

GET CONNECTED LEX

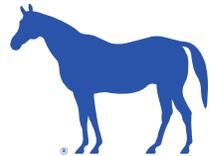
DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY FOR LEXINGTON

Budget, Finance & Economic Development (BFED) Committee

March 24, 2026

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Liz Rodgers, CIO, Department of Information Technology



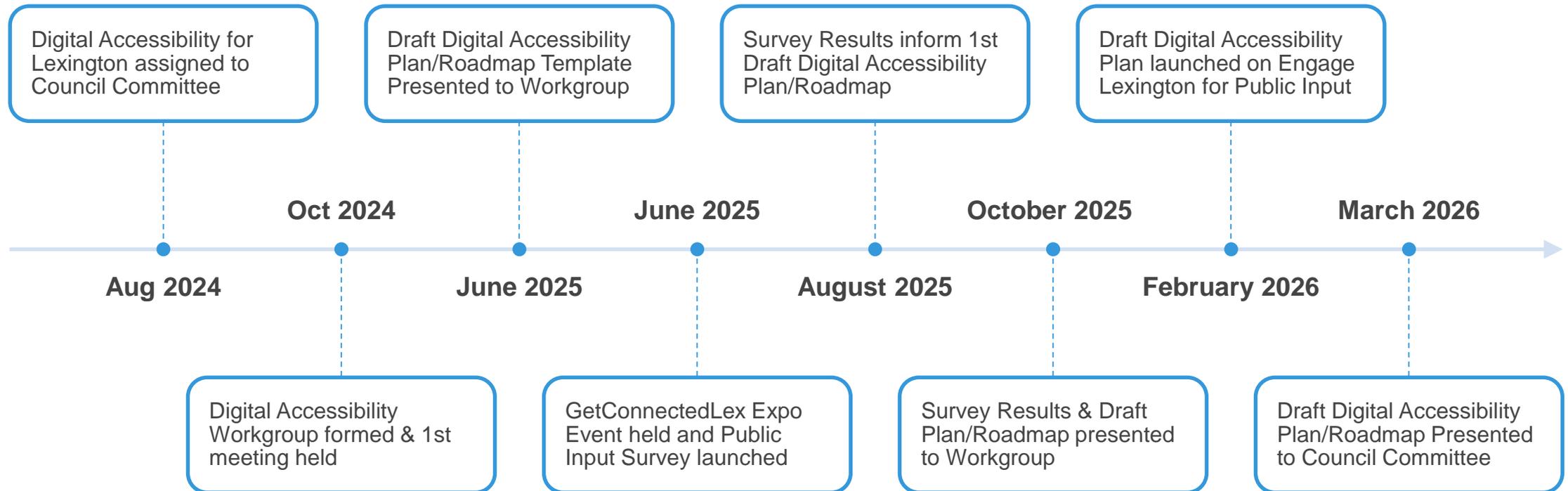
LEXINGTON

- Congress passed the Digital Equity Act in 2021 as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The Act sought to close the digital divide and ensure all communities have the technology and skills needed to participate in the digital economy.
- Digital Accessibility allows individuals to have the necessary information technology resources to participate fully in the economy and society. This includes access to education, job opportunities, healthcare, civic services, online commerce, and social platforms.
- Kentucky's Digital Equity Plan was presented early 2024, and the state was awarded federal funding to implement the plan. The plan was developed in collaboration with Kentuckians to address issues like internet affordability, digital literacy, and access to devices.
- Recognizing the importance of facilitating a plan for our community, LFUCG officials began discussing how we might align with and support the Digital Equity Act of 2021 and the Kentucky Digital Equity Plan. It was determined that we need a local plan inclusive of community voices that identifies services and gaps, guides policy, and promotes access to resources.
- In August 2024, Digital Accessibility for Lexington was referred to the Urban County Council's Budget, Finance and Economic Development Committee. Councilmember James Brown, in coordination with the offices of the Chief Development Officer and the Chief Information Officer formed Lexington's Digital Accessibility Workgroup.

Timeline



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- **Formation of the Working Group:** Established the Lexington Digital Accessibility Working Group, bringing together city leaders, community organizations, and industry partners to guide planning and explore barriers to digital accessibility and strategic priorities.
- **Case Study Analysis:** Evaluated case studies from ten similar cities to note common gaps and solutions, major trends, and key topics to consider.
- **Community Engagement:** Hosted the Digital Accessibility Expo to raise awareness, foster dialogue, and launch the citywide Digital Accessibility Community Survey, inviting residents to share experiences and shape Lexington's digital accessibility priorities.
- **Community Survey:** Collected input from 219 residents across all 12 council districts through the GetConnectedLex Survey, identifying barriers to internet access, device ownership, and digital-skills development.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Engaged libraries, workforce partners, schools, nonprofits, and ISPs to align resources, reduce duplication, and inform the city's coordinated digital empowerment strategy.



GET CONNECTED LEX
A Digital Accessibility Expo
Saturday, June 28
Lexington Senior Center
195 Life Lane
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Come out & join the community for a day of engagement, input and education, in order to help plan Lexington's digital future.

- ✓ Internet Safety & Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- ✓ Help with your computers & other devices
- ✓ Virtual Reality Demonstration & Workforce Development

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Urban County Council

* Door Free Gift
* Lunch Free @ 12:00

Get Connected Lex Expo

- The event opened with welcoming remarks from the mayor, setting the stage for a day focused on bridging digital access and inclusion in Lexington.
- Vendors participated by hosting informational tables, sharing resources and insights to support digital accessibility and connect attendees with available services.
- Heather Gate led a session on internet safety and the evolving role of artificial intelligence in daily digital interactions.
- A panel discussion followed, featuring Austin Howel, Ronald Delgado, Kevin Schoedinger, and Owen Cropper. The panel addressed critical intersections between digital accessibility, education, and workforce development.
- Kim McGinnis led a discussion on the integration of technology in healthcare and its impact on accessibility and patient outcomes.
- Lunch was generously provided by Stella's, offering a variety of boxed options for attendees.
- The official launch of Lexington's **Digital Accessibility Survey**, designed to gather community input and identify barriers to digital inclusion across the city.



Community Survey & Plan Feedback

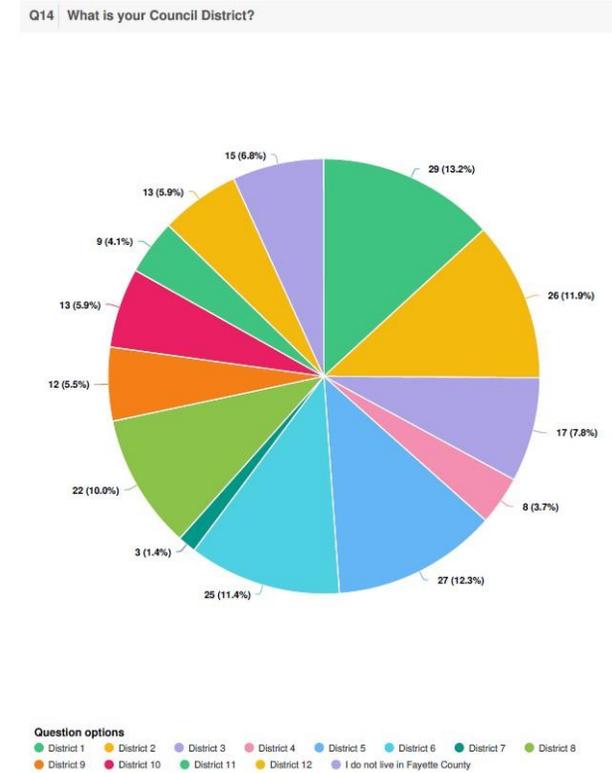
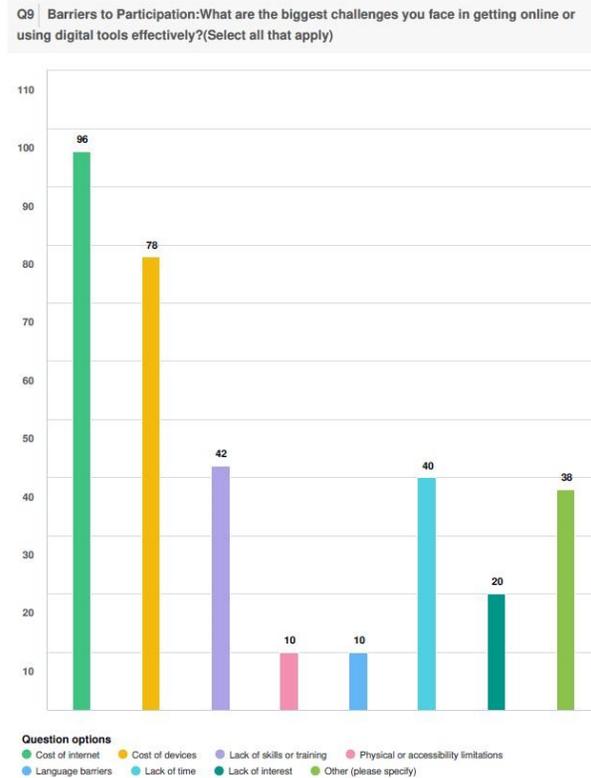


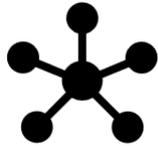
- **Community Engagement:** Collected over 200 unique responses across all 12 council districts through the GetConnectedLex Survey and Draft Plan Feedback efforts. This feedback help to identify barriers to internet access, device ownership, and digital-skills development and help to guide priorities.



Get Connected Lex
Lexington's Digital Accessibility
Workgroup

[View Project](#)





Availability

- Coverage of Fayette County is at 99%*
- 11 area service providers (includes satellite, fixed wireless)
- 13% of survey respondents reported no/slow service
- Reach and reliability of public Wi-Fi varies



Affordability

- Cost of broadband cited as a barrier by 96% of survey respondents
- Many providers have affordable plans, special plans for seniors and students
- Cost of internet-capable devices also a significant contributor at 78%



Digital Skills

- Major focus is on employment
- Opportunities often misaligned with groups in need
- Information about resources is scattered
- 58% of respondents expressed interest or openness to learning

Strategies & Key Contributors



	Goals	Strategies	Key Contributors
 <p>Reliable internet community-wide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiber optic broadband available throughout Fayette County Adoption of alternative broadband technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee completion of fiber construction projects and report progress to residents Engage with additional providers (fixed wireless, satellite) to expand consumer choice Map locations providing free public Wi-Fi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LFUCG Service providers Schools, businesses, nonprofits
 <p>Affordable devices and service plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community awareness of lower-cost service plan options Financial assistance for qualifying individuals or families Device re-use or donation pipelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote lower-cost plan options across websites, social media, other channels Connect qualifying individuals/families with existing resources for financial assistance Establish means for area businesses to donate decommissioned devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LFUCG Service providers Nonprofits and Nonprofit networks Area business operators
 <p>Digitally empowered residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of digital skills resources Programming targeted to specific populations (ESL, Veterans, etc.) Digital accessibility resources for local online businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate and publish catalog of area digital skills training providers and their programming Work with providers to develop new programming to fill digital skills gaps Develop training or resource kits to help local businesses create accessible online experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LFUCG Lexington Public Library Community anchor institutions Schools, businesses, nonprofits

Models & Opportunities

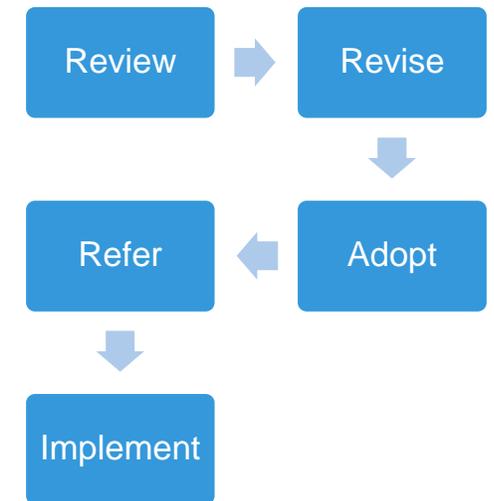


COMMUNITY & RESIDENT SERVICES PRESENTS

Laptops 4 Learning Program
Computer Skills Training + Free Laptop Giveaway



- Prepare final draft of Digital Accessibility Plan
- Council to consider adopting a resolution that acknowledges the work of the Digital Accessibility Workgroup and supports the plan and action items
- Refer recommendations that fall under the responsibility of LFUCG to the Council's respective standing committees
- Work with the private and education sectors, non-profit and community organizations to implement recommendations that go beyond the scope of LFUCG



Questions?



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