Digital Equity in the City of Boston

Results of survey research among residents of The City of Boston

July 2024

Conducted for the City of Boston by The MassINC Polling Group

THE **MassINC** POLLING GROUP

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Introduction

A group of organizations including CTC, HRiA, city stakeholders, and The MassINC Polling Group (MPG) were engaged to create a digital equity assessment and plan for the City of Boston. As a part of this effort, MPG led a multi-step survey research program to gather data about resident opinions and experiences as they relate to digital equity.

Digital equity is critical to the health of modern societies given direct impacts on economic opportunities, education, and quality of life. Access to digital resources ensures that all residents can participate in the modern economic system, reach their educational goals, and access essential services. Understanding the extent and nature of digital inequities through comprehensive survey programs such as this one allows policymakers and community organizations to develop targeted interventions. This survey provides valuable insights into the current state of digital access in the City of Boston and identifies key areas requiring attention.

When it comes to measuring and analyzing digital equity, there are a range of potential frameworks. For the purposes of this report, we are using a conventional digital equity model with three main elements: 1) internet access, 2) device access, and 3) digital literacy and skills. The main sections of this report are based on these elements, with questions from the survey related to each topic area. The data outlined in each section provides an in-depth look at how residents of the city are experiencing these components and offers insight into gaps where policy leaders could focus.

Any survey offers near infinite ways of grouping response data. For this report, we focus on priority populations for digital equity, as defined by stakeholders from the City of Boston who guided the survey process. The tables throughout the report show the results broken out by these groups, allowing decision makers to focus on the needs and experiences of the groups most impacted by digital equity concerns. Respondents who fall into each group were identified by survey responses as shown in the table on the following page.

Priority groups matched with survey questions and answers	
Group description *(response count total)*	**Survey question (response option)**
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	Were you born on the island of Puerto Rico, in the United States, or in another country? (Another country)
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	What languages are spoken regularly at home? (Selected any language other than English)
School-aged families *(n=330)*	How many children under the age of 18, currently live in your household? (1 or more)
People in public housing / restricted housing units* *(n=766)*	Do you live in affordable housing? Affordable housing is defined as housing subsidized by a housing authority, paid for through a voucher, or in a building run by a private developer (Yes)
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	What is your age? (Age 60+)
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	Last year, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? (Under $40K)
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	Which of the following best describes you? (Selected any LGBTQ+ identifier)
Black community *(n=331)*	How would you describe your race or ethnicity? (Black alone or in combination)
Latino community *(n=320)*	How would you describe your race or ethnicity? (Latino alone or in combination)
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	Do you identify as a person with a disability? (Yes)
Veterans *(n=59)***	Did you serve on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces? (Yes)
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	Do you belong to a North American Indigenous, Native, or Tribal group? (Yes)
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	Do you live in affordable housing? (I am currently unhoused and do not have a home to live in)
People on government assistance programs* *(n=983)*	Do you receive or take part in any of the following government programs? (Yes to any)
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	Were you ever formerly incarcerated? (Yes)

* The figures for people in public housing/restricted housing units and those who receive government assistance includes a large number of responses collected by community-based organizations and the Boston Housing Authority. All other response groupings are exclusively drawn from the representative survey.

** Sample sizes for some priority groups were small, as indicated in this table and survey results shown in the report. Given the important of these groups to city leaders, results are shown for all priority groups, but caution is strongly recommended when interpreting the results for any group with under 100 responses.

Key Findings

Digital access is essential to an equitable modern society. Digital access is not a privilege, it is a necessity for participating in a broad range of everyday activities. But despite the importance of opportunities to participate in the digital world, the survey finds many within Boston remain cut off from the opportunities offered by equitable access. While large majorities have sufficient access, it is by no means universal. For example, while the vast majority of residents (85%) report sufficient internet at home, one in four lower income households do not have sufficient internet. Similarly, although 84% of the general population report having sufficient devices, just 69% of those in households with annual income less than $25,000 say the same. Digital skills follow the same pattern, with gaps in confidence related to using the internet for tasks such as job applications and telehealth. The dynamics are prevalent across a range of population groups, outlining the challenge facing city leaders as the work toward digital equity.

- **Among the priority groups, some are further behind on digital equity metrics.** Four specific groups are below 80% in terms of home internet service and sufficient devices for internet use: people on government assistance programs, people in public housing, low-income households, and people who are formerly incarcerated. In terms of digital skills, other groups are most impacted. Seniors, veterans, immigrants, public housing residents, and Latino residents are the least likely to express confidence in their ability to complete a range of online tasks. Many of these groups overlap considerably.

- **Many residents in priority populations lack internet access.** The vast majority of respondents (85%) report having home internet service. However, several priority populations are less likely to have this access. Among low-income residents, only 75% have home internet. Among formerly incarcerated residents, just 71% report access. Among public housing residents and Latino residents, 78% in each group say they have a home internet plan.

- **Speed and connectivity are also concerns for many.** About three-quarters (76%) of Boston residents say they have home internet *and* that it works well enough to meet their needs. This drops to 64% among both low-income and Latino residents, many of whom cite connectivity and speed issues. Among all residents, 25% say they have internet but that they frequently experience low connection speeds, while 22% say they frequently experience dropped connections.

- **Affordability is also a major concern.** Overall, 24% of Boston residents have internet access but express concerns about its affordability. Many others lack home internet altogether due to the high cost of service and rely instead on their cell phones for internet. Among those without home internet, the primary reasons cited include using their cell phone for internet access and concerns over the cost of service.

- **Many do not have access to the devices they need**. While 84% overall indicate their households have access to the necessary devices for internet use, some priority populations are less likely to say so. Formerly incarcerated residents (65%), unhoused residents (60%), residents of public

housing (74%), and low-income residents (74%) are less likely to report having sufficient devices.

- **Gaps in confidence limit some users' online experiences**. Overall, most respondents feel at least somewhat confident using the internet for a range of purposes, though far fewer feel "very confident" (46% to 71%). Confidence in telehealth usage is far lower among senior / older adults and veterans. The groups least likely to express confidence on a range of tasks are seniors / older adults, veterans, Latino residents, people in public housing, immigrant residents, and residents who speak languages other than English.

- **Digital skills classes could help close some of the gaps.** Just 32% of residents say they have taken digital skills classes, but 47% would be interested if they were free. More would prefer online classes (62%), but others say they would like in person classes (38%) or in person support (25%). Classes on fixing computer issues and internet safety drew the greatest interest.

Elements of digital equity

The remainder of this report is organized around tables digging into the three main elements of digital equity: Internet access, device access, and digital literacy and skills. Affordability is an important consideration when it comes to digital equity and is woven through the other three elements.

The three pillars of digital equity we focus on are as follows along with the definitions that guided the development of the survey as well as this report.

1. Internet access: Affordable, accessible, and reliable high-speed home internet service is available.

2. Device access: Individuals have access to well-functioning devices and technical support.

3. Digital literacy and skills: Individuals have digital skills to support their ability to meaningfully use the internet in their daily lives.

Responses to key items are shown both for all residents as well as each of the 15 priority groups identified by city officials.

1: Internet Access

Definition: Affordable, accessible, and reliable high-speed home internet service is available.

Table 1: Internet access at home and by mobile phone data plan
Which of the following plans do you currently have? A data plan for a cell phone. A home internet service plan.
Asked of all residents

Group description	Have phone data plan	Have home Internet service
Overall *(n=1109)*	88%	85%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	84%	80%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	87%	80%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	91%	90%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)**	84%	**78%**
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	**77%**	84%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	83%	**75%**
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	86%	84%
Black community *(n=331)*	83%	82%
Latino community *(n=320)*	87%	**78%**
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	80%	79%
Veterans *(n=59)***	**77%**	86%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	**77%**	85%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	**73%**	NA
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)**	82%	77%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	80%	**71%**

* Throughout the report, the analysis of people in public housing/restricted housing units and those who receive government assistance includes a large number of responses collected by community-based organizations and the Boston Housing Authority. All other response groupings are exclusively drawn from the representative survey. **Caution: small sample sizes

Among all residents, access to both phone data plans and home internet service are over 80%. But there are several groups among whom access gaps exist.

- Among those in lower income households, 75% say they have a home internet plan, compared to 85% of residents overall. Similarly, 71% of formerly incarcerated people say they have a home internet plan.
- Among respondents who are unhoused, 73% say they have a cell phone plan. Additionally, about three quarters (77%) of veterans, indigenous residents, unhoused people, and seniors / older adults are less likely to say they have a cell phone plan.

Table 2: Home internet service quality
Which of the following plans do you currently have? A home internet service plan. How well does your home internet service work?
Includes all residents

Group description	Have it, good enough	Have it, not good enough	Don't have it
Overall *(n=1109)*	76%	9%	12%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	69%	10%	18%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	69%	11%	18%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	76%	12%	8%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	62%	13%	19%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	73%	10%	14%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	64%	10%	20%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	76%	6%	13%
Black community *(n=331)*	69%	11%	17%
Latino community *(n=320)*	64%	12%	20%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	68%	11%	20%
Veterans *(n=59)** *	70%	14%	8%
Indigenous community *(n=35)** *	67%	13%	15%
Unhoused people *(n=28)** *	NA	NA	NA
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	64%	11%	19%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)** *	58%	12%	28%

**Caution: small sample sizes

Overall, 76% of city residents say they have internet service at home and that their plan is good enough to meet their needs. There are a range of priority groups where sufficient access is less common.

- Low-income households (64%) and Latino residents (64%) are the least likely of any priority group to say they have home internet and that it is good enough to meet their needs.
- In many of the priority populations, 20-40% say they either do not have internet access or that it is not good enough to meet their needs.
- Among low-income respondents, Latino residents, people with disabilities, and those formerly incarcerated, at least 1 in 5 do not have home internet.

Table 3: Internet affordability among those with home internet
Which of the following plans do you currently have? A home internet service plan. How would you describe the affordability of your home internet service?
Includes all residents

Group description	Have it, Affordable	Have it, unaffordable	Don't have it
Overall *(n=1109)*	60%	24%	12%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	59%	19%	18%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	60%	19%	18%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	67%	22%	8%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	57%	19%	19%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	57%	23%	14%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	53%	21%	20%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	60%	22%	13%
Black community *(n=331)*	59%	19%	17%
Latino community *(n=320)*	58%	18%	20%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	46%	31%	20%
Veterans *(n=59)***	65%	21%	8%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	64%	18%	15%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	NA	NA	57%
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	52%	24%	19%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	54%	14%	28%

**Caution: small sample sizes

Affordability is a major concern to many residents when it comes to home internet service. Overall, just 60% say they have affordable home internet access while 24% say it is unaffordable.

- People with a disability (46%), low-income residents (53%), and those formerly incarcerated (54%) are least likely to say they have affordable home internet.
- Across all priority groups, affordability is a common concern. With the expiration of the ACP program, we should expect the financial burden of home internet service to continue to grow.

Table 4: Internet connection experiences, low or dropped connections
Which of the following plans do you currently have? A home internet service plan. How often do your experience each of the following with your home internet connection?

Group description	Have home internet, frequently experience *low connection speeds*	Have internet, frequently experience d*ropped connections*
Overall *(n=1109)*	25%	22%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	24%	23%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	25%	23%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	34%	30%
People in public housing/ restricted housing units *(n=766)*	33%	30%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	22%	23%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	26%	22%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	30%	24%
Black community *(n=331)*	29%	22%
Latino community *(n=320)*	25%	26%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	30%	22%
Veterans *(n=59)***	30%	29%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	37%	30%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	NA	NA
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	29%	25%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	43%	34%

*Asked of all respondents
**Caution: small sample sizes

Overall, about a quarter say they have internet but that they frequently experience low speeds and dropped connections.

- Among formerly incarcerated residents, 43% report frequent low connection speeds.
- Similarly, 34% of school-aged families experience the same challenges, perhaps due to the higher demand on internet capacity due to larger household sizes.
- Those in public housing (33%) and indigenous residents (37%) also report more problems with low connection speeds than other groups.

Table 5: Reasons for no home internet plan, among those without home internet
What are the reasons you do not have an internet service plan at home?
*Percents among those who said they do not have home internet.

Reason	% of non-internet users (n=152)
I access the internet using my cell phone	33%
Service is too expensive	28%
I can't afford a device to use the internet	14%
I don't want to use the internet	6%
I am concerned about online privacy or safety	5%
I don't feel confident using the internet	5%
Service is not available in my area	3%
Other	25%
Don't know / refused	4%

When residents who do not have a home internet service plan are asked why, key reasons include the cost of the service or reliance on their cellphone for access. This includes 152 respondents, which makes it impossible to break down these results further.

Table 6: Affordable Connectivity Program enrollment and familiarity

Have you heard about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that provides discounted internet service for low-income households? Are you currently enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?
Asked of all respondents

Group description	Heard of ACP	Enrolled in ACP
Overall *(n=1109)*	37%	12%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	31%	7%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	33%	12%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	42%	17%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	56%	28%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	41%	10%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	47%	24%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	40%	16%
Black community *(n=331)*	41%	12%
Latino community *(n=320)*	36%	10%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	54%	22%
Veterans *(n=59)***	40%	13%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	75%	48%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	NA	NA
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	50%	24%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	73%	43%

***Caution: small sample sizes*

Congress has not voted to fund ACP going forward. The program was familiar to many members of the priority population groups and was broadly utilized among some.

- The ACP was well known, with more than half of residents in many of the priority groups saying they have heard of the program.
- Had the program continued, there would have been significant opportunity to communicate to priority groups and to enroll more residents.

2: Device Access

Definition: Individuals have access to well-functioning devices and technical support.

Table 7: Access to enough devices

Does everyone in your household have access to the devices they need to meet their everyday needs for internet use? (Computers, smartphones, tablets, or other internet enabled devices)?
Among all respondents

Group description	Have enough devices
Overall *(n=1109)*	84%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	81%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	83%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	85%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	74%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	83%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	74%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	81%
Black community *(n=331)*	80%
Latino community *(n=320)*	82%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	77%
Veterans *(n=59)***	76%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	85%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	60%
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	73%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	65%

**Caution: small sample sizes

A large majority (84%) report having access to enough devices to meet their everyday internet needs, but access is less common among some priority groups.

- Unhoused and formerly incarcerated residents in Boston are less likely to report having enough devices in their household, with 60% and 65% respectively saying they have enough.
- Across priority groups, there are significant opportunities for expanding access to sufficient devices to meet every day needs.

Table 8: Type of device, among internet users
Which of the following devices do you use regularly to access the internet? Select all that apply.
Among all respondents

Group description	Cell	Desktop	Laptop	Tablet	Other
Overall *(n=1109)*	87%	30%	66%	41%	4%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	86%	25%	55%	31%	6%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	88%	27%	61%	39%	5%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	92%	35%	67%	56%	3%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	86%	24%	48%	39%	4%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	75%	32%	53%	35%	5%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	85%	23%	51%	33%	5%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	87%	26%	74%	42%	6%
Black community *(n=331)*	81%	28%	59%	39%	4%
Latino community *(n=320)*	86%	27%	53%	37%	4%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	81%	27%	60%	39%	5%
Veterans *(n=59)***	76%	34%	67%	45%	6%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	74%	35%	53%	45%	3%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	89%	8%	49%	43%	2%
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	85%	26%	52%	43%	4%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	85%	30%	43%	42%	6%

***Caution: small sample sizes*

Cell phones are the most common device used regularly to access the internet (87%), followed by laptops (66%). Desktop computers are the least common.

- Across most priority groups, there is a split on who uses a laptop or not to access the internet. If they're not using a laptop, a cellphone is most common.
- Less than half of unhoused individuals, people in public housing, and those formerly incarcerated, use a laptop to access the internet.

3: Digital Literacy and Skills

Definition: Individuals have digital skills to support their ability to meaningfully use the internet in their daily lives.

Table 9: Confidence in internet use
How confident would you feel using the internet for each of the following? (Very + somewhat confident)
Asked of all respondents.

Group description	Search / apply for a job	Health care/ telehealth	Participate in local community	General internet search	Transpo info.	Apply for benefits	Average
Overall *(n=1109)*	78%	82%	78%	91%	86%	75%	82%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	70%	78%	69%	86%	80%	64%	75%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	73%	78%	65%	88%	81%	67%	75%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	83%	87%	79%	93%	88%	78%	85%
People in public housing/ restricted housing units *(n=766)*	65%	75%	69%	86%	77%	72%	74%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	53%	73%	71%	84%	75%	61%	70%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	70%	76%	69%	89%	83%	72%	77%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	84%	84%	78%	94%	88%	77%	84%
Black community *(n=331)*	80%	82%	82%	89%	81%	77%	82%
Latino Community *(n=320)*	68%	75%	66%	84%	77%	65%	73%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	73%	84%	81%	91%	82%	77%	81%
Veterans *(n=59)***	63%	73%	72%	80%	78%	64%	72%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	69%	81%	80%	92%	76%	61%	77%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	67%	84%	72%	89%	89%	57%	76%
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	67%	78%	74%	87%	82%	72%	77%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	76%	84%	77%	88%	84%	73%	80%

**Caution: small sample sizes

Majorities feel confident in using the internet for a broad range of uses.

- Overall, residents feel most confident in using the internet for general search activity.
- On average, seniors / older adults, veterans, Latino residents, and residents of public housing are least likely to express confidence in their ability to perform a range of internet tasks.

Table 10: Taken digital skills classes

Have you ever taken any classes to improve your digital skills (these could be computer skills, navigating the internet, certain programs, etc.)?
Asked of all respondents.

Group description	Have taken classes
Overall *(n=1109)*	32%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	27%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	30%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	33%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	43%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	37%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	28%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	29%
Black community *(n=331)*	36%
Latino Community *(n=320)*	33%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	36%
Veterans *(n=59)***	40%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	52%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	21%
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	35%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	43%

**Caution: small sample sizes

Overall, about a third (32%) of respondents overall have taken digital skills classes.

- People in public housing, indigenous residents, and those formerly incarcerated more likely to say they have taken classes.
- Unhoused people, immigrants, and low-income residents are least likely to report having taken classes.

Table 11: Interest in free digital skills classes?

Would you be interested in digital skills training if it were offered free of charge?
Asked of all respondents

Group description	Interested	Not interested
Overall *(n=1109)*	47%	44%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	52%	40%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	48%	41%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	66%	23%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	52%	43%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	47%	46%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	61%	30%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	43%	48%
Black community *(n=331)*	60%	32%
Latino Community *(n=320)*	47%	44%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	52%	37%
Veterans *(n=59)***	53%	41%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	69%	31%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	70%	25%
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	61%	26%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	75%	25%

***Caution: small sample sizes*

About half of respondents are interested in digital skills courses (47%), if they were offered free of charge.

- Populations most interested in digital skills classes are school-aged families, low-income households, Black residents, indigenous residents, unhoused residents, residents on government assistance and those formerly incarcerated.

Table 12: Digital skills class interests
What kinds of digital skills topics would you be most interested in?
Among all respondents. Top 6 responses shown.

Group description	Fix computer issues	Internet safety	Download new software	Basics of computer	Navigate internet	Use social media
Overall *(n=1109)*	27%	20%	17%	14%	13%	12%
Immigrant populations *(n=332)*	24%	18%	15%	18%	15%	14%
People who speak languages other than English *(n=422)*	24%	19%	18%	18%	14%	13%
School-aged families *(n=330)*	30%	25%	21%	14%	13%	18%
People in public housing/restricted housing units *(n=766)*	41%	39%	32%	31%	27%	25%
Seniors/Older adults *(n=264)*	23%	20%	16%	19%	14%	14%
Low-income populations *(n=335)*	39%	24%	23%	23%	19%	14%
LGBTQ+ community *(n=156)*	27%	14%	13%	10%	10%	10%
Black community *(n=331)*	33%	23%	19%	18%	16%	15%
Latino Community *(n=320)*	26%	20%	21%	21%	17%	14%
People with disabilities *(n=232)*	37%	22%	23%	22%	20%	15%
Veterans *(n=59)***	21%	23%	16%	10%	15%	22%
Indigenous community *(n=35)***	45%	35%	35%	28%	32%	32%
Unhoused people *(n=28)***	40%	13%	12%	16%	17%	7%
People on government assistance programs *(n=983)*	39%	30%	27%	28%	23%	19%
Formerly incarcerated people *(n=58)***	43%	34%	28%	23%	17%	16%

**Caution: small sample sizes

Among those interested in digital skills classes, fixing computer issues would be most popular. The other classes of greatest interest were internet safety, downloading new software, basics of using a computer and general internet searching.

- Indigenous residents, people in public housing, formerly incarcerated people, and those receiving government benefits were most interested in digital skills classes.

Methodology

Questionnaire: The questionnaire was designed collaboratively by teams from The MassINC Polling Group, HRiA, CTC, and the City of Boston. It followed the general contours of the survey conducted by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute in municipalities across Massachusetts. The overall topics included internet access, device access, and digital literacy and skills.

Base survey: The main element was a representative survey of 1,109 residents of Boston. This included a base sample of 700 respondents as well as an oversample to reach a total of 300 each of Black and Latino residents of the city. The survey was administered via a combination of live telephone interviewing, text to web interviewing, and online surveys. The approximate questionnaire length was 16 minutes when conducted by live interviewer, and 9 minutes when conducted online.

Final results were weighted to match target population parameters for the city of Boston both within race and ethnicity and for the city as a whole. Population parameters were drawn from a variety of sources including the American Community Survey, MAPC, and elsewhere. The credibility interval for the survey is approximately 3.5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level inclusive of the design effect.

The survey was conducted as a part of a larger project in collaboration with CTC, HRiA and the city of Boston. Funding for the project was provided by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. The questionnaire was offered in Arabic, Cape Verdean Creole, English, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese and Traditional Chinese.

Community-Based Surveys: To dig deeper on digital equity issues among priority populations, a community-based survey process was conducted alongside the representative survey. Community based organizations across Boston assisted MPG in distributing the questionnaire to target populations and obtained an additional 508 responses from their constituents, members, and service recipients. The survey was available in paper as well as online and was distributed in ways best fit for each organization. The questionnaire and all outreach materials were offered in Arabic, English, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese and Traditional Chinese.

For the purposes of this report, tables showing residents living in subsidized housing and those receiving other benefits include *both* the community survey and the representative survey. Results for all other population groups include only the representative survey.