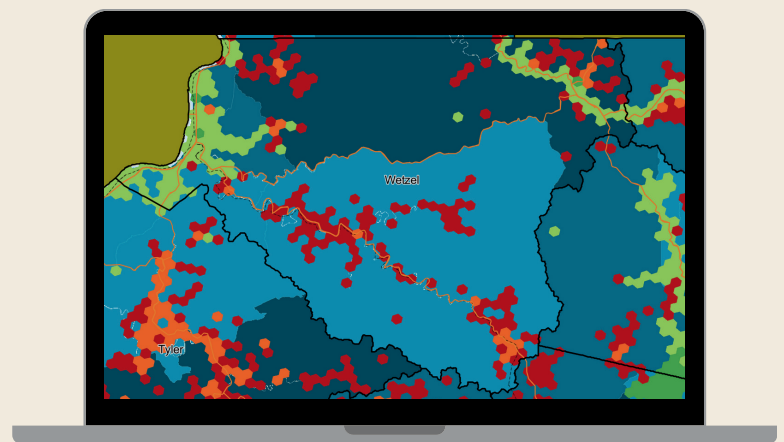
- High-speed internet fosters job opportunities, skills training, and remote work potential in rural communities.



#### Civic Engagement:

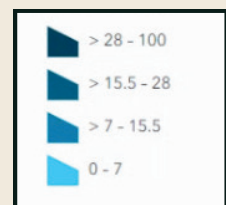
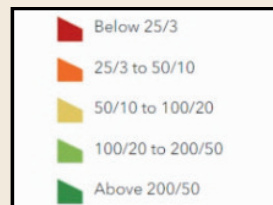
- Broadband helps residents participate in democracy, access public services, and stay informed.

### Broadband Access in WETZEL COUNTY



Claimed Speeds

% of no broadband subscription



Digital equity plans were completed by Generation WV on behalf of Wetzel 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
<b>Affordability of devices/technology, and services. Lack of affordable subscriber options.</b>	<b>Advocacy and Funding:</b> Advocacy for funding programs for low-income residents (ACP), Subsidies for devices like mobile hotspots to fill in the gaps.
<b>Lack of education on technology, lack of access to training about using digital resources/tools.</b>	<b>Education and training programs:</b> Create and nurture opportunities for community training & coordination, Host training and community workshops, Provide education on benefits of the digital world, convert terminology to ordinary language for the community.
<b>Cyber security risks, fear around use of online services. Fear of AI</b>	<b>Partnership</b> with educational institutions, senior centers, the VA, workforce organizations to host trainings.
<b>Geographic challenges for infrastructure development and mobility of residents to get to services.</b>	<b>Infrastructure development:</b> Smart Networks, Smart network, All fiber everywhere

What would broadband access mean for Wetzel

County:



### Wetzel 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 stakeholder input.

### Digital Equity Plan:

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

