NORTHEAST NEBRASKA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT - NENEDD
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 - 7:15 P.M.

City of Norfolk Offices – Training Room, 309 N. 5th St., Norfolk, NE 68701

The Chairman and Board of Directors reserve the right to adjourn into closed session as per Section 84-1410 of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

AGENDA

I. Call to Order: Inform the public about the location of the Open Meetings Act and that it is accessible to the public (LB 898).

II. Roll Call

III. Introduction of Guests

IV. Secretary's Report
A. Consideration of approval of the September 27, 2023, agenda and August 30, 2023, meeting minutes (emailed and posted).

V. Treasurer's Report
A. Consideration of acceptance of the August 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented.

VI. Discussion Items
A. Quarterly Staff Reports
B. Digital Equity Plan Draft

VII. Action Items
A. No items

VIII. Executive Session (if needed)

IX. Chairman/Board Comments

X. Next Meeting Date: The Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District will meet on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 7:15 p.m. or following the Northeast Economic Development, Inc. meeting. The meeting will be held at the following location: City of Norfolk Offices – Training Room, 309 N. 5th St., Norfolk, NE 68701.

XI. Adjournment

Charlie Bahr_____ Sally Ganem_____ Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong _____ Troy Uhlir_____
Blake Denton_____ Loren Kucera_____ Meghann Buresh_____ Justin Webb_____ Benjamin Benton____

Y (In Favor of Motion) **N** (Against Motion) **ABS** (Abstain) **A** (Absent)

NENEDD Board Agenda

Object: Consideration of approval of the September 27, 2023, agenda and August 30, 2023, meeting minutes

Contact Person: Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr., Executive Director

For: Action

Explanation: The September 27, 2023, agenda has been posted on the website. The August 30, 2023, meeting minutes have been posted on the website.

Motion: Consideration for approval of the September 27, 2023, meeting agenda and the August 30, 2023, board meeting minutes.

Charlie Bahr_____ Sally Ganem_____ Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong _____ Troy Uhlir_____
Blake Denton_____ Loren Kucera_____ Meghann Buresh_____ Justin Webb_____ Benjamin Benton____

Y (In Favor of Motion) **N** (Against Motion) **ABS** (Abstain) **A** (Absent)

NENEDD Board Agenda

Object: Acceptance of the August 2023 Treasurer's Report

Contact Person: Kristen Rosner, Fiscal Officer

For: Action

Background:
Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District's (NENEDD) August 2023 Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures that reflect the monthly Budget, Actual and Budget Variance. Also stated is the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget for the nonaccrual accounts, July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, Actual, Budget Variance so far this fiscal year and Percent of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget remaining.

Explanation:

Additional Information:

Business Loan Principal Received	60,378.15
Business Loan Disbursements	140,000.00

Restate Net Income

Year to Date Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	126,576.20
Year to date Non-Operating Revenue:	
Bad Debt Recovery	(757.48)
Year to date Non-Operating Expenditures:	
Donations (To Northeast Economic Development, Inc.)	-
Depreciation Expense	9,207.96
Loans Written Off	-
Actual Year to date Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	135,026.68

Business Loan Payoffs:
Client #314010, Annacott Publishing LLC, $23,815.45

Business Loan Disbursements:
Client #324002, Albion Livestock Market, LLC, Albion, $140,000

NENEDD Business Revolving Loan Funds Available for Lending (All Sources): $2,385,564

Motion: Consideration for acceptance of the August 2023 treasurer's report as presented.

Loren Kucera_____ Benjamin Benton_____ Tina Biteghe Bi Ndong _____ Meghann Buresh _____
Troy Uhlir_____ Justin Webb _____ Charlie Bahr_____ Blake Denton_____ Sally Ganem_____

Y (In Favor of Motion) **N** (Against Motion) **ABS** (Abstain) **A** (Absent)

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District

Statement of Financial Position - Overall - Unposted Transactions Included In Report

As of 08/31/2023

	Current Period Balance
Assets	
General Cash	
Cash in Bank - Checking	151,591.30
Unrestricted CD-Stanton State Bank #2995	23,155.53
Unrestricted CD-Midwest #882523	27,741.72
Loan Payment Account	25,368.11
Unrestricted-BankFirst #1648078	266,433.61
Unrestricted-BankFirst #1648166	81,785.53
Business RLF Cash	
EDA RLF-BankFirst #1648089	1,079,340.92
IRP RLF-BankFirst #1648122	674,502.35
HUD Business RLF-BankFirst #1648133	205,061.73
IRP #1 Loan Loss Reserve-BankFirst #1648144	37,836.38
IRP #2 Loan Loss Reserve-BankFirst #1648177	13,236.19
EDA CARES Act RLF - Bankfirst #1755625	426,659.82
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	111,337.64
Business RLF Loans Receivables	
EDA RLF Loans Receivable	1,269,554.67
IRP RLF Loans Receivable	682,041.67
HUD RLF Loans Receivable	33,945.41
EDA CARES Act RLF Notes Receivable	1,829,209.20
Prepaid Expenses	
Prepaid Expense	10,070.88
Allowances for Uncollectible Accounts	
Allowance for Uncollectible A/R	(18,778.00)
Allowance for Uncollectible Notes	(516,023.00)
Fixed Assets	
Furniture and Equipment	212,096.30
Accumulated Depreciation	(173,848.15)
Total Assets	6,452,319.81
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	2,534.86
Other Payables	
Lease Payable	4,179.41
Payroll Payables	
ADD, Life, Vision, Dental Payable	(42.59)
Accrued FICA Payable	3,987.80
Federal Tax Withheld	2,293.57
State Tax Withheld	1,145.04
457 Withheld	712.61
Health Insurance Payable	508.84
Cafeteria Premium Payable	133.08
Child Support Payable	1,500.00
Annual Leave Payable	12,672.97
HSA Contributions	489.00
Accrued Salaries	19,348.62
IRP Loan Payable	
IRP #1 Loan Payable	242,963.67
IRP #2 Loan Payable	238,821.53
Total Liabilities	531,248.41

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District

Statement of Financial Position - Overall - Unposted Transactions Included In Report

As of 08/31/2023

	Current Period Balance
Net Assets	
Other	5,921,071.40
Total Net Assets	5,921,071.40
Total Net Assets and Liabilities	6,452,319.81

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures - Unposted Transactions Included In Report

From 08/01/2023 Through 08/31/2023

		Current Period Budget	Current Period Actual	Current Period Budget Variance	Total Budget	Current Year Actual	Total Budget Variance	Percent Total Budget $ Remaining
	Revenues							
400	Federal Grants-EDA	5,833.33	17,500.00	11,666.67	70,000.00	17,500.00	(52,500.00)	(75.00)%
405	Dues-Community	13,500.00	0.00	(13,500.00)	162,000.00	174,097.35	12,097.35	7.47%
406	Dues-Counties	1,200.00	0.00	(1,200.00)	14,400.00	14,640.00	240.00	1.67%
407	Dues-Associates	1,121.21	0.00	(1,121.21)	14,000.00	16,050.00	2,050.00	14.64%
410	State Funding NDED	12,887.25	0.00	(12,887.25)	154,647.00	0.00	(154,647.00)	(100.00)%
418	NED, Inc. Management	19,583.33	28,277.67	8,694.34	235,000.00	52,023.61	(182,976.39)	(77.86)%
420	General Administration Fees	18,750.00	13,975.00	(4,775.00)	225,000.00	24,271.25	(200,728.75)	(89.21)%
425	Lead Based Paint Inspection	1,250.00	0.00	(1,250.00)	15,000.00	0.00	(15,000.00)	(100.00)%
430	Housing Management Fees	9,375.00	7,207.46	(2,167.54)	112,500.00	15,900.89	(96,599.11)	(85.87)%
433	Construction Management	5,000.00	1,596.88	(3,403.12)	60,000.00	3,999.38	(56,000.62)	(93.33)%
444	Loan Closing Revenue	104.17	48.75	(55.42)	1,250.00	798.75	(451.25)	(36.10)%
445	NPAIT Investment Income	225.00	311.50	86.50	2,700.00	595.99	(2,104.01)	(77.93)%
451	Business Loan Interest	13,333.33	12,358.44	(974.89)	160,000.00	25,474.71	(134,525.29)	(84.08)%
452	Loan Late Fees	50.00	25.00	(25.00)	600.00	25.00	(575.00)	(95.83)%
453	Loan Processing Fee	291.67	3,400.00	3,108.33	3,500.00	3,400.00	(100.00)	(2.86)%
454	Annual Servicing Fees	1,083.33	1,019.16	(64.17)	13,000.00	1,375.25	(11,624.75)	(89.42)%
460	Special Projects	250.00	212.50	(37.50)	3,000.00	3,450.00	450.00	15.00%
490	Interest Income	2,083.33	3,354.19	1,270.86	25,000.00	6,742.50	(18,257.50)	(73.03)%
491	Miscellaneous Income	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
495	In-Kind Contributions	1,250.00	0.00	(1,250.00)	15,000.00	1,250.00	(13,750.00)	(91.67)%
	Total Revenues	107,170.95	89,311.55	(17,859.40)	1,286,597.00	361,619.68	(924,977.32)	(71.89)%
	Expenditures							
500	Salaries and Wages	60,000.00	53,452.90	6,547.10	720,000.00	110,440.51	609,559.49	84.66%
505	Fringe Benefits	15,000.00	16,334.41	(1,334.41)	180,000.00	32,358.73	147,641.27	82.02%
520	Rent In-Kind	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	15,000.00	1,250.00	13,750.00	91.67%
521	Telephone	666.67	520.65	146.02	8,000.00	958.80	7,041.20	88.02%
522	Postage	250.00	0.00	250.00	3,000.00	(0.02)	3,000.02	100.00%
523	Office Supplies	833.33	414.90	418.43	10,000.00	2,100.30	7,899.70	79.00%
524	Training	666.67	0.00	666.67	8,000.00	0.00	8,000.00	100.00%
526	Travel-Staff	2,500.00	2,519.42	(19.42)	30,000.00	3,553.09	26,446.91	88.16%
530	Printing/Publishing	208.33	0.00	208.33	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	100.00%
531	Copier Expense	100.00	0.00	100.00	1,200.00	(0.01)	1,200.01	100.00%
536	Computer Equipment	416.67	92.64	324.03	5,000.00	2,136.08	2,863.92	57.28%
538	Computer/Software Maintenance	1,266.67	1,136.80	129.87	15,200.00	2,278.25	12,921.75	85.01%
539	Lead Testing Expense	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	15,000.00	0.00	15,000.00	100.00%
548	Loan Closing Expense	104.17	304.00	(199.83)	1,250.00	812.00	438.00	35.04%
550	Building Maintenance	333.33	341.00	(7.67)	4,000.00	682.00	3,318.00	82.95%
551	Utilities	600.00	0.00	600.00	7,200.00	1,023.62	6,176.38	85.78%

V.A Treasurer's Report

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures - Unposted Transactions Included In Report

From 08/01/2023 Through 08/31/2023

		Current Period Budget	Current Period Actual	Current Period Budget Variance	Total Budget	Current Year Actual	Total Budget Variance	Percent Total Budget $ Remaining
553	Dues/Memberships	833.33	541.00	292.33	10,000.00	1,682.00	8,318.00	83.18%
554	Subscriptions	116.67	0.00	116.67	1,400.00	0.00	1,400.00	100.00%
555	Advertising/Marketing	125.00	0.00	125.00	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	100.00%
556	Insurance	500.00	1,216.00	(716.00)	6,000.00	1,587.00	4,413.00	73.55%
560	Legal Services	166.67	0.00	166.67	2,000.00	516.45	1,483.55	74.18%
561	Audit Fees	783.33	0.00	783.33	9,400.00	0.00	9,400.00	100.00%
562	Other Professional Services	416.67	337.47	79.20	5,000.00	749.14	4,250.86	85.02%
565	Depreciation Expense	758.33	666.49	91.84	9,100.00	1,332.98	7,767.02	85.35%
572	USDA Interest Expense	402.67	0.00	402.67	4,832.00	0.00	4,832.00	100.00%
580	Loans Written Off	2,083.33	0.00	2,083.33	25,000.00	0.00	25,000.00	100.00%
590	Bank Fees	20.83	60.00	(39.17)	250.00	60.00	190.00	76.00%
602	Vehicle Maintenance	625.00	0.00	625.00	7,500.00	840.02	6,659.98	88.80%
	Total Expenditures	92,277.67	77,937.68	14,339.99	1,107,332.00	164,360.94	942,971.06	85.16%
	Total Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	14,893.28	11,373.87	(3,519.41)	179,265.00	197,258.74	17,993.74	10.04%

V.A Treasurer's Report

NENEDD Board Agenda

Object: Staff Reports

Contact Person: See individual reports

For: Discussion

Background: Review of activities for period July - September 2023

Explanation: See attached individual reports

Thomas L. Higginbotham Jr. Executive Director
Quarterly Activity Report July 2023 – September 2023

- NENEDD/NED, Inc.
  - Working on hiring a new planner and developing the transition plan due to the resignations of the deputy and executive director.
  - Assisting the BOD in the hiring of a new executive director
  - Hired a part-time administrative assistant M-Th 9-5 28 hrs.
  - Continue to review personnel/administration policies for updates
  - Overall management of organizations, programs, and budgets

- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
  - Continue to stay informed of federal legislation and federal budget and impacts on federal programs.
  - Participated in various webinars regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
  - Implementing and managing our CEDS scope of work

- Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED)
  - Continue to follow and monitor the disaster programs for flood and COVID-19
    - possible relocation of Winslow
    - continue to monitor ARPA fund opportunities
  - General management & correspondence of NENEDD and NED, Inc grants
  - Working with DED on closeout of multiple community grants

- Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC)
  - Preparing the October all staff conference and BOD meeting
  - Working on our digital equity grant broadband grant partnering with the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council since they only cover Dakota Cnty
  - Held the kickoff meeting in March with the committee
  - Scheduled the April committee meeting to start gathering data for asset building a list of libraries, schools, senior centers, etc. that provide public access to the internet
  - Participated in NROC monthly board of directors' meetings
  - Continue to work with our lobbyist on legislation

- Norfolk
  - Attended meeting related to potential grant applications for ARPA projects
  - Attended weekly Norfolk Action Council economic development meetings
  - Continue to participate in Northeast Nebraska Growing Together initiative
  - Attended monthly Housing Agency board meetings

To: NENEDD Board of Directors
From: Tina M. Engelbart, Deputy Director
RE: Quarterly Staff Report – July/August/September 2023

- NENEDD/NED, Inc.
  - Conducted interview for Administrative Assistant position & reviewed resumes for the Community Planner position
  - Wrapping up projects
  - Assisting in the transition for new Executive & Deputy Directors
  - Hosted and participated in regional Digital Equity meetings and worked on the final draft of the digital equity plan with SIMPCO staff. The plan was submitted September 25th to be included in the statewide plan.
  - Attended & Participated in the Nebraska Digital Equity Planning conference in Kearney
  - Overall management of organizations, programs, budgets, and staff

- Human Resources
  - SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management)
    - Kept apprised of current developments in human resources through newsletters, emails and webinars

  - NAHRA (Norfolk Area Human Resources Association)
    - Participated in the HR Nebraska statewide 3-day conference
    - Participated in monthly membership meetings and various webinars

- EDA (Economic Development Administration)
  - Implementing goals of the current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) scope of work

- DED (Nebraska Department of Economic Development)
  - Continue communications w/DED staff on community projects and closeouts
  - General management & correspondence of NENEDD and NED, Inc grants

- NADO (National Association of Development Organizations)
  - Stayed apprised of current developments on Capitol Hill through email, the NADO newsletter and webinars

- NHDA (Nebraska Housing Developers Association)
  - Participated in annual meeting & policy calls– currently serving as the board Chair

- NROC (Nebraska Regional Officials Council)
  - Participated in board meetings and misc. calls with the NROC lobbyist relating to state legislation and potential funding opportunities
  - Continue to be involved in discussion with NROC on Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant for a statewide broadband study

To: NENEDD Board of Directors

From: Kristen Rosner, Fiscal Officer

RE: Activity Report: July - September 2023

- Meetings/Conferences/Webinars
  - Loan tracking software consultations and training
  - Accounting software webinars on advanced functions in the software
  - Amplifund training through Dept. of Economic Development
  - Successfully completed exams 2 of 4 of the CPA Exam
- Reporting as required
  - NED, Inc.
    - RMAP Quarterly Report
    - NDO Semi-Annual Report
    - Notification of Annual Audit
    - HOME Program Income Report
  - NENEDD
    - EDA CARES RLF Annual Report
    - EDA Grant Reports
    - Payroll quarterly reports including 941, 941N, and unemployment
    - Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards
- Audit for FYE June 30, 2023
  - Testing of accounts for the fiscal year
  - Internal controls reviewed, bank account and loan confirmations ready for processing
  - Fieldwork week of August 28
  - Audit notes completed and submitted to auditor
- Monthly and daily tasks of accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, loan payments, follow-up with loan clients, financial statements, invoicing for services, etc.

TO: NENEDD BOARD OF DIRECTORS **FROM: JEFF CHRISTENSEN, BUSINESS LOAN SPECIALIST**

RE: ACTIVITY REPORT – JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 2023

- CDBG GENERAL GRANT ADMINISTRATION DUTIES
  - 20EDCV002 - NORFOLK MOBILE LAB (NORFOLK)
    - JOBS MONITORING
    - ALL FUNDS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED
    - 2ND PUBLIC HEARING HELD
    - PROJECT CLOSEOUT STARTED
  - 20EDCV004 – MIDWEST VETERINARY SERVICES, INC. (BURT COUNTY)
    - ALL FUNDS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED
    - JOBS MONITORING
    - PROJECT CLOSEOUT STARTED
- DIRECTED NORTHEAST RLF COMMITTEE MONTHLY MEETINGS
- LOAN CLIENT SITE VISITS AND MET WITH VARIOUS BANKERS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS
- PARTICIPATED IN KNOX COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MONTHLY MEETING
- JOINED NROC 3RD THURSDAY CONFERENCE CALL

TWELVE LOANS WERE CLOSED:

- SUNSET'S SLICE, D/B/A DOMINO'S PIZZA – NORFOLK ($200,000 - NENEDD EDA CARES)
- RIVER'S EDGE MEAT LOCKER, LLC – FULLERTON ($200,000 - NED, INC. NDO)
- POLLY AUCTIONS – ALLEN ($40,000 - NED, INC. USDA IRP1)
- 39TH AVENUE INDUSTRIAL & STORAGE, LLC – COLUMBUS ($52,000 – NED, INC. DED MICRO #5)
- WOLKEN THERAPY & WELLNESS, LLC – OAKLAND ($50,000 – NED, INC. USDA IRP2)
- TORNADO ALLEY, LLC – WISNER ($94,512 – NENEDD EDA CARES)
- POTTS TAXIDERMY – HARTINGTON ($35,000 – NENEDD EDA CARES)
- PUNTNEY FAMILY PROPERTIES, LLC – COLUMBUS ($250,000 – NED, INC. NDO)
- ELKHORN RIVER COFFEE COMPANY, LLC – SCRIBNER ($50,000 – NED, INC. USDA RBEG)
- ALBION LIVESTOCK MARKET, LLC – ALBION ($140,000 – NENEDD EDA)
- MIDWEST MACHINE & TOOL, INC. – COLUMBUS ($250,000 – NED, INC. NDO)
- SMOKIN' DIESEL REPAIR – LAUREL ($200,000 – NENEDD USDA IRP / $60,000 – CKPPD USDA REDLG)

ONE LOAN APPROVED YET TO BE CLOSED:

- VET. PROPERTIES, LLC, D/B/A TOWN & COUNTRY VET – ALBION ($250,000 NED, INC. NDO) – CLOSING SCHEDULED FOR 9-28-23.

TWO LOANS FOR APPROVAL AT TONIGHT'S BOARD MEETING

- LABENZ ENTERPRISES, LLC – SCHUYLER ($200,000 NED, INC. NDO)
- NSW, LLC (MOTOPLEX OF COLUMBUS) – COLUMBUS ($190,000 NED, INC. NDO)

POTENTIAL BUSINESS LOAN PROJECTS INQUIRIES THIS QUARTER:

CAR/TRUCK REPAIR – EXPANSION BOWLING ALLEY – TRANSITION

Beauty Shop – expansion
Daycare – startup
Auto/Body Shop – Transition
Bar – startup
Cabinet Maker – transition
Coffee Shop/Trailer – startup (3)/expansion
Monument Sales – expansion
Campground – transition
Newspaper – transition
Amusement Center – startup
Popcorn – expansion
Machine/Tool – expansion
Restaurant – transition (3)/Expansion
Insurance Office/Fin. Planning (2) – expansion
Gun Mfg. – startup
Butcher Shop – startup
Veterinarian Clinic – transition
Welding Shop – transition
on-line boutique – startup
Sporting Goods Retail – startup
Convenience Store – expansion
Flower/Gift Shop - startup

Abbreviations:

CARES – Corona Virus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CDBG – Community Development Block Grant
DED – Department of Economic Development
EDA – Economic Development Administration
IRP – Intermediary Relending Program
NDO – Non-Profit Development Organization
NROC – Nebraska Regional Officials Council
REDLG – Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant
RLF – Revolving Loan Fund
RMAP – Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
USDA – US Department of Agriculture

TO: NENEDD Board of Directors
FROM: Mandy Gear, Housing Loan Specialist
DATE: September 27, 2023
RE: Staff Report for July, August, September

OWNER/OCCUPIED HOUSING REHABILITATION (OOR)

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development Inc. (NED, Inc.) and Community Reuse OOR Projects

- Contact applicants on regional waiting list for participation in the program
- Mail out application packets
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Monitor projects
- Prepare loan documents for approved and completed projects
- Assist with marketing materials to promote program
- Community program income reports
- Keep current on program guidelines
- Assist communities in preparing semi-annual program income reports
- OOR projects completed and files closed this quarter: 1

City of Wayne 21-HO-35041

- Correspondence with potential applicants
- Mail application packets
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Prepare documents as required by federal and state regulations
- Prepare final drawdown and begin closeout process per City's request
- Assist with marketing materials to promote program
- Keep current on program guidelines

RENTAL REHABILITATION PROJECTS

Conover Properties – Madison

- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Tenant income reviews
- Determine maximum allowable rents and notify landlords regarding lease renewals
- All units currently occupied

BOWA and Parkview Properties - Bloomfield

- Tenant income reviews
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Determine maximum allowable rents and notify landlords regarding lease renewals
- All units currently occupied

City of Plainview 20-TFRH-35023

- Administer Housing Management Agreement
- Prepare drawdowns
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Determine maximum allowable rents
- Keep current on program guidelines
- 3 units currently occupied

City of Pierce 21-TFRH-35017

- Administer Housing Management Agreement
- Prepare drawdowns
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Determine maximum allowable rents
- Keep current on program guidelines
- 4 units currently occupied

City of Fremont 22-FRH-15032

- Assist with special conditions items
- Facilitate interest meeting with property owners

City of Fremont

- Determine maximum allowable rents and notify landlords regarding lease renewals

Riverpoint Properties – City of Norfolk

- Determine maximum allowable rents and notify landlords regarding lease renewals

Conover Properties – City of Norfolk 20-TFRH-15005

- Administer Housing Management Agreement
- Prepare final drawdown and begin closeout process
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Determine maximum allowable rents
- Keep current on program guidelines

DIRECT HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE (DHA)

NED, Inc. Regional Reuse Funds and NED, Inc. 20-TFHP-15004

- Correspondence with potential applicants
- Mail application packets
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Prepare documents as required by federal and state regulations
- Attend loan closings
- Keep current on program guidelines
- DHA loans closed this quarter: 2

City of Columbus 20-TFHP-17006

- Correspondence with potential applicants
- Mail application packets
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Prepare documents as required by federal and state regulations
- Prepare final drawdown and begin closeout process
- Attend loan closings
- Attend Housing Committee meetings
- DHA loans closed this quarter: 1

Fremont Area Habitat for Humanity 19-TFHP-15062 (OOR and new construction activities)

- Correspondence with potential applicants
- Mail out application packets
- Process applications and determine income eligibility
- Prepare documents as required by federal and state regulations

- Prepare drawdowns
- Attend loan closings
- DHA loans closed this quarter: 0
- OOR projects completed and files closed this quarter: 0

NEBRASKA AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND DISASTER GRANTS

Greater Fremont Development Foundation 19-TFDR-15092

- Prepare drawdowns
- Prepare grant files for closeout

RURAL WORKFORCE HOUSING FUNDS (RWHF)

Greater Fremont Development Council 17-RWHF-009

- Attend GFDC meetings as needed
- Provide housing administrative services
- Maintain Housing project files
- Keep current on housing guidelines
- Annual reporting

Pender Community Development 20-RWHF-003

- Attend PCD meetings as needed
- Provide housing administrative services
- Maintain Housing project files
- Keep current on housing guidelines
- Annual reporting

Cuming County Economic Development 20-RWHF-004

- Attend CCED meetings as needed
- Provide housing administrative services
- Maintain Housing project files
- Keep current on housing guidelines
- Annual reporting

GENERAL HOUSING ACTIVITIES

- Maintain client files
- Update community reuse account budget sheets with information from bank statements
- Mail monthly housing administration invoices to communities
- Compare fiscal officer's element codes balances to open grant budget balances
- Provide updates to housing department project list
- Assist communities in getting set up in Amplifund

MEETINGS/CONFERENCES

- NED, Inc. monthly board meetings
- HomeNE webinars
- RWHF meeting with AEDC

To: NENEDD Board of Directors

From: Martin Griffith, Housing Specialist

RE: Activity Report – July, August, September

Meetings/Conferences

- Attended National Association of Home Builders local chapter monthly General and Board meetings
- Attended Nebraska State Home Builders Association Board meeting
- Attended Ned, Inc and NENEDD board of Directors meetings
- Attended Community and Housing Board meetings
- Attended Schuyler Housing Development Committee meetings representing NENEDD as a consultant
- Attended Town Hall meetings
- Attended City of Norfolk Planning Commission & sub-committee meetings
- Attended Home NE webinars
- Attended NROC monthly zoom meetings

Owner Occupied

- Sent application packets to interested individuals
- Processed applications
- Performed initial Housing Quality Standards inspections
- Prepared initial work and board write-ups
- Presented applicants to Board for approval/denial
- Conducted Tier II Environmental Reviews
- Ordered Title Searches
- Ordered Lead Based Paint Audits/Risk Assessments and Clearances
- Reviewed Lead Based Paint Risk Assessments and revised work write-ups accordingly
- Prepared bid specifications
- Filed and evaluated bids
- Prepared and issued construction contracts
- Conducted Pre-construction Conferences
- Conducted interim and final inspections of repairs
- Reviewed contractor invoices, verified work completed and authorized payment to contractors
- Maintained project files and budgets

Homebuyer Assistance program

- No activities

Ned, Inc Regional Reuse Program

- Initiated two housing rehab projects in Wayne & Norfolk
- Completed rehabilitation of three homes in Scribner & Madison
- Monitored progress nine housing rehab projects
- Verified work completed and authorized payments to contractors

Community Reuse Programs

- Prepared and mailed one application packet
- Initiated one housing rehab project in Bloomfield

Fremont Habitat for Humanity Grant

- Corresponded with grantee, clients, and contractors
- Monitored progress on two projects
- Verified work completed and authorized payments to contractors
- Completed two projects & conducted Final Inspections

Columbus Home Buyer Assistance Grant

- Performed HQS inspection and re-inspection on one property
- Corresponded with interested applicants
- Prepared and mailed applications

Ned, Inc. Home Buyer Assistance Grant

- Performed two initial HQS inspection and re-inspection in Columbus & Norfolk
- Corresponded with interested applicants
- Prepared and mailed applications

Plainview Rental four-plex New Construction Grant

- Verified work completed for grant drawdowns
- Corresponded with grantee, developer and contractor
- Performed final inspection of two units
- Maintained file
- Attended ribbon cutting ceremony

Cuming County Rural Workforce Housing Fund

- Verified work completed
- Maintained file

Greater Fremont Development Council Rural Workforce Housing Fund

- No activity

Pierce Five Star Rental Townhomes New Construction Grant

- Verified work completed for grant drawdowns
- Corresponded with grantee, developer and contractor
- Performed final inspection of four units
- Maintained files
- Attended ribbon cutting ceremony

Pender Community Development Inc Rural Workforce Housing Fund

- Corresponded with PCDI representatives and DED

Plainview 20-DTR-005 Grant

- Performed Davis Bacon wage interviews

Newcastle 21-PW-015 grant

- Conducted Davis Bacon wage interviews

Ned, Inc Emergency Repairs Program

- Corresponded with and mailed three individuals' applications
- Processed and approved three applications
- Verified repairs to be emergency repairs and initiated three projects
- Verified completion of work for contractor payment
- Completed two projects

TO: NENEDD Board of Directors
FROM: Grace Petersen, Community Planning Assistant
DATE: September 27, 2023
RE: Staff Report for July, August, September

July Activities Completed:

- Completed office procedures, which included, but not limited to, ordering office supplies as needed; directing phone calls to appropriate staff members; processing mail and delivering it to appropriate staff members; and switching vehicle mileage sheets at the beginning of each month
- Completed daily bank deposits
- Produced and distributed monthly board meeting agendas
- Participated in monthly board meetings
- Produced and distributed monthly board meeting minutes
- Updated insurance records for both housing loan and business loan clients
- Updated and input data into membership database
- Composed Deeds of Reconveyance for both housing loan clients and business loan clients
- File Deeds of Reconveyance and Deeds of Trusts for housing and business clients
- Processed membership dues
- Started working on Annual Report
- Worked with DED as they continue to monitor grants, which requires gathering and submitting documents upon request; responding to monitoring letters that require attention; preparing final drawdowns and final financial reports for signatures; uploading signed documents to Amplifund. To date, 10 grants have been cleared for close out.

August-September Activities Completed:

- Promoted to Community Planning Assistant
- Completed exhibits for grant applications; uploaded exhibits on Amplifund
- Created 2nd Public Hearing notices for numerous grants
- Assisted with updating maps for grant applications
- Proofread grants prior to submission
- Assisted with grant applications as requested by Community Planners
- Entering invoice data on budget spreadsheets
- Submitting drawdowns to communities for signatures
- Upload payment request and source documentation to Amplifund
- Attended NROC Third Thursday meetings

TO: NENEDD Board of Directors
FROM: Andrea Larson, Community Planner
DATE: September 27, 2023
RE: Staff Report for July, Augus, September

Meetings/Conferences

- Attended various webinars and training sessions in-house, including topics on NROC, CDBG, HomeNE

Community Projects:

Columbus

- Continuing construction management related to the City's DTR project
- Wrote a DTR grant application

Emerson

- Working on the procurement process for the DTR plan
- Wrote a Game and Parks Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for park and swimming pool improvements

Martinsburg

- Continuing construction management related to work on the Village's water improvement project

Maskell

- Began a USDA income survey for the Village

Newcastle

- Working on the procurement process for a Comprehensive Plan
- Continued construction management related to work on the Village's street project
- Completed Environmental Assessment for the Villag's sidewalk project

Norfolk

- Attended various meetings with the City's economic development department regarding multiple grant opportunities, including a CCCFF Creative District grant
- General administration two Qualified Census Tract grants through ARPA
- Continued general administration services for the Norfolk CCCFF Johnson Park project
- Wrote a DTR grant application

Orchard

- Wrote a DTR grant application

Osmond

- Wrote a DTR grant application

Pender

- Working through pre-construction process for the fourth round of DTR commercial rehab project
- Conducted site visits and wage interviews related to work on the NENECAP site improvement project
- Working on the procurement process for a CCCFF planning grant

Plainview

- Continuing construction management related to ongoing DTR

Stanton

- Continuing construction management for the DTR grant

Tilden

- Wrote a DTR grant application

Wakefield

- Working on repurposing funds for the City's sidewalk improvement project

All active communities

- General administration and construction management for all open grants

To: NENEDD Board of Directors

From: Kirk Brown, Community Planner

RE: Activity Report July, August, September 2023

Meetings and Conference Calls

Attended Fremont/Dodge County Long Term Recovery Group/COAD quarterly meeting
Attended Northeast Nebraska Networking Meeting in Randolph
Attended NED/NENEDD quarterly meeting
Monthly NROC Zoom Meetings
Monthly HomeNE Webinars
Webinars: Game and Parks Land Water Conservation Fund, Game and Parks Recreational Trails Program, CCCFF

Community Projects

- **Battle Creek**
  - Discussions with City Officials regarding NENEDD membership
- **Bloomfield**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG EMCV Grant
- **Columbus**
  - Attended City Council Meeting/Public Hearing for CDBG DTR Grant
- **Clarkson**
  - Discussed grant opportunities
- **Clearwater**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG Planning Grant
- **Craig**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG Planning Grant
  - Work on Release of Funds for CDBG PW grant
- **Creighton**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG EMCV Grant
- **Dodge County**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG EM Grants
  - Wrote and submitted Game and Parks Recreational Trails Grant

- **Fremont**
  - Meetings with Angie Olson, City of Fremont to discuss current and future grants
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG EM Grant
  - Completed general grant administration duties for three CDBG EMCV Grants
  - Attended Fremont City Council Meeting/Public Hearing for CDBG DTR Grant
  - Attended meeting with potential NAHTF applicants
  - Attended meeting with Downtown Business Owners/Landlords regarding CDBG DTR Grant
  - Continued work on Fremont NAHTF grant
  - Wrote and submitted CDBG DTR Grant

- **Hooper**
  - Met with City Officials regarding possible grants

- **Lyons**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG WW Grant
  - Attended City Council meeting/public hearing for CDBG Public Works Grant
  - Wrote and submitted CDBG Public Works Grant

- **Madison**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for two CDBG EMCV Grants

- **Niobrara**
  - Wrote and submitted CDBG Public Works Grant

- **North Bend**
  - Attended meetings with Purcell Initiative (Economic Development Group)
  - Worked on Community Attitude Survey

- **Orchard**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for CDBG Planning Grant

- **Ponca**
  - Research for new NENEDD Community Member

- **Schuyler**
  - Attended Schuyler Housing Development Committee monthly meetings
  - Attended Schuyler Downtown Revitalization and Commercial Development Committee quarterly meeting
  - Completed general grant administration duties for two CDBG EMCV Grants
  - Attended meeting with City and State Officials regarding the Top Notch Building
  - Attended Schuyler City Council Meeting/Public Hearing for CDBG Planning Grant
  - Attended Meetings for Schuyler 12th & B CDBG Public Works Grant
  - Attended Mayor's Advisory Group meetings
  - Worked for release of funds on CDBG Public Works Grant
  - Wrote and submitted CDBG Planning Grant

- **Scribner**
  - Completed general grant administration duties for repurposed funds
  - Attended meeting to discuss Rural Workforce Housing Grant
  - Researched grant opportunities

- **Tilden**
  - Attended meeting with Lowell Schroeder regarding Tilden Recreational Trails Program Grant

- **Wayne**
  - Attended Zoom meeting with Wayne officials regarding Land Water Conservation Fund Grant
  - Completed general grant administration duties for Public Works Grant
  - Wrote and submitted LWCF Grant

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NENEDD Board Agenda

Object: Update on Digital Equity Plan Draft

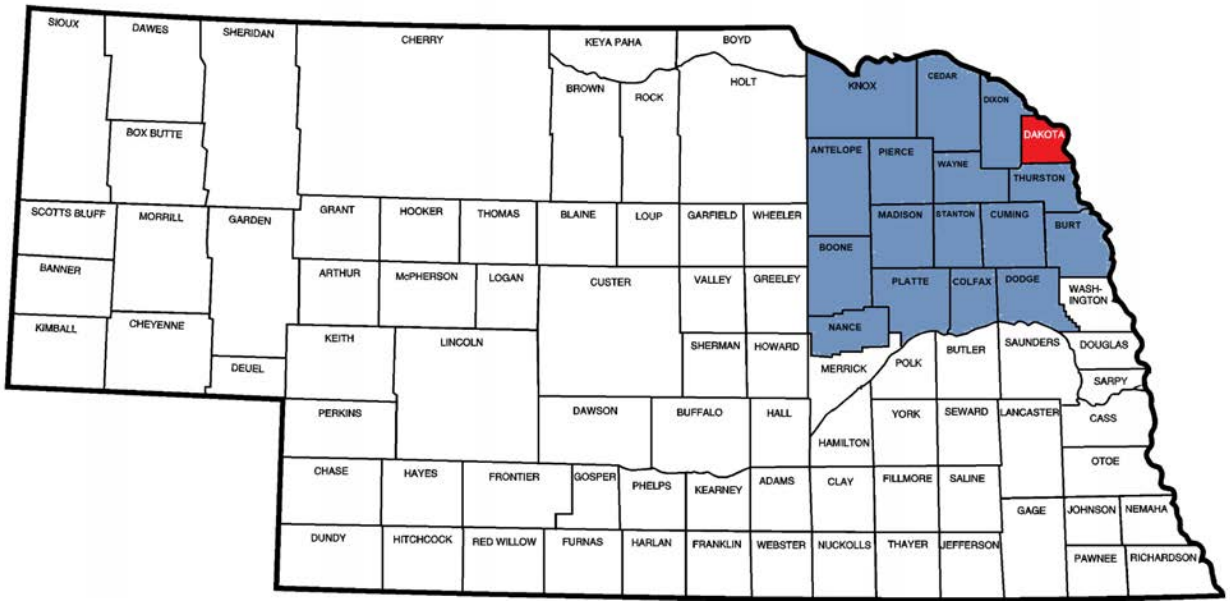
Contact Person: Tina M. Engelbart, Deputy Director/Thomas L. Higginbotham, Jr., Executive Director

For: Discussion

Explanation: Update on Digital Equity Plan Draft

NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional Digital Equity Plan

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District & Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council



NEBRASKA DIGITAL EQUITY

NENEDD
Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District

simpco

VI.B Discussion Item

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Executive Summary

Overview

Digital access is an essential tool for residents as it assists communities in improving and expanding available resources while embracing technological advancements for their community. Economic development will prosper by building and sustaining community partnerships focused on growing digital equity and inclusion throughout the region as it reaches every aspect of life including education, healthcare, industry, and agriculture. Developing partnerships and advocating for all Nebraskans to have access to affordable, quality broadband, an appropriate device, and the skills to use technologies at home, school, the farm or ranch, businesses, healthcare, and government is essential to economic growth.

In January 2023, the Northeast Nebraska Digital Equity Planning Committee was created through a partnership with the Nebraska Information & Technology Commission, SIMPCO, and NENEDD. Regional stakeholders representing the populations of rural, aging, ethnic and racial minorities, language barriers, low to moderate income, veterans and disabilities were invited to discuss the needs of their represented communities. The participating stakeholders represent community organizations and industries, including educational institutions, healthcare and service providers, local governments, and economic development organizations. The NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional Digital Equity Plan was created with input and guidance from these stakeholders.

The purpose of the NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional Digital Equity Plan is to identify barriers to digital equity in the region and implement strategies to remove these barriers. Included in the plan is an asset inventory, availability maps, cybersecurity planning guidelines and enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program by county.

Problem Statement

The NENEDD/SIMPCO Region has seen growth in service and access to broadband in larger cities across the one-county region, but minimal growth in broadband to rural areas outside of city limits. The work to ensure each household has access to affordable, quality broadband has revealed new challenges that must be addressed to fully connect each resident. The primary concerns for the region after access are - personal device access, digital literacy (specifically cybersecurity and online safety) and access to and knowledge of public resources to assist in the transition to a digital society. The NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional Digital Equity Plan provides an in-depth look at the challenges ahead for the region and strategies to address these concerns.

Regional Working Vision

The NENEDD/SIMPCO Region will see an increase economic development through community partnerships focused on growing digital equity and inclusion throughout the region by ensuring that Northeast Nebraskans have access to affordable, quality broadband, an appropriate device, and the skills to use technologies at home, school, the farm or ranch, businesses, healthcare, and government.

Key Priorities

Through the pursuit of Digital Equity Capacity Grants and Digital Equity Competitive Grants, residents, governments and community anchor institutions (CAIs) can actively work to bridge the digital divide. Based on these key priorities, the NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional Digital Equity Planning Committee developed specific goals and strategies.

1) Rural access to digital literacy and technical support
2) Cybersecurity for all populations, which is promoted outside of work and school
3) Improve affordability of internet access, especially in rural areas
4) Digital literacy programs offered to an expanded number of cultures, languages, and abilities

5) Increased public resources to provide and sustain digital services through
    a) Sharing of resources among communities in the region
    b) Increased accessibility to online trainings
6) Increased promotion and awareness of public, digital resources
7) Capitalize on existing partnerships for sustainable programming
8) Identify an entity (or entities) to pursue available funding and address these issues while convening stakeholders to implement solutions

Conclusion

Future disbursement of Digital Equity Capacity Grants and Digital Equity Competitive Grants ensures the NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional communities and CAIs can be supported and work continued to bridge the digital divide. Based on these opportunities, this digital equity plan includes recommendations to achieve specific goals.

The NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional Digital Equity Plan outlines short-term and long-term strategies to address the challenges of the digital divide. In the short-term, by the end of 2026, the region must prioritize updates to current technology systems offered as public resources across various institutions. Ongoing strategizing with CAIs and local governments is necessary to maximize the use of funds available. Partnerships with community organizations and national nonprofits will increase the number of household devices available and provide navigation through digital literacy and cybersecurity training.

The long-term steps, with a goal date of 2030, include identification of permanent funding with support from community members to ensure stability in digital programming implemented in the region. The next steps prioritize maintaining growth in digital literacy, economic development, telehealth services, education, and government within each community.

Digital access is necessary to sustain and grow a community. Through the NENEDD/SIMPCO Regional Digital Equity Plan, the region will increase economic development through

established and new partnerships. With the assistance of federal and state funding, the region can ensure that the region will have access to affordable broadband, devices compatible with the new economy, and the knowledge to use both to their fullest capability.

Regional Data and Covered Populations

Overview Data on Region and Covered Populations

SIMPCO

The Nebraska portion of the SIMPCO Region covers one county: Dakota County, which has a population of 21,582 as of the 2020 Decennial Census.[1] While Dakota County is included in the Sioux City, IA-NE-SD Metropolitan Statistical Area, only South Sioux City and Dakota City are located within the metropolitan area's urbanized boundary.[2]

NENEDD

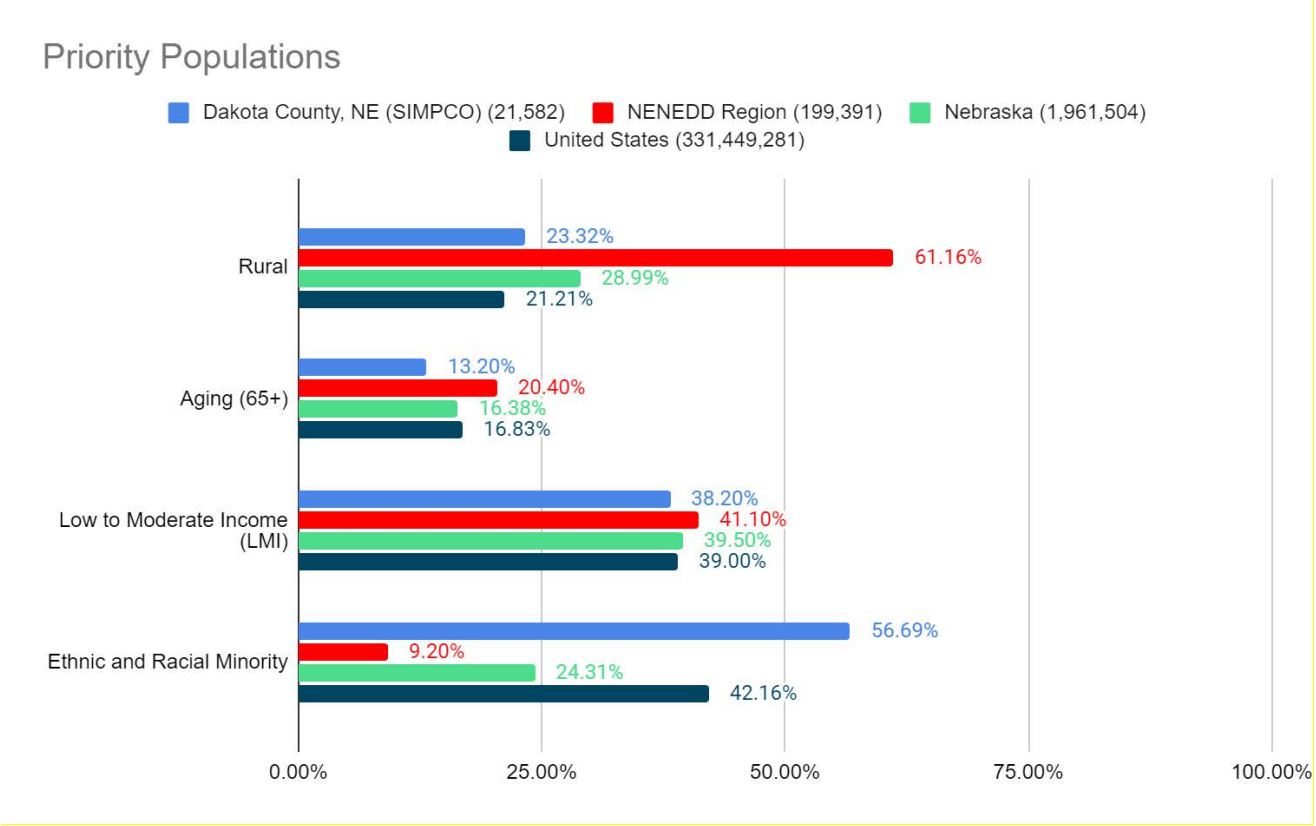
Designed initially as an economic development facilitator, Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD) started operations in 1977 to serve Northeast Nebraska. The NENEDD region included the counties of Antelope, Boone, Burt, Cedar, Colfax, Cuming, Dixon, Dodge, Knox, Madison, Nance, Pierce, Platte, Stanton, Thurston and Wayne. The total population of this region is 199,391 of which nearly 70,000 is concentrated in our three micropolitans Fremont, Columbus and Norfolk. Of the 117 communities in the NENEDD footprint, 110 have a population less than 2,500.

The following chart depicts a comparison of the prioritized population groups, by percentage, in Dakota County and the NENEDD region compared to the state of Nebraska and the United States. Per an article from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, households are classified as low-to-moderate income (LMI) for the Priority Populations chart if their reported family income was less than $50,000, which approximates 80% of the District median income.[3]

[1] Source for 2020 Decennial Census data retrieved from: <https://data.census.gov>

[2] Information retrieved from SIMPCO's website; <www.simpco.org>

[3] Source for LMI calculations: <https://www.kansascityfed.org/surveys/low-and-moderate-income-economic-conditions/lmi-economic-conditions-in-the-tenth-district-fall-2021/>



Key takeaways from the data comparison for Dakota County include the following:

- 23.32% of Dakota County's residents are classified as rural, meaning that they reside outside of both South Sioux City and Dakota City. This figure is slightly higher than the national percentage (21.21%) but smaller than Nebraska's percentage (28.99%).
- 13.2% of Dakota County's population is aged 65 years or older, which is a lesser portion of the population than Nebraska (16.38%) and the United States (16.83%).
- Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) household percentages are nearly equal across all three political entities, with all three figures hovering around 39%.
- More than half of Dakota County's residents identify within an ethnic and/or racial minority (56.69%). Nebraska, in contrast, only has 24.31% of its population within the same category.

Key takeaways from the data comparison for the NENEDD Region include the following:

- 61.16% of the NENEDD Region residents are classified as rural, meaning that they reside outside of the micropolitans of Columbus, Fremont and Norfolk. This figure is

much higher than the national percentage (21.21%) but smaller than Nebraska's percentage (28.99%).

- 20.41% of the region's population is aged 65 years or older, which is a higher portion of the population than Nebraska (16.38%) and the United States (16.83%).
- Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) household percentages are nearly equal across all three political entities, with all three figures hovering around 39-41%.
- Less than 10% of the region's residents identify within an ethnic and/or racial minority (9.2%). Nebraska, in contrast, only has 24.31% of its population within the same category while the national percentage is 42.16.

Each population prioritized by the National Technology Information Administration (NTIA) is represented in the region, but the main issues for the majority of the population is the lack of available and potentially new resources for racial and ethnic minorities, as well as a financial barrier to access for low-to-moderate income households. Upon completing the asset inventory, the NENEDD/SIMPCO Digital Equity Planning Committee identified four populations most in need of resources through the Digital Equity Act:

- Rural Residents
- Aging Individuals
- Low-to-Moderate Income
- Racial and Ethnic Minorities

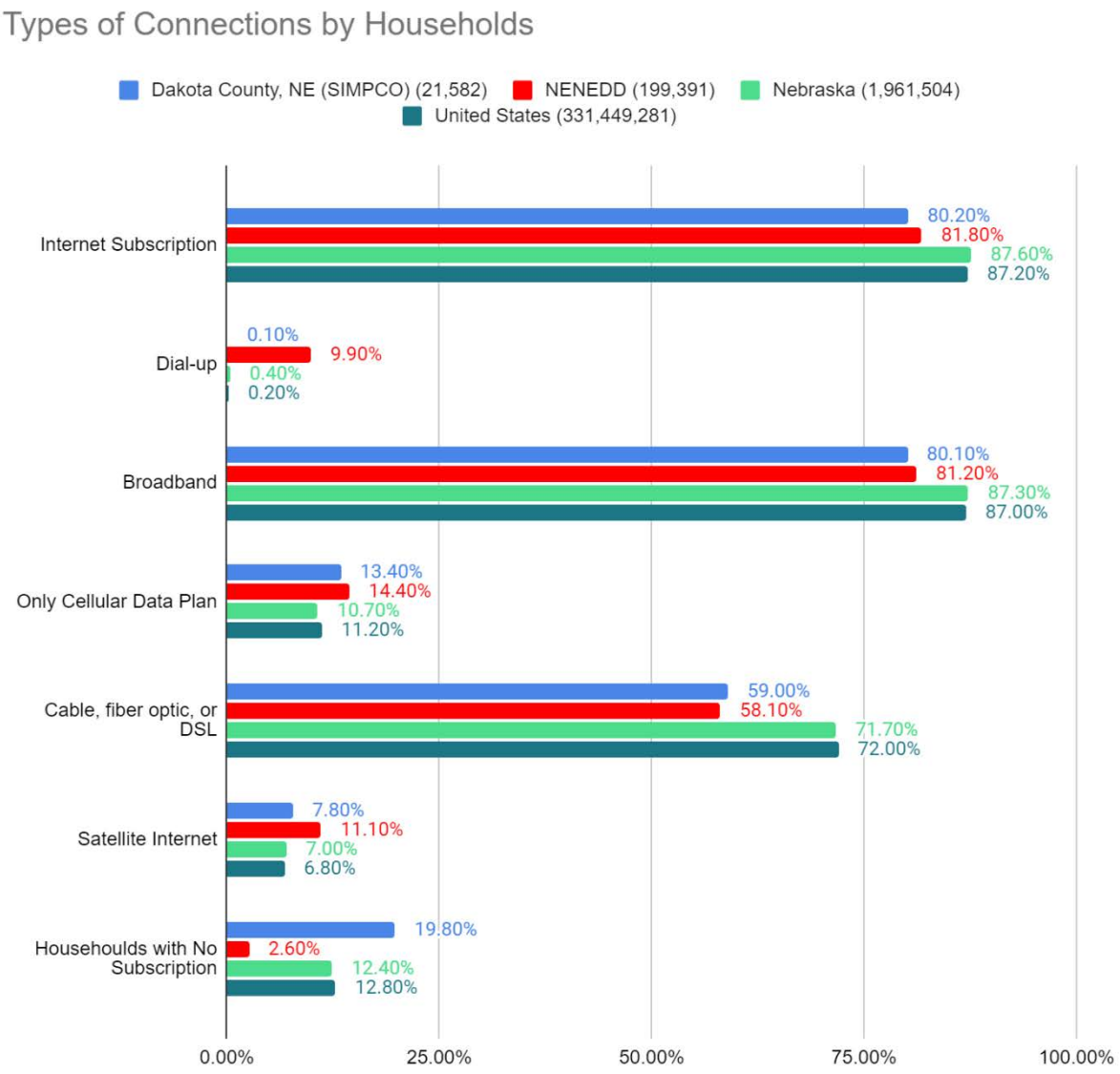
Dakota County has a unique strength in its geographic location at the junction of three states (Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota). A significant portion of Dakota County's residents travel across the Missouri River to Sioux City to work, shop, and utilize services provided by out-of-state entities. Additionally, while distance is not as prevalent of an issue for rural residents in Dakota County, there is a pronounced lack of internet service provider (ISP) availability outside of South Sioux City's municipal boundary. Additionally, as Dakota County's population continues to diversify and welcome residents of all backgrounds, the need for multilingual and culturally sensitive programs and services becomes increasingly important.

Each county and region has unique strengths and challenges, but the combination of each of the four selected populations presents additional challenges that require unique consideration.

Broadband Availability and Overview

Limited access to reliable service is the main barrier to digital equity for rural residents in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region . For many residents outside of South Sioux City, Dakota City, Columbus, Fremont and Norfolk the only options for broadband access are from mobile or satellite providers, both of which are more susceptible to service disruption during inclement weather. Additionally, Dakota County's terrain makes fiber optic installation more difficult and costly, which ultimately increases prices for rural consumers. The Committee gives preference to fiber optic deployment to ensure the region's transition to a digitally driven economy through the future-proof infrastructure of broadband fiber optic. The Committee and SIMPCO support the process of hanging fiber optic cables from the existing electrical pole infrastructure, where possible, to expedite deployment and minimize costs of expansion.

The region is made up of all eight priority populations; yet the main barrier of digital equity for each population is the lack of affordability to access high speed internet. The current cost to build out broadband infrastructure is a heavy burden on the communities and internet service providers in the region and yet a crucial task to ensure each person can fully participate in a modern society.

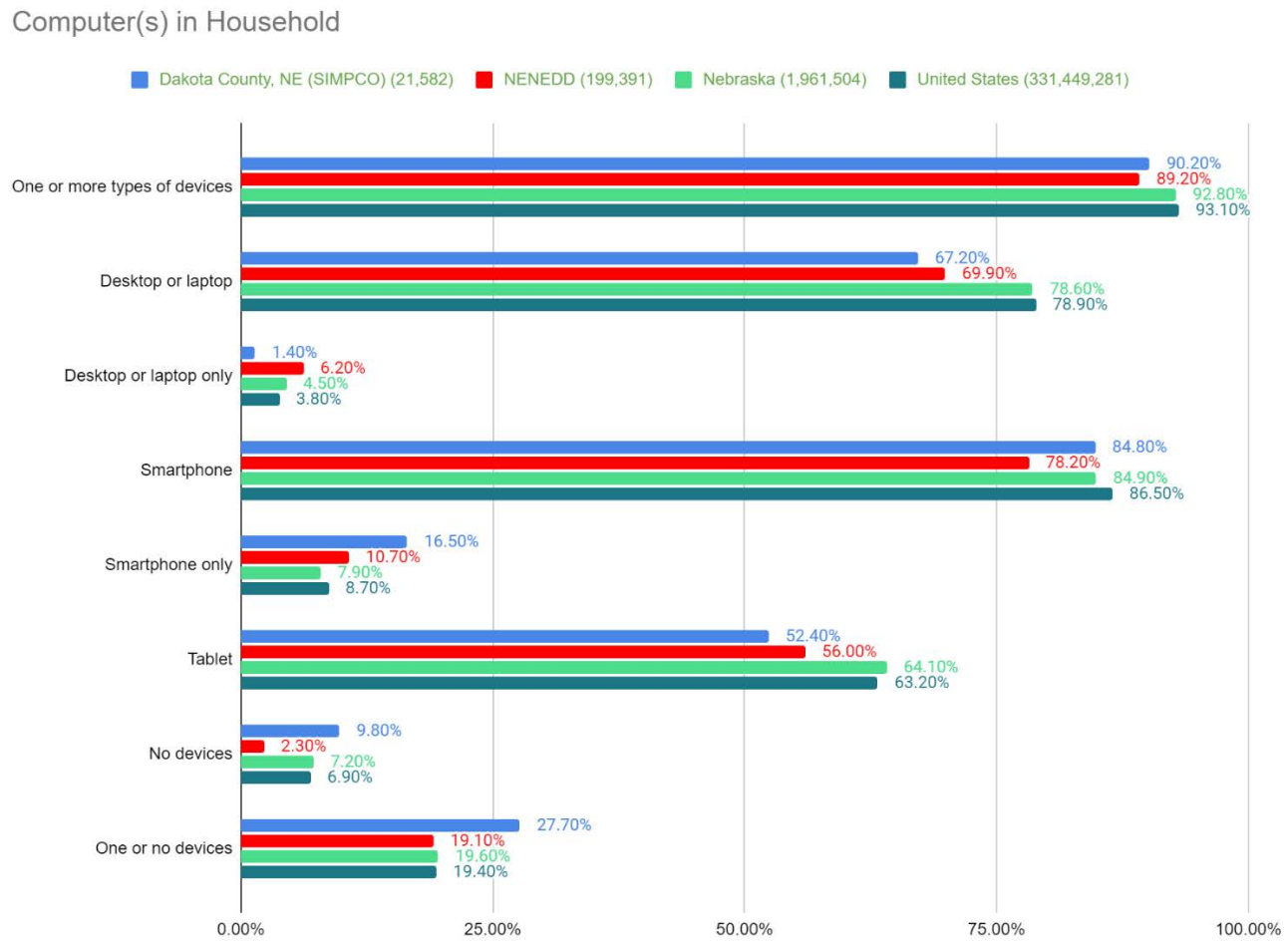


The ACS 2021 data shows concerning statistics in the SIMPCO Region , specifically relating to the percentage of households with internet subscriptions in the region in comparison to Nebraska and the United States. Dakota County has a higher than average percentage of households with no internet subscription (19.8%). Furthermore, among households that do have internet subscriptions, a larger than average percentage of households rely on having only cellular data plans to connect to the internet (13.4%). Broadband (80.1%) and cable, fiber optic, or DSL (59.0%) subscription rates are also significantly lower than the state and national averages.

The ACS 2021 data shows average statistics in the NENEDD Region when compared to Nebraska and the United States. The number of households in the NENEDD Region with cable, fiber optic or DSL is slightly lower (58.1%) than Nebraska and the United States, as is the number of households with no internet subscription (2.60%). As is the case in Dakota County, among households that do have internet subscriptions, a larger than average percentage of households rely on having only cellular data plans to connect to the internet (14.4%). Broadband (81.2%) and cable, fiber optic, or DSL (58.1%) subscription rates are also significantly lower than the state and national averages.

Device Availability and Affordability

Despite advancements in technology and device availability, both continue to be an ongoing challenge for Northeast Nebraskans. There are limited storefronts located in the region to purchase a device in-person, which causes residents to often have to drive out-of-state to Sioux City, IA, for those in Dakota County or Columbus, Fremont, Norfolk for those in the NENEDD region to purchase devices. Additionally, for the 40 percent of Northeast Nebraskans who are part of low-to-moderate income households, the cost to purchase a brand new device may be insurmountable. While distance may not present as great of an issue for residents to purchase new devices, there are still barriers to access for folks who may not have access to their own transportation, particularly among aging citizens. The option of purchasing a device through a regional internet service provider is extremely limited for low-to-moderate income households, as there is a lack of data to identify whether any of the region's providers offer this option through the Affordable Connectivity Program.



The ACS 2021 data shows that Dakota County is comparable to Nebraska and the United States in having one or more types of computing device, as well as having a smartphone. However, there are significant differences in each of the other categories. The most extreme data variance is “smartphone only”, in which Dakota County (16.5%) has more than double the percentage of Nebraska households (7.9%) that only have a smartphone for computing purposes. Another alarming statistic is that 9.8% of Dakota County households do not have a computing device. Furthermore, nearly 18% of Dakota County households only have one device for computing purposes. The issue of device access and affordability becomes an even larger barrier for individuals with disabilities. This particular population requires specialized technology to assist their disability; examples of this include light control, sound control, specialized keyboards and accessories, diction or talk-to-text features, software to read text

aloud, and other tools. The specialization of the device is often not available at standard retail store locations, and the cost for each modification makes the devices more cost prohibitive.

The ACS 2021 data shows that the NENEDD Region is comparable to Nebraska and the United States in most categories. The percentage of the region with no device is extremely low (2.3%). Having one or more types of computing device, as well as having a smartphone was lower in the NENEDD Region than in Dakota County, Nebraska and the United States.

Digital Literacy

Limited access to resources and training materials prevent the region from achieving improved digital skills. For low-to-moderate income populations, multilingual populations, and rural populations, access to digital literacy courses become scarce. While educational institutions and many workplaces provide in-house training, these trainings are limited and the lack of resources has a high impact on the community.

Northeast Community College has four campuses (South Sioux City, Norfolk, O'Neill and West Point) in the NENEDD/SIMPCO regions that provide post-secondary educational opportunities for the region's residents. Additionally, while there are many libraries in the NENEDD/SIMPCO regions, the rural libraries outside of South Sioux City, Columbus, Fremont and Norfolk face additional challenges related to staffing, lack of funding, lack of capacity, and a lack of specialized training for digital literacy. These challenges, in turn, stifle the ability to educate rural residents on digital literacy.

The typical rural libraries' operating schedules may not meet the needs of all community members. Providing additional resources to the organizations already established in the community to expand hours and services would improve residents' access to develop technology skills and workforce development potential. As communities attract new residents and businesses, it is important that each community has resources in place to provide digital training and support. Having a digitally engaged community is also beneficial to potential businesses. For the counties with a predominantly low-to-moderate income

population, the implementation of digital resources could result in the increase of investments from businesses and job growth. Additionally, since a few of the counties have a significant population that does not speak English, digital literacy training sessions will need to be adapted and provided in a variety of languages, removing the language barrier from the hiring process. While funding is available, communities should take advantage of the opportunity to build up digital resources that will be vital in the future.

Privacy and Security

As Nebraskans begin to see an increase in broadband access and digital resources, it is critical to ensure the digital security and safety of Nebraskans. The local governments in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region should update the equipment and publicly available resources to reflect the standards for 2023. Updating public resources will assure community members that the government website is secure and a reliable source of information. These public resources would be protected from cybersecurity threats that could endanger community assets such as theft of sensitive information, disruption of services, and financial losses. Local governments can serve as a resource for internet safety by sharing resources and community wide training sessions to increase the knowledge of cyber safety. One unique method would be implementing alerts to cybercrimes through the local Emergency Messaging Services, if established. Through sharing of information and resources, community anchor institutions (CAIs) and local governments can identify the best way to protect their information and their community members while ensuring the public is served without interruption.

Online Accessibility and Inclusivity

With the expansion of quality and affordable internet access, more individuals will be given the opportunity to fully participate in the digital economy. The resources to assist individuals in learning techniques, skills, and security prevention methods are often not available to individuals with specific needs. The NENEDD/SIMPCO Region is seeing an increase of

households that speak limited English or have a language barrier and individuals who have a disability that prevents them from fully participating online. According to U.S. Census data from 2021, 21.7% of the households in Dakota County and 7.9% of the households in the NENEDD Region spoke English less than "very well". Multiple languages aside from English are spoken by residents in the NENEDD/SIMPCO regions residents, the most common of which is Spanish. Meanwhile, 10.9% of the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region population experience some type of disability that may prevent them from using the resources already established in their community or to fully engage online. The Disability Employment Center estimates 28%[4] of the 110,000 individuals with disabilities in Nebraska are actively looking for work as of 2021. Updating information to be inclusive and accessible is crucial to creating a fully engaged state and local workforce.

[4] https://aoddisabilityemploymenttacenter.com/state/Nebraska/

Asset Inventory

Community Assets - *Refer to Appendix*

Libraries

Libraries are a necessary resource for the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region . The local library serves as a community anchor institution by providing entertainment, resources to expand education and learning, a shared community space, and so much more. However, for the communities with populations of 5,000 or less, the local library has struggled to maintain capacity and funding in an ever-evolving digital world.

The SIMPCO Region has 4 libraries to serve 4 communities. All four of these libraries provided responses to the Nebraska Library Commission Technology Survey from 2021. Each library provides public internet access and public devices. The quality of these resources varies from each community:

• One library receives internet through a fiber optic connection

• The other three libraries rely on fixed wireless, cable, or DSL connections

The NENEDD Region has 57 libraries serving a multitude of communities in the area. All 57 of these libraries provided responses to the Nebraska Library Commission Technology Survey from 2021. Fifty-five of the libraries provides public internet access and public devices. The quality of these resources varies from each community:

• Twenty-two libraries receive internet through a fiber optic connection

• The other thirty-three libraries rely on fixed wireless, cable, or DSL connections

Libraries are also experiencing a lack of resources to hire extra staff for expanded hours and to provide resources regarding digital literacy and/or cybersecurity.

Senior Centers

Dakota County has one senior center, located in South Sioux City. This senior center, which operates under the name “Northeast Nebraska Senior Citizens Center”, recently reopened after an extended closure to renovate the building. In contrast, there are 43 senior centers throughout the 16 counties of the NENEDD Region. It is unclear whether the senior centers offers Wi-Fi, computers, or any digital-themed programming to attendees. These locations have the potential to be a great resource for digital equity if given guidance and the personnel resources on how best to prepare and/or assist their patrons with new technology.

Gap Analysis

Over the course of two months, NENEDD/SIMPCO facilitated the completion of the Northeast Region's Gap Analysis. The Committee reviewed each Community Need for each of the 4 respective populations: availability and affordability of fixed and wireless broadband, availability and affordability of consumer devices and technical support, digital literacy, awareness and use of online privacy and security, and accessibility and inclusivity of public resources. Using the information from the completed Asset Inventory, each Need was given a score of Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory, or Not Present through small group discussion and consensus. NENEDD/SIMPCO staff then quantified these rankings to calculate average scores for each ranked category, using the following metric:

- Satisfactory rankings received a point value of 5
- Needs Improvement rankings received a point value of 3
- Unsatisfactory rankings received a point value of 1
- Not Present rankings received a point value of 0

The chart on the next page reflects the Committee's assessments.

	Availability & Affordability of Fixed & Wireless Broadband	Availability & Affordability of Consumer Devices & Technical Support	Digital Literacy	Awareness & Use of Online Privacy & Security	Accessibility & Inclusivity of Public Resources
Rural Residents - Mobile	3.29 (NI)	3.29 (NI)	2.71 (U/NI)	3.00 (NI)	3.00 (NI)
Rural Residents - Broadband	2.67 (U/NI)	3.33 (NI)	3.29 (NI)	2.43 (U/NI)	2.71 (U/NI)
Aging Citizens (60+) - Mobile	3.00 (NI)	2.67 (U/NI)	2.43 (U/NI)	2.43 (U/NI)	2.14 (U/NI)
Aging Citizens (60+) - Broadband	3.00 (NI)	2.00 (U)	2.43 (U/NI)	2.43 (U/NI)	2.43 (U/NI)
LMI Households - Mobile	4.00 (S)	3.33 (NI)	3.57 (NI)	3.29 (NI)	3.57 (NI)
LMI Households - Broadband	3.00 (NI)	3.33 (NI)	3.00 (NI)	2.71 (U/NI)	3.00 (NI)
Ethnic & Racial Minorities - Mobile	4.00 (S)	2.67 (U/NI)	3.00 (NI)	3.00 (NI)	2.67 (U/NI)
Ethnic & Racial Minorities - Broadband	4.00 (S)	2.67 (U/NI)	3.00 (NI)	2.71 (U/NI)	2.43 (U/NI)

Goals and Strategies

The Northeast Nebraska Digital Equity Planning Committee has identified the top four goals for the region. To ensure each goal can be supported with short-term and long-term funding, each goal has been matched with the appropriate funding source from both Federal and State Entities.

Federal Funding Sources

Icon	Federal Program
●	IIJA* – Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD): $210M[5]
♥	IIJA* - State Digital Equity Act (DE): $21M
♣	IIJA*- Enabling Middle Mile (EMM): $5M -100M
♠	USDA** - ReConnect: $300M

** Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding is managed by the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA)*

*** United States Department of Agriculture*

State Funding Sources

Icon	State Program
▲	Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP): $5M
■	Affordable Connectivity Program Outreach Grant: $500K

[5] ACA Connects, "BEAD Program: A Framework to Allocate Funding for Broadband Availability", Feb. 2, 2023.

List of Region-wide Goals

Goal One

Goal One: Increase the number of households in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with affordable access to internet service speeds of 100 Mbps/100 Mbps by 9,000 households

	● BEAD	♥ DE	♣ EMM	♠ReConnect	▲ NBBP
Funding Source	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Timeframe	2025-2027	2023-2028	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategies 1.1: Increase the percent of households with access to affordable, quality broadband service available

Baseline: 11,060 (NENEDD) & 1,346 (SIMPCO) households without an internet connection[6]

Activities:

1. Define "affordable" as $50 per month before the Affordable Connectivity Program
2. Prioritize broadband infrastructure for locations outside of municipalities
3. Facilitate workshops to assist public entities and private Internet Service Providers to create working agreements including match funding for grant applications, negotiate shared resources, and identify best practices
4. Capitalize on existing public-private partnerships to assist in broadband infrastructure build out
5. Connect county commissioners and county supervisors with appropriate stakeholders to identify areas with limited broadband access using Nebraska Broadband Mapping Project, Federal Communication Commission Map, and the USDA ReConnect map

[6] ACS 5-year 2021 Table B28002

6. Identify Broadband Investment Priority Areas (BIPAs) for the region in partnership with community leaders

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 11% decrease in the number of households without access to affordable, quality broadband service
2. Increase in the number of applications for broadband funding approved by the Nebraska Public Service Commission and/or Nebraska Broadband Office
3. Three regional stakeholder meetings to identify and address regional priorities by 2026

Strategy 1.2: Increase the percent of households in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with a broadband subscription to match the number of households with access to internet service

Baseline: 2,222 (NENEDD) & 85 (SIMCPO) households with access to internet, but with no subscription[7]

Activities:

1. Encourage the expansion of broadband infrastructure to provide quality internet connection to households currently designated as unserved or underserved
2. Showcase the importance of home internet through schools, libraries, senior centers, and workforce development for work from home, education, and quality of life opportunities

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 15% decrease in the number households with no broadband subscription by 2028

[7] ACS 5-year 2021 Table B28002

Strategy 1.3: Increase the percent of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Baseline: Dakota County (SIMPCO): 333 households enrolled[8] NENEDD 6,065 households enrolled

Activities:

1. Media campaigns to promote awareness of ACP
2. Collaboration with libraries and senior centers to host enrollment days for ACP
3. Digital Navigator trainings to provide assistance to eligible households in applying and enrolling in ACP

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 10% increase in the number of households enrolled in ACP by 2024 (current federal funding set to expire in 2024)

[8] https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/, and ACS 5-year 2021 Table S1702 (number of families under 200% of poverty level)

Goal Two

Goal Two: Improve the technology skills of Northeast Nebraskans including the further development of a skilled workforce

	● BEAD	♥ DE	♣ EMM	♠ ReConnect	▲ NBBP
Funding Source		✓			
Timeframe	2025-2027	2023-2028	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategy 2.1: Increase the financial and technical support for local libraries to encourage the implementation of digital literacy courses and updated devices

Baseline: There are four libraries with organized digital literacy classes in the NENEDD regions and zero in Dakota County (SIMPCO), all other libraries with resources provide informal digital literacy support[9].

Activities:

1. Assist local libraries to identify funding opportunities to pay for:
    a. The yearly fee for North Star Digital Literacy Programs, or similar program, to track digital skill trainings
    b. Computers and software, current within 4 years, for public use and ongoing maintenance and tech support
2. Encourage and support local libraries to translate public resources into languages spoken by at least 5% of the population of their community

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 100% of libraries participate in North Star Digital Literacy Programs, or similar program, including a score database
2. 75% of public libraries in region have updated computers and software

[9] Asset Inventory

3. Digital Literacy trainings offered in English, Spanish, and/or the language proportional to the population of the county
4. 75% of libraries have access to ongoing maintenance and tech support

Strategy 2.2: Increase public resources to allow for digital literacy certification testing such as North Star Digital Literacy Assessment

Baseline: 10 free digital literacy courses offered twice per year

Activities:

1. Encourage community organizations to subscribe to digital literacy training software
2. Encourage higher education facilities to provide more frequent, hands on digital literacy courses to community members and students
3. Update devices at Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) for public use

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Implement tracking of digital literacy skills outside of public education
2. Average of 50% passing rate using the standardized digital literacy courses
3. 75% of public libraries have computers and software that are no more than 4 years old

Strategy 2.3: Encourage and assist senior centers and community facilities to develop partnerships to provide device access and trainings in digital literacy and cybersecurity trainings, and device access

Baseline: No known digital literacy courses offered by the senior centers in the region

Activities:

1. Assist senior centers to identify funding opportunities to pay for:
    a. Yearly fee for North Star Digital Literacy programs to track skill trainings
    b. Computers and software, current within 4 years, for public use

2. Facilitate collaboration with libraries and schools to encourage populations of 65+ to participate in digital literacy trainings

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 100% of senior centers participate in North Star Digital Literacy Programs including the tracking component
2. 100% of senior centers have at least 2 computers and software that are no more than 4 years old for public use
3. Increase in digital literacy trainings focused on older populations

Strategy 2.4: Encourage educational institutions to provide digital literacy classes and "take home" resources to expand digital skills and familiarity with devices in the household

Baseline: Several digital literacy courses offered annually by Northeast Community College in Norfolk, with some outreach to South Sioux City's branch location.

Activities:

1. Encourage higher education facilities to provide more frequent, hands on digital literacy courses to community members and students
2. Assist educational institutions to find funding and incorporate support for new after school programs that support digital literacy and technical skills
3. Encourage existing, technology education organizations to expand to the region and in rural communities

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Four digital literacy classes offered annually in Dakota County, Columbus, Fremont, Norfolk
2. Four school districts in the NENEDD/SIMPCO region adopts an after school digital literacy program for grades 5-12

Strategy 2.5: Decrease the percentage of households in NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with no internet connected devices

Baseline: 1,734 (NENEDD) & 707 (SIMPCO) households in the region have no internet connected device

Activities:

1. Capitalize on existing partnerships with CAIs to host device distribution drives
2. Encourage new partnerships between CAIs and national nonprofits focused on providing affordable devices
3. Work with private internet service providers to enroll in the ACP device stipend (currently $100)
4. Encourage the development of new partnerships to increase the number of entities offering device trade-in and repair in rural areas

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 5% increase in ownership of internet connected devices by 2026
    a. Note: 90.21% ownership rate as of 2021 ACS 5-year estimates
2. 5 device distribution drives across the region by 2026
3. 50% of ISPs in the region enrolled in the ACP stipend program by 2026
4. 3% increase in repair shops and/or mobile services by 2026

Strategy 2.6: Decrease the percent of households in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with a smartphone only

Baseline: 8,439 (NENEDD) & 1,192 (SIMPCO) households have only a smartphone as an internet connected device.[10]

[10] ACS 5-year 2021 Table B28001

Activities:

1. Capitalize on existing partnerships with CAIs to host device drives
2. Connect CAIs with national nonprofits focused on providing affordable devices
3. Work with private internet service providers to enroll in the ACP stipend for a device
4. Explore and advocate for more individuals, groups, or companies to offer device trade-ins and repairs in rural areas

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 5% decrease in number of households owning just a smartphone
2. 5 device distribution drives across the region by 2026
3. 50% of ISPs in the region enrolled in ACP stipend for a device by 2026
4. 3% increase in repair shops and/or mobile services by 2026

Goal Three

Goal Three: Increase the knowledge of Northeast Nebraskans regarding cybersecurity and internet safety

	● BEAD	♥ DE	♣ EMM	♠ ReConnect	▲ NBBP
Funding Source	✓	✓		✓	
Timeframe	2025-2027	2022-2024	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategy 3.1: Develop public awareness initiatives on cybersecurity risks and common scams

Baseline: No known public awareness initiatives completed by local governments or CAIs

Activities:

1. Public media campaign notifying public of updated resources and information regarding protection against cybercrimes
2. Encourage CAIs, including schools, libraries, senior centers, etc., to share information about potential threats and ways to protect against cybercrimes on public computers
3. Encourage CAIs to develop curriculum specifically for cybersecurity and scam prevention

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Implementation of standardized notification system for cybercrimes
2. 5% decrease in cybercrimes across the region
3. Establishment of 5 cybersecurity trainings for community members with 1 hosted in a rural community

Goal Four

Goal Four: Improve online accessibility and inclusivity of public resources and services.

	● BEAD	♥ DE	♣ EMM	♠ReConnect	▲ NBBP
Funding Source		✓			
Timeframe	2025-2027	2022-2024	2024-2026	2024-2028	2024

Strategy 4.1: Increase awareness of online public resources available through CAIs and county or local governments

Baseline: Promotion of online public resources primarily conducted by CAIs through social media resulting in limited promotion of available resources

Activities:

1. Media campaigns to promote resources currently available in libraries and community centers not limited to social media campaigns

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 5% increase in the number of attendees/users of resources per month

Strategy 4.2: Update resources in public libraries and local government to include multiple languages as reflected by proportion of population as outlined in the Nebraska Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy

Baseline: Not all community websites provide resources online in languages other than English

Activities:

1. Identify up to 3 languages used within each county as reflected by proportion of population as outlined in Nebraska's LEP Policy

2. Assist libraries and local government in identifying grant funding to translate resources and/or provide a translator for the top language aside from English

Key Performance Indicators:

1. Have all resources translated into languages proportional to the population for their county
2. Identification of translation support resource providers for the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region

Strategy 4.3: Update digital and technical resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities or special needs

Baseline: No known CAIs provide digital and technical information or resources for individuals with disabilities or special needs

Activities:

1. Assist CAIs in pursuit of funding to make public resources physically accessible
2. Assist libraries in pursuit of funding to provide devices to accommodate hard of hearing individuals, visually impaired individuals, individuals prone to seizures caused by bright lights and loud noises, and other disabilities and special needs identified by the library

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 100% of CAI buildings and digital resources physically accessible by 2030
2. 15% increase in digital and technical resources available to individuals with disabilities or special needs

Strategy 4.4: Update local government websites to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines

Baseline: Of the communities and counties that have websites, not all have accessibility tools available.

Activities:

1. Create a checklist to meet the requirements of the ADA guidelines
2. Identify and assist local government websites that need to be updated
3. Encourage county and local governments to establish a plan to maintain website ADA compliance

Key Performance Indicators:

1. 50% of communities have websites meeting the ADA guidelines by 2025

Funding Strategy Table

The purpose of the Funding Strategy Table is to align federal and/or state programs to proposed strategies. Aligning the goals, strategies, and activities with funding opportunities addresses challenges with adoption rates and affordability options while providing support through the implementation process. The following funding opportunities are subject to change as more information becomes available.

Northeast Nebraska Digital Equity Plan	
Programs	**Strategy**
	Strategy 1.1: Increase the percent of NENEDD/SIMPCO Region households with access to affordable, quality broadband service available
	Strategy 1.2: Increase the percent of households in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with a broadband subscription to match the number of households with access to internet service
	Strategy 1.3: Increase the percent of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
	Strategy 2.1: Increase the financial and technical support for local libraries to encourage the implementation of digital literacy courses and updated devices
	Strategy 2.2: Increase public resources to allow for digital literacy certification testing such as North Star Digital Literacy Assessment
	Strategy 2.3: Encourage and assist senior centers and community facilities to develop partnerships to provide digital literacy trainings, cybersecurity trainings, and device access
	Strategy 2.4: Encourage educational institutions to provide digital literacy classes and “take home” resources to expand digital skills and familiarity with devices in the household
	Strategy 2.5: Increase the use of telehealth services in rural communities

	Strategy 2.6: Decrease the percentage of households in Northeast Nebraska with no internet connected devices
	Strategy 2.7: Decrease the percentage of households in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with a smartphone only
	Strategy 3.1: Create or update county and local governments' cybersecurity plans
	Strategy 3.2: Update county and/or local government websites and print materials to include curriculum focused on cybersecurity, internet safety, and compliance with State/Federal regulations
	Strategy 3.3: Develop public awareness to security risks and common scams
	Strategy 4.1: Increase awareness of public resources currently available through CAIs and county or local governments
	Strategy 4.2: Update resources in public libraries and local government to include multiple languages reflected by proportion of population as outlines in the Nebraska Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy
	Strategy 4.3: Updates resources to include translations and methods of learning for individuals with disabilities
	Strategy 4.4: Update local government websites to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Implementation Timeline

For this plan to be successful the key will be prioritizing and implementing the goals through a feasible and achievable timeline. Listed are various performance metrics paired with each goal to ensure each goal is completed. Completion date of short-term targets is anticipated by the end of 2026 and long-term targets by the end of 2030.

	Strategy	Short-term Targets	Long-Term Targets
Goal One	Increase the percent of NENEDD/SIMPCO Region households with access to affordable, quality broadband service available	5% increase in households with access to broadband service	11% increase in households with access to broadband service
	Increase the percent of households in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with a broadband subscription to match the number of households with access to internet service	10% increase in broadband subscriptions	15% increase in broadband subscriptions
	Increase the percent of eligible households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)	10% increase in ACP enrollment	50% increase in ACP enrollment
Goal Two	Increase the financial and technical support for local libraries to encourage the implementation of digital literacy courses and updated devices	60% of public libraries have updated computers and software	100% of public libraries have revolving funding to support digital updates
	Increase public resources to allow for digital literacy certification testing such as North Star Digital Literacy Assessment	40% of libraries participating in digital literacy score tracker software	100% of libraries participating in digital literacy score tracker software

	Encourage and assist senior centers and community facilities to develop partnerships to provide device access and trainings in digital literacy and cybersecurity trainings, and device access	60% of senior centers or community centers have at least 2 computers and software for public use	100% of senior centers or community centers have at least 2 computers and software for public use
	Encourage educational institutions to provide digital literacy classes and "take home" resources to expand digital skills and familiarity with devices in the household	1 digital literacy class taught annually per county	1 after school program for grades 5-12 adopted by one school district per county
	Increase the use of telehealth services in rural communities	Establishment of 3 private rooms located in CAI for telehealth appointments	10% increase in telehealth appointments
	Decrease the percentage of households in NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with no internet connected devices	5% increase in device ownership	10% increase in device ownership
	Decrease the percent of households in the NENEDD/SIMPCO Region with a smartphone only	5% decrease in households owning only a smartphone	1% of households owning only a smartphone
Goal Three	Create or update county and local governments' cybersecurity plans	5% decrease in cybercrimes	15% decrease in cybercrimes
	Update county and/or local government websites and print materials to include curriculum focused on cybersecurity, internet safety, and compliance with	5% decrease in cybercrimes	15% decrease in cybercrimes

	State/Federal regulations		
	Develop public awareness initiatives on cybersecurity risks and common scams	5% decrease in cybercrimes	15% decrease in cybercrimes
Goal Four	Increase awareness of online public resources available through CAIs and county or local governments	15% increase in the number of attendees/users per month	20% increase in the number of attendees/users per month
	Update resources in public libraries and local government to include multiple languages as reflected by proportion of population as outlined in the Nebraska Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy	10% increase of resources in languages other than English	15% increase of resources in languages other than English
	Update digital and technical resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities or special needs	15% increase in digital and technical resources to assist individuals with disabilities or special needs	20% increase in digital and technical resources to assist individuals with disabilities or special needs
	Update local government websites to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines	5% increase in use of local government websites	15% increase in use of local government websites

Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement

The Northeast Nebraska Digital Equity Planning Committee was formed by 20 community stakeholders, in addition to SIMPCO and NENEDD staff. The Committee first met on March 8, 2023, to introduce the project, establish the timeline, and outline expectations. Committee members provided feedback to staff to guide the development of key priorities. The Committee's second meeting was held on April 19, 2023, and the committee worked with staff to review the committee list to identify additional partners and stakeholders. Additionally, staff presented the initial draft of the region's asset inventory to seek feedback and input from committee members. The Committee met for a third time on May 17, 2023, to review the final draft of the asset inventory, identify covered populations to guide staff's research, and begin the development of the needs assessment and gap analysis. The fourth Committee meeting was held on June 21, 2023, and staff continued facilitating discussion of the needs assessment and gap analysis. Additionally, the committee began to discuss and develop recommended strategies to include in the regional plan. With the support of the Committee, the Northeast/SIMPCO Region Digital Equity Plan was completed on August 2, 2023. A list of committee members can be found on the next page.

Committee and Stakeholder List

Stakeholder	Organization
JoAnn Gieselman	Growing Community Connections
Dr. Cyndi Hanson	Northeast Community College
Connie Cooper	Northeast NE Area Agency on Aging
Gregg Hanson	Madison County Veterans Affairs
Dan Spray	Precision IT
Bill Heimann	ESU 1
Ted Deturk	ESU 2
Bill Johnston	Dakota/Dixon County Veterans Service Office
Jerry Eisenhauer	Norfolk Veterans' Home
Larianne Polk	ESU 7
Tami Clay	ESU 7
Dan Ellsworth	ESU 7
Corey Dahl	ESU 8
Judi Gaigaiashkibos	Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs
Matt Andrews	City of South Sioux City
Cicely Douglas	City of South Sioux City
Brian Sterud	Faith Regional Health Services
Larry Loucks	Ponca Economic Development Corporation
Drew Ebert	Ponca Economic Development Corporation
Pat McElroy	NE Nebraska Telephone Company (NNTC)

Appendix