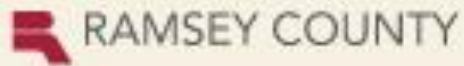


Connectivity Blueprint:

A Roadmap to Digital Equity



SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA



February 22, 2023

Saint Paul Digital Equity Efforts

- City CARES funding investments, collaborations between multiple city departments
 - TechPaks distribution in partnership with Ramsey County
 - Youthprise funding for Saint Paul residents on Chromebook waiting list
 - Expand wifi to reach beyond library walls
 - “Internet essentials” codes for SPPS students
- Library efforts
 - Library opens limited computer access as first in-building service
 - CARES Career labs collaboration with Ramsey County
 - Continued career labs with CDBG funding
 - Digital navigator pilot
 - Emergency connectivity funding distributions: 500 hotspots for long-term check out, added chromebooks
- Partnerships
 - MELSA digital inclusion survey
 - Connectivity Blueprint

Connectivity Blueprint Background

- COVID-19 illuminated a digital divide and disparities in access, affordability, connectivity and navigation in electronic devices
- Digital Equity as a basic need alongside housing, food, and access to healthcare
- Launched Connectivity Blueprint following CARES funded Workforce Solutions and Saint Paul and Ramsey County Libraries collaboration
- American Rescue Plan Act funded by city of Saint Paul and County.
 - The initiative is led by Ramsey County, Saint Paul and a steering committee of experts.
 - Aimed to create a community-guided roadmap to digital equity through understanding the current policy context and community perspectives on digital equity in Ramsey County and St. Paul.

Connectivity Blueprint Steering Committee

- Co-Chair Ling Becker, Ramsey County.
- Co-Chair Drew Nelson Saint Paul.
- Rebecca Ryan, Saint Paul.
- Jon Grebner, Mayor's Office.
- Bruce Riebe, Saint Paul.
- Council Member Nelsie Yang, Saint Paul.
- John Perlich, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce.
- Idrissa Davis, Saint Paul.
- Chetan Ganatra, Ramsey County.
- Mary Sue Hansen, Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative.
- Pamela Maldonado, Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties.
- Commissioner Trista Matascastillo, Ramsey County.
- Tiffany Kong, Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation.
- Dr. Ellen Roster, Saint Paul College.
- Josh Anderson, Maplewood – North Saint Paul School District.
- Megan Jekot, Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood.

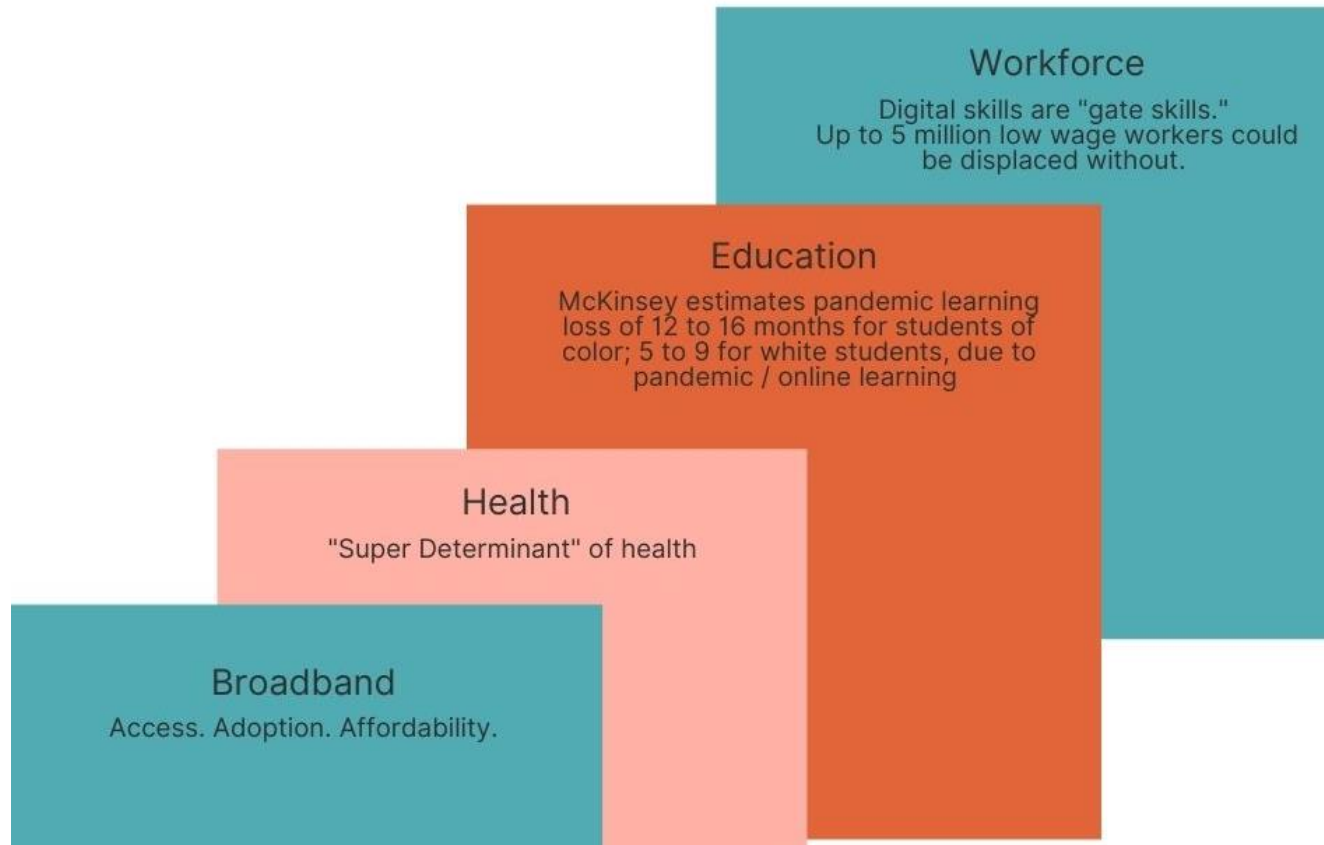
Our Process



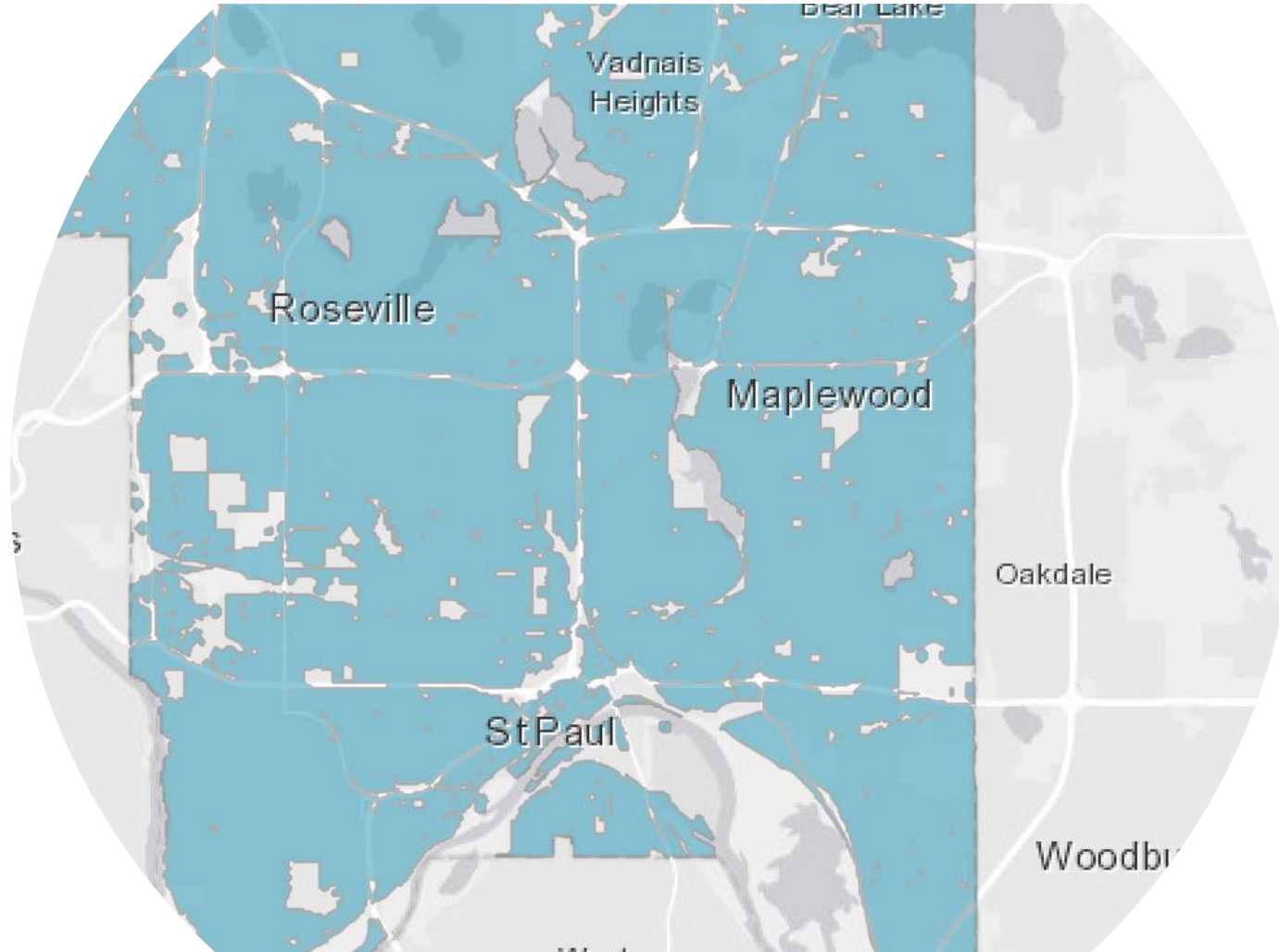
Digital Equity Definitions

- **Equity:** Equity is about fairness. It's about rebalancing social systems.
- **Full Connectivity:** Having sufficient devices and connections to fully participate in online life. This includes a broadband connection with sufficient upload / download speeds, a computer or tablet, a cell phone and a cell plan.

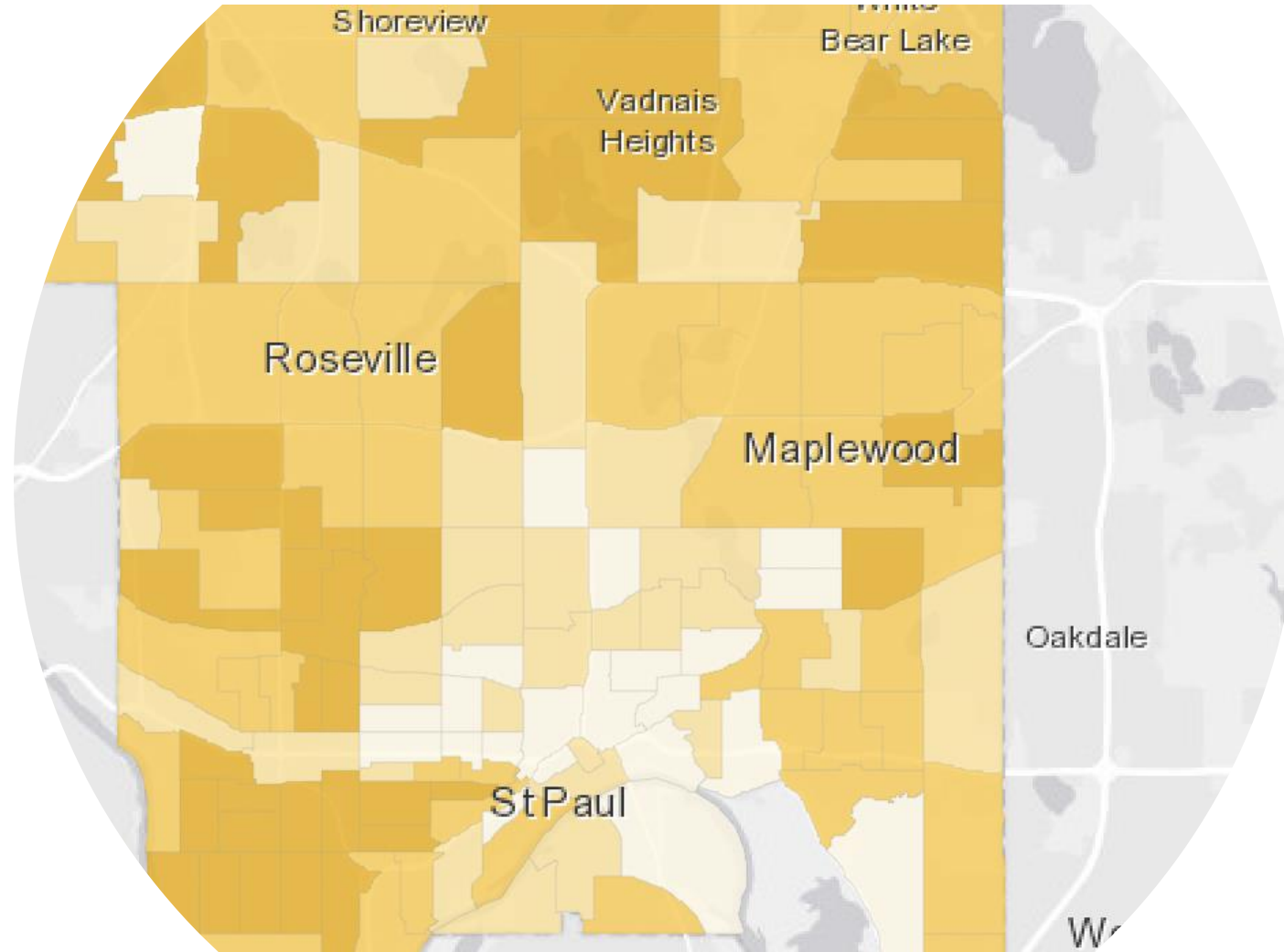
Digital Inclusion is the Foundation of an Equitable Future



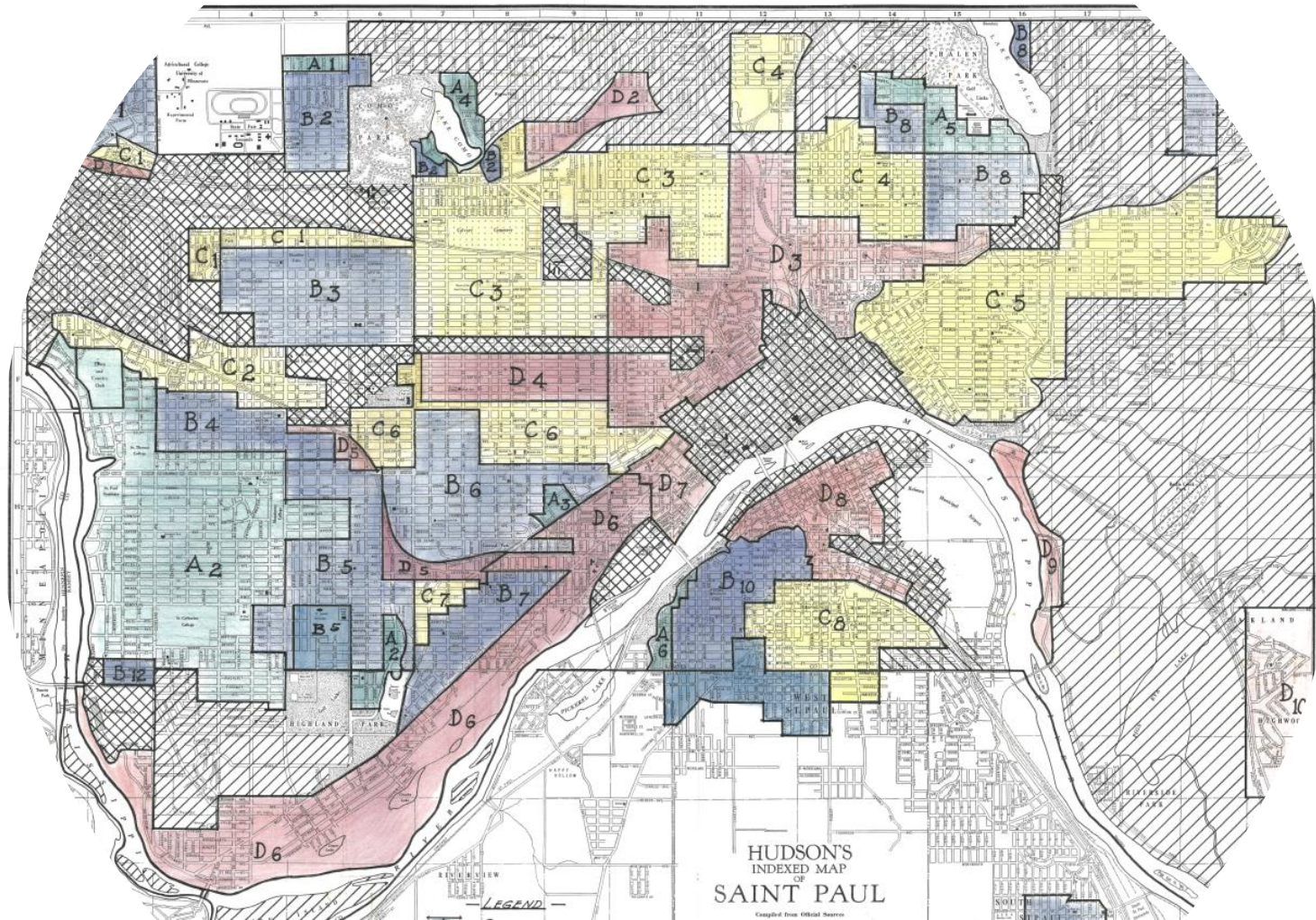
Digital Inequities are Driven by Systemic Inequities with Deep Roots



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Digital Inequities are Driven by Systemic Inequities with Deep Roots

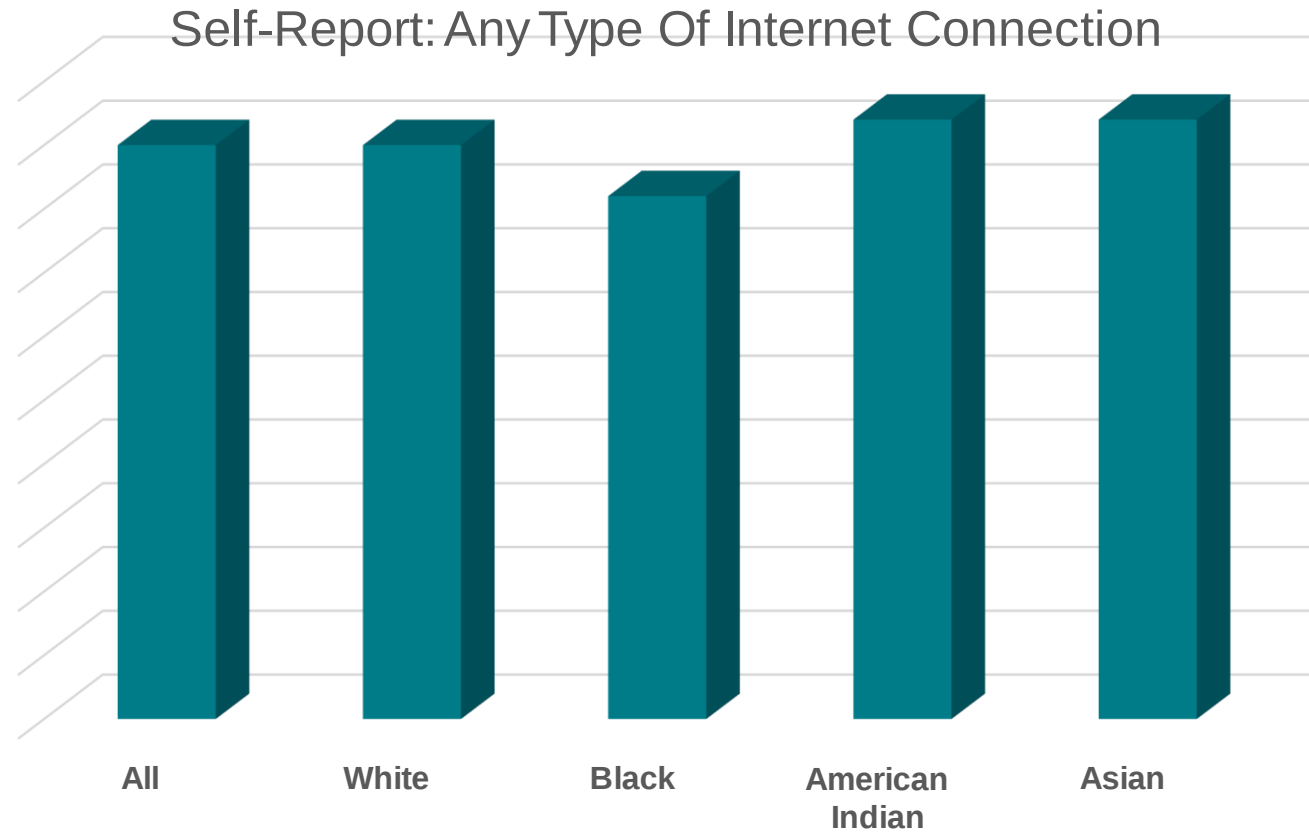


The background features a pattern of hexagons in four colors: white with a thin grey outline, dark navy blue, light grey, and maroon. These hexagons are scattered across the slide, with some partially cut off by the edges.

Digital Inclusion Focus: It's About People, Not Wires

Connectivity
Blueprint

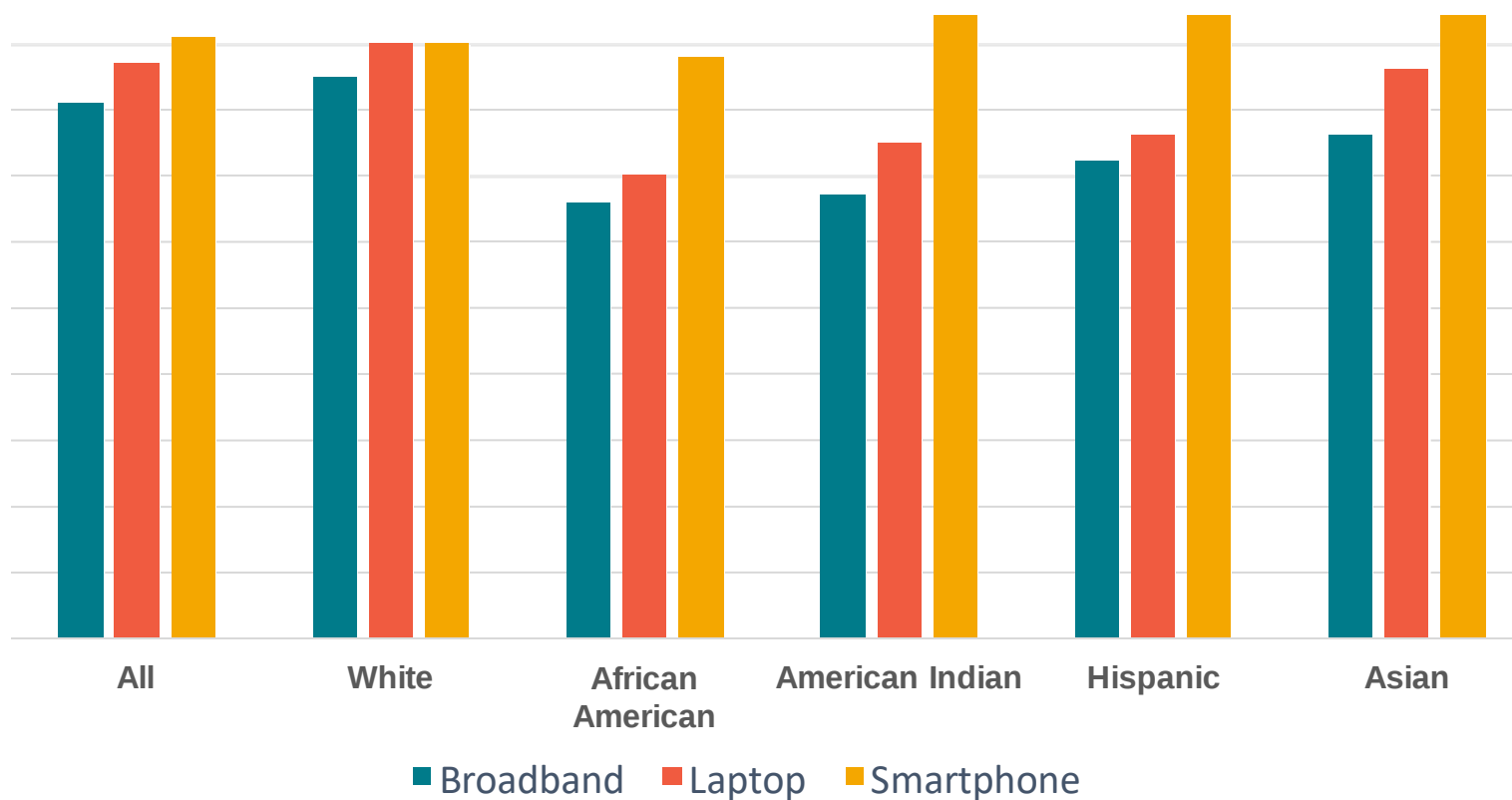
Most Ramsey County Residents Have Some Internet Connection



Source: American Community Survey

But Broadband, Device Divides are Substantial

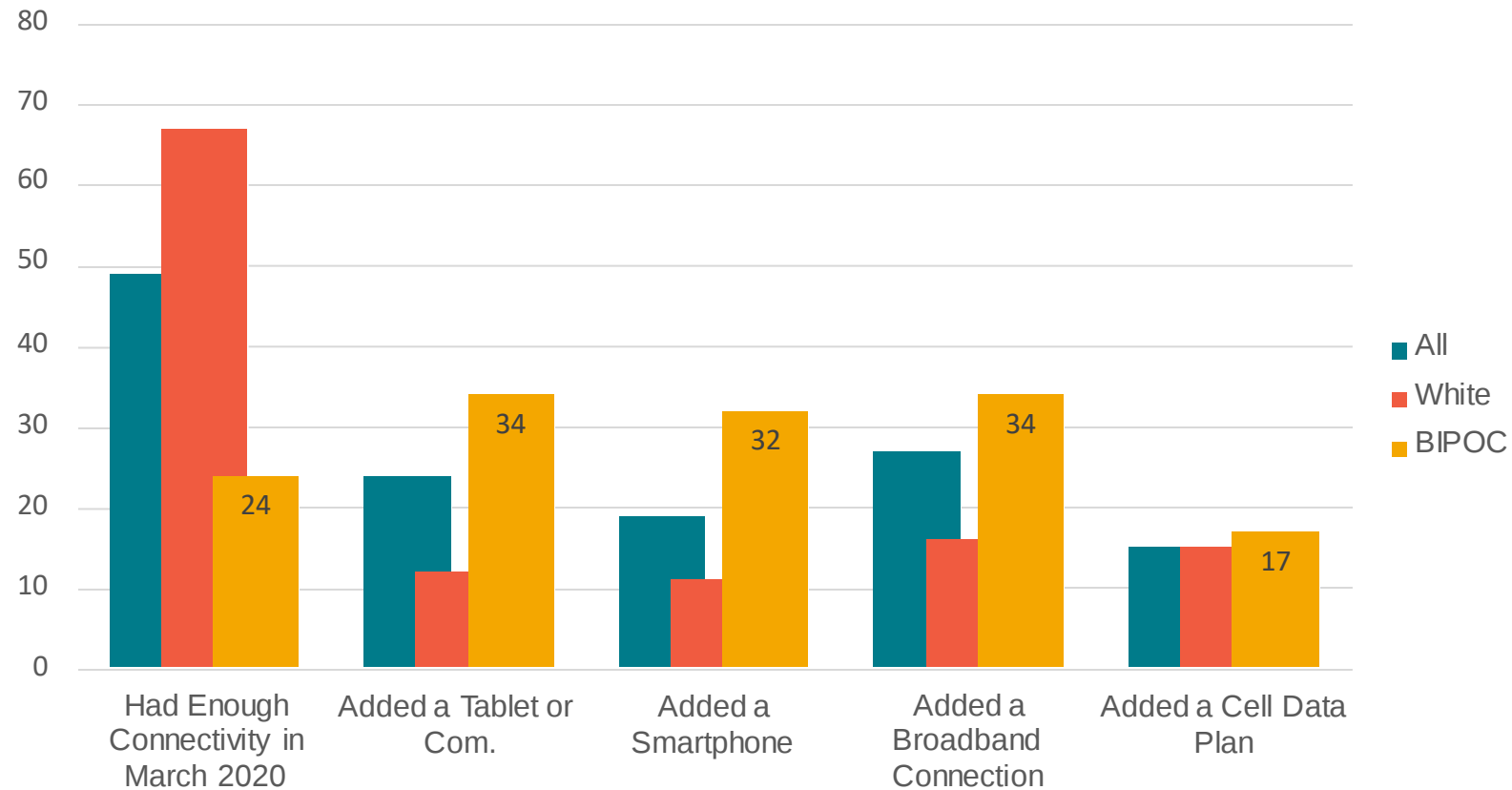
Broadband, Laptop and Smartphone Access by Race



Source: American Community Survey

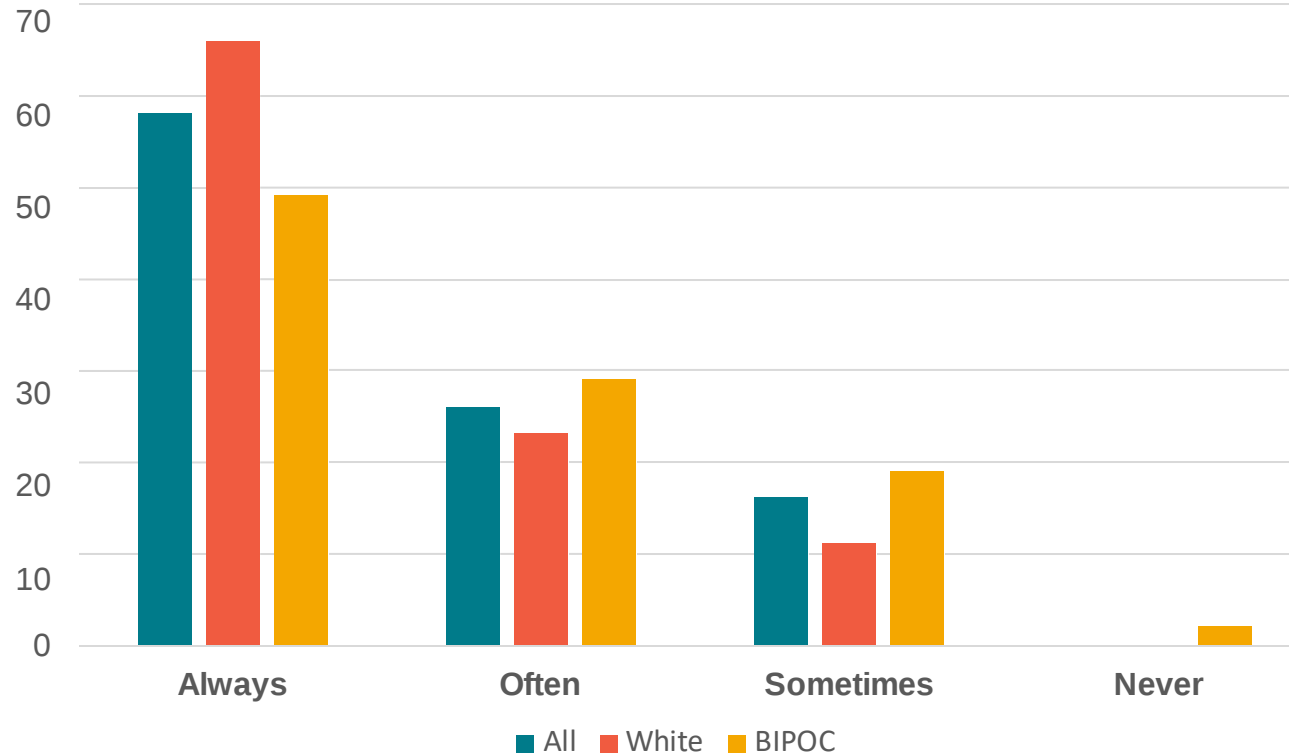
Ramsey/Saint Paul BIPOC Communities Started the Pandemic Behind

Describe Your Connectivity in March 2020

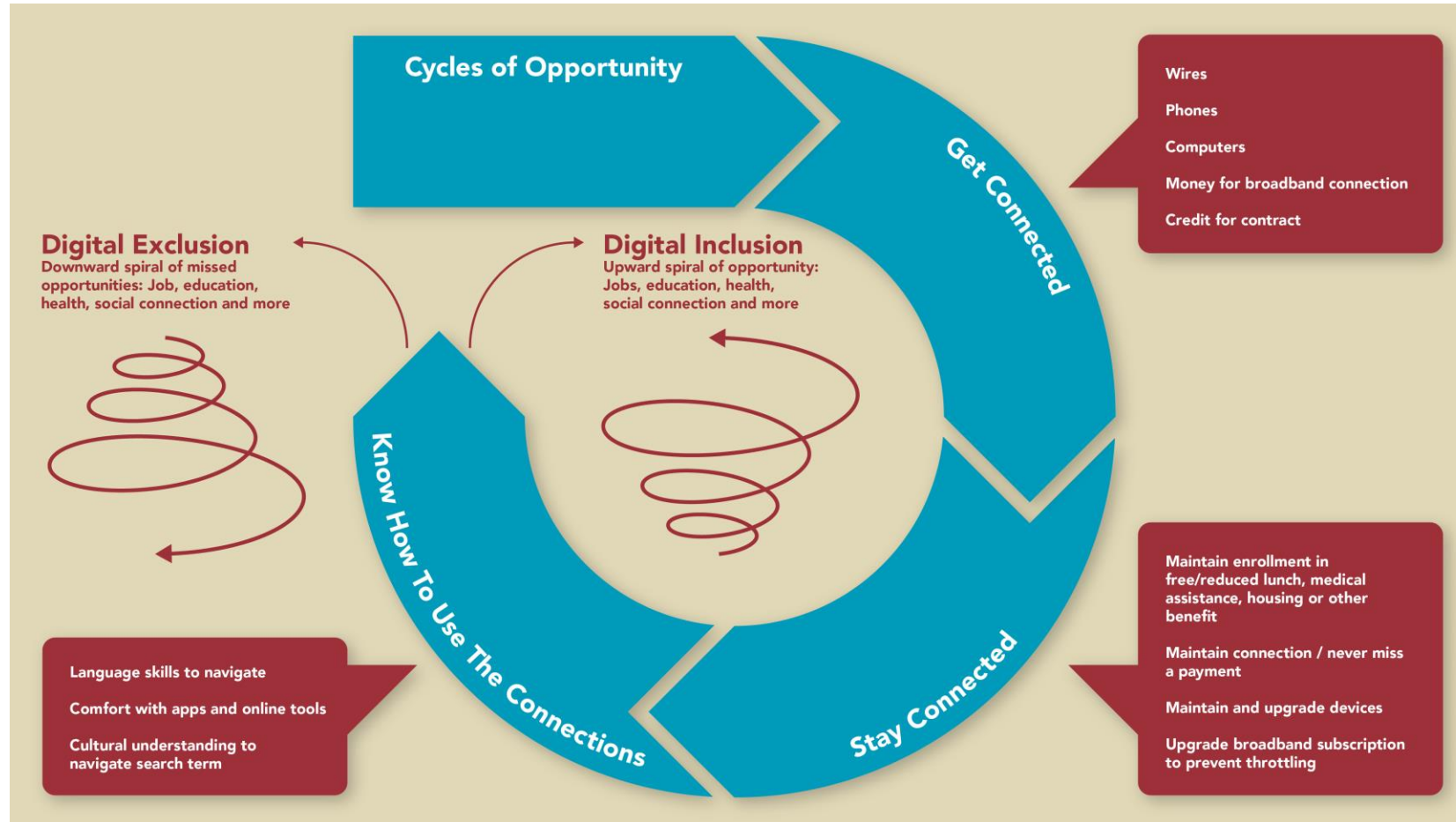


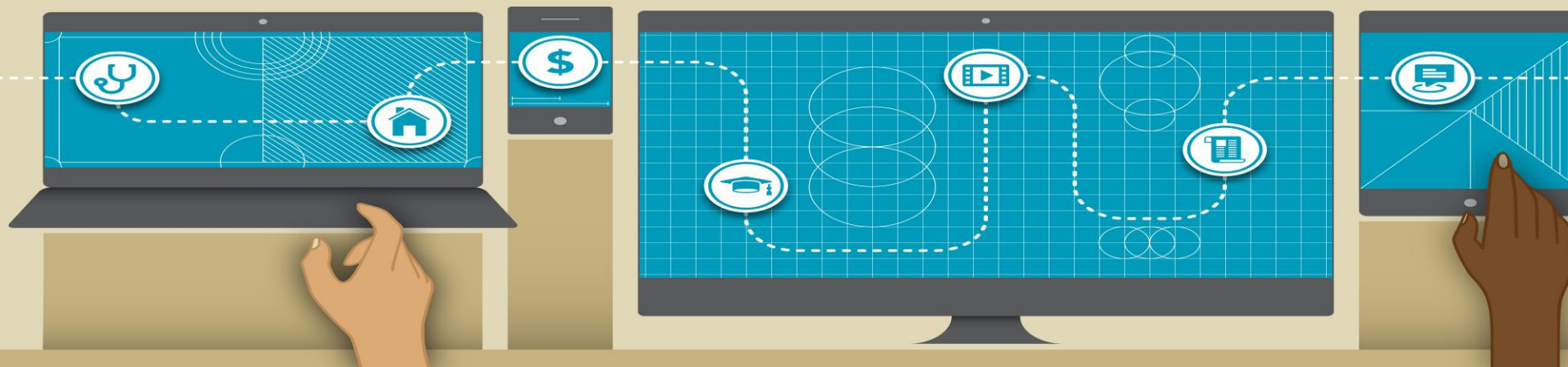
The Digital Divide in Ramsey/Saint Paul is Felt Today

How often do you have the technology and internet access needed to participate in online life as much as you would like to?



Rethinking the “Three-Legged Stool”





Recommendation Areas

- Build awareness of digital equity as an equity, not infrastructure, issue.
- Take immediate actions to strengthen and grow programs.
- Collaborate to maximize federal funding for digital equity in Ramsey/Saint Paul.
- Advance broadband policy that makes connectivity accessible to all.

Conclusions

- Digital equity is the foundation of an equitable future.
- Focus on **people**, our residents and their families, not only on wires and broadband
- The city has an opportunity to invest in digital infrastructure in a way that prioritizes digital equity through federal funding coming to the state over the next 2-5 years.
- Opportunity for multiple city departments to work in partnership, continued opportunities for metro area collaboration
- Embed digital equity in our strategic priorities work.
- Align our legislative efforts and policies as the state forms its plans.
- Final report live on county website in next few weeks