Let's Improve Whately's Digital Equity!
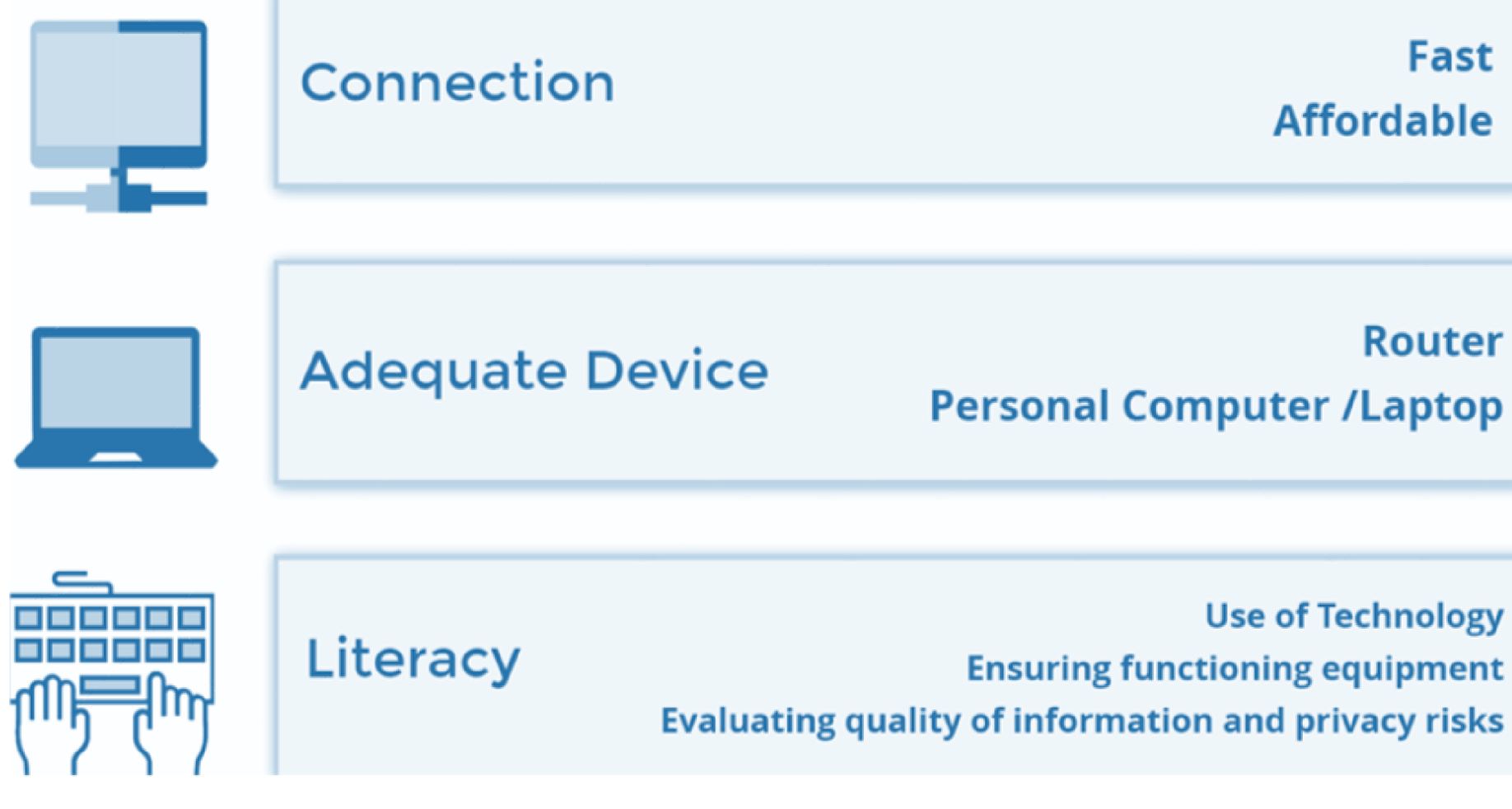
DRAFT Vision Statement and Goals

Overview

What is "digital equity"?

Digital equity is a condition in which all individuals and communities have the **information technology capacity needed for full participation** in our society, democracy, and economy.

NDIA - NATIONAL DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE — WITH DIGITAL EQUITY, WE ALL WIN

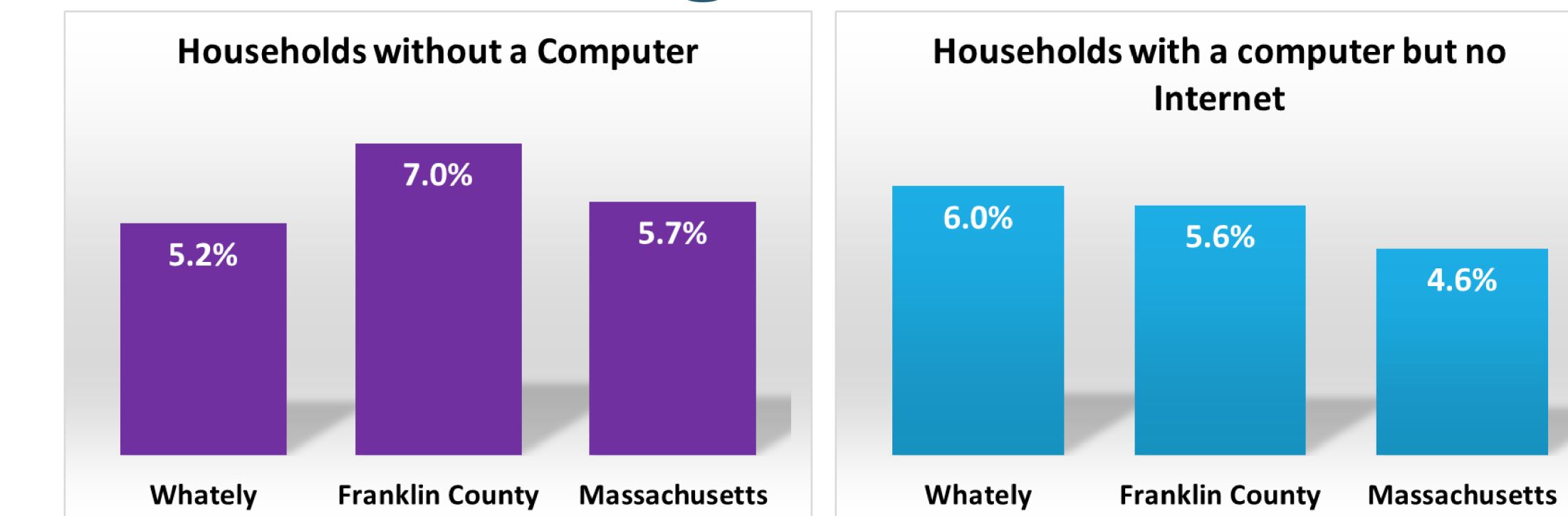| Connection | Fast Affordable |
| Adequate Device | Router Personal Computer /Laptop |
| Literacy | Use of Technology Ensuring functioning equipment Evaluating quality of information and privacy risks |

What is the purpose of this digital equity plan?

To guide municipal **decision-making and investments** related to increasing access, adoption and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prepare municipalities to submit **grant proposals** to existing or forthcoming state or federal programs to support digital equity activities.
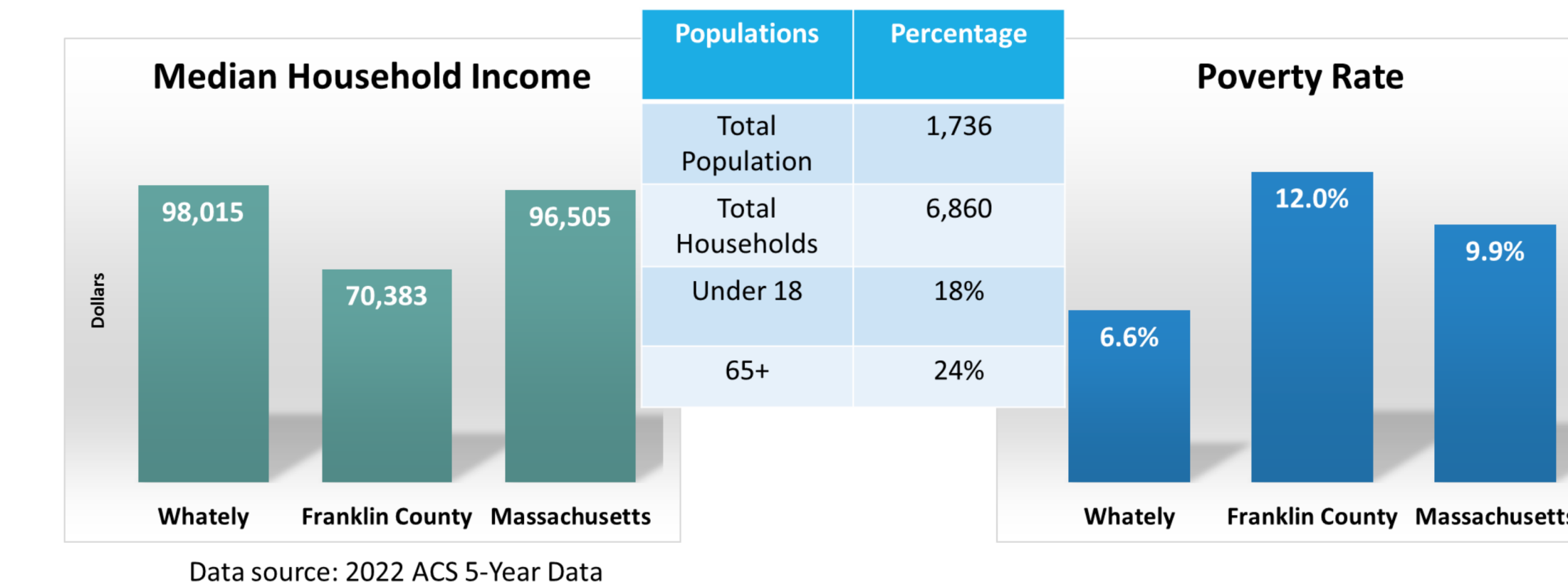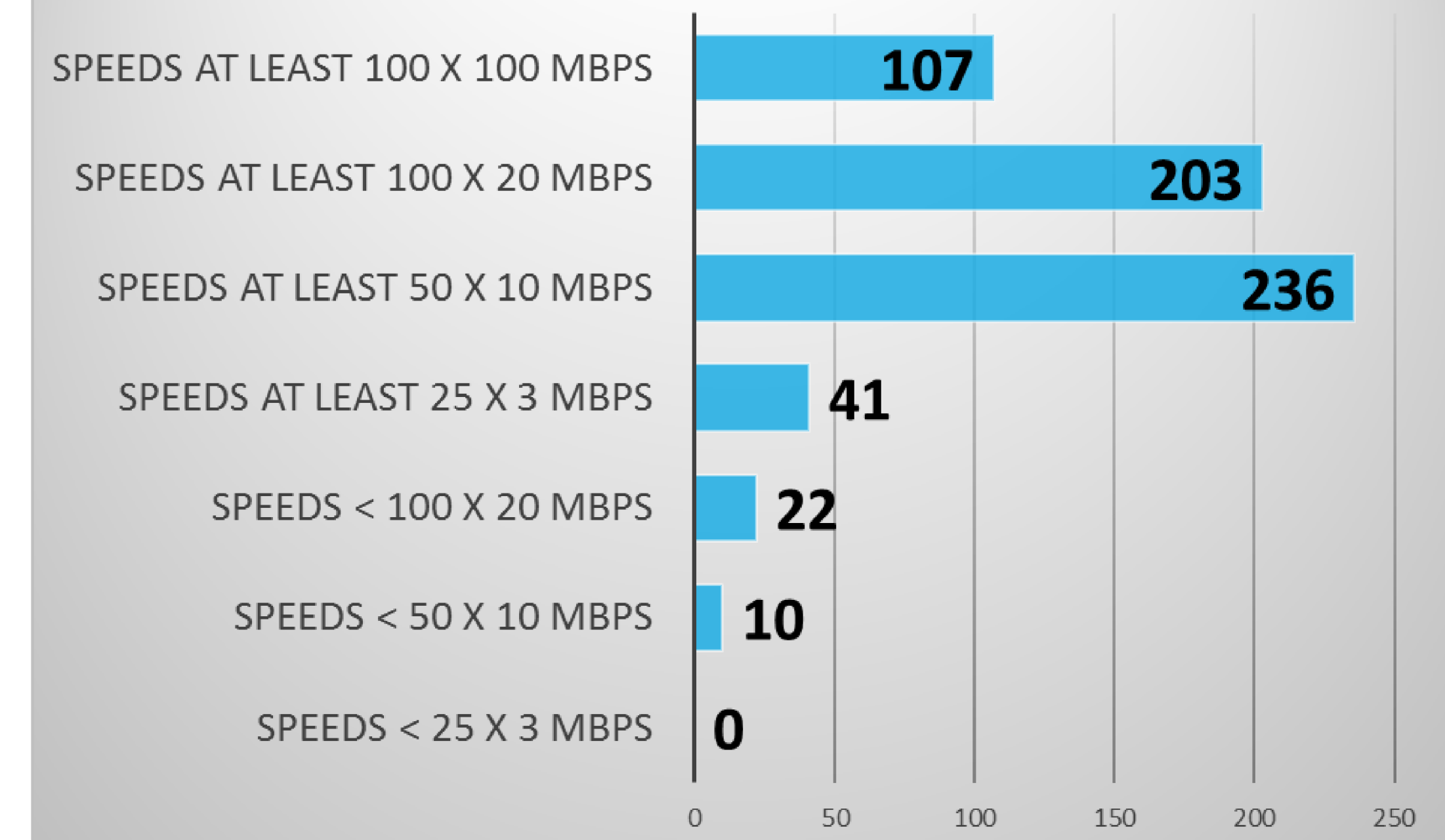
Next Steps

- **Conduct Focus Groups (FRCOG will staff and facilitate)**
- **Finalize Vision and Goals (FRCOG to provide draft)**
- **Draft Recommendations**

frcog Franklin Regional Council of Governments | MBI MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE at the MassTech Collaborative

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"Our vision is for all residents in Whately to be able to access affordable, high-speed internet, with the appropriate devices. Affordable access, which includes cost, speed, devices, and knowledge, is not a privilege for those who can afford it, but a right for all of our residents. The Whately Digital Equity Plan will lay the groundwork for long-term investments so that our community may reach digital equity for all its residents. With this plan, the Town will be well-positioned to compete for broadband funds that may become available through federal, state, and private sector broadband infrastructure and digital equity funding opportunities."

Goal 1 - Partnerships: Develop and maintain partnerships across sectors (public, private, nonprofit) to support digital equity for residents of the region.

Goal 2 - Digital Equity Assets: Support our residents' access to public digital equity assets and resources.
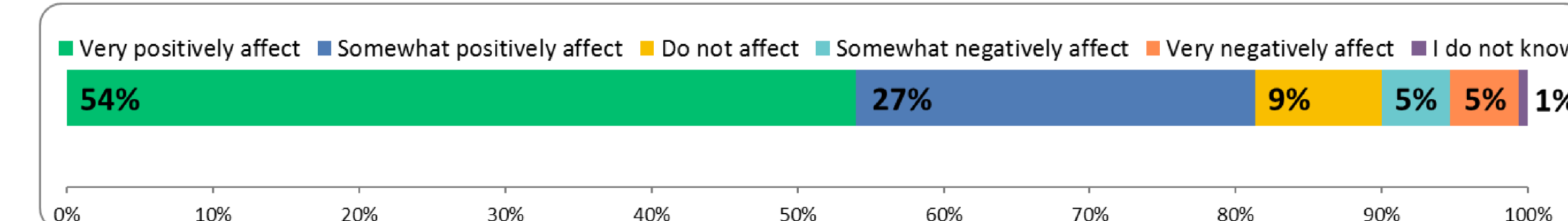
Goal 3 - Connectivity: Support residents' access to the internet connectivity they need and can afford

Goal 4 - Digital Literacy: Ensure every resident in our towns has the opportunity to learn the skills needed to effectively use digital technology

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Existing Conditions

Households without a Computer

Whately 5.2%, Franklin County 7.0%, Massachusetts 5.7%

Households with a computer but no Internet

Whately 6.0%, Franklin County 5.6%, Massachusetts 4.6%

Whately Broadband Speeds

SPEEDS AT LEAST 100 X 100 MBPS	107
SPEEDS AT LEAST 100 X 20 MBPS	203
SPEEDS AT LEAST 50 X 10 MBPS	236
SPEEDS AT LEAST 25 X 3 MBPS	41
SPEEDS < 100 X 20 MBPS	22
SPEEDS < 50 X 10 MBPS	10
SPEEDS < 25 X 3 MBPS	0

Median Household Income

Whately 98,015; Franklin County 70,383; Massachusetts 96,505

Populations	Percentage
Total Population	1,736
Total Households	6,860
Under 18	18%
65+	24%

Poverty Rate

Whately 6.6%, Franklin County 12.0%, Massachusetts 9.9%

Data source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Data

Survey Results

How does access to internet affect your life in the Town of Whately?

Answered: 151

Very positively affect, Somewhat positively affect, Do not affect, Somewhat negatively affect, Very negatively affect, I do not know

54% | 27% | 9% | 5% | 5% | 1%

What are the top three issues for your household regarding internet access? *Select up to 3 answers.*

Answered: 136

- Cost of internet plan — 65%
- Internet speed — 49%
- Cybersecurity — 42%
- I don't have any issues with internet access — 32%
- Access to internet — 18%
- Better understanding of how to use the internet — 4%
- Access to devices (computers, laptops, tablets, phone, etc) — 4%