

2023 California Digital Equity Public Surveys

In 2023, the California Department of Technology (CDT) conducted two surveys to identify barriers California residents face when accessing and utilizing broadband internet. One was a randomized telephone survey, designed to obtain a scientific sampling, and the other was a voluntary, mobile-friendly online survey available in 14 languages. Both surveys inform [California's Digital Equity Plan](#).

Telephone Survey

CDT partnered with California Emerging Technologies Fund and the University of Southern California Annenberg School of Communications and Journalism to identify the unique challenges of those with limited or no access to broadband internet and digital resources.

Internet Adoption

Statewide broadband adoption remains high: 91% of respondents report being able to connect to the Internet from home.

Public and community broadband continue to play a critical role in providing alternatives for those without home access, with 41% reporting they connect in schools or libraries, 29% in parks or similar public spaces, 29% through community Wi-Fi and 22% at the parking lot of school or libraries.

K-12 Education

Broadband adoption among respondents with school-age children has decreased from 97% in 2021 to 93% in 2023.

Fewer children in K-12 households have a desktop, laptop, or tablet computer available at home to use for school activities that is not shared with other family members, a decline from nearly 95% in 2021 to about 72% in 2023.

The share of K-12 families that report having a device provided by the school fell by 22% from nearly 70% in 2021 to about 58% in 2023.

Affordability

Californians spend an average \$83.60/month on broadband internet service.

Cost is the main barrier to home broadband adoption; almost two-thirds (61%) of respondents without home broadband report cost as one of the reasons for not having the service.

The income gap in broadband adoption has decreased. Adoption among the poorest households (below \$20,000 annual household income) jumped from 70% in 2021 to 85% in 2023.

Affordable Connectivity Program

Nearly 2/3 of respondents have never heard of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

Telehealth

Telehealth utilization among covered populations has declined by 5% since 2021.

Digital Skills

Just over half of respondents (56%) are high-skills Internet users.

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Mobile Friendly Online Survey

CDT partnered with Broadband Equity Partnership to conduct a mobile-friendly online survey from May through July 2023. The survey was available in 14 languages with audio options for those with vision impairments or low levels of literacy.

Affordability

42% respondents with home internet access pay more than \$100/month for their home internet service

(which may include other bundled services like TV, phone service, etc.) This number is even higher for individuals in **rural areas (51%), veterans (46%), and tribal communities (45%)**.

Internet Adoption

Covered Populations are more likely than overall survey respondents to rely on smartphones only for access to the internet causing them to be underconnected when it comes to internet access.

1 in 5 (22%) survey respondents did not have access to technical support or assistance within their household or community.

Internet Speed

Nearly a third (27%) of speed test respondents had inadequate download speeds (below 25 Mbps)

20% had inadequate upload speeds (below 3 Mbps).

Cybersecurity

22% of respondents with home internet access are not familiar with cybersecurity measures.

Almost 1 in 5 survey respondents (17%) who were familiar with cybersecurity measures did not have cybersecurity measures **actually installed on their devices** or were unsure about the status of their cybersecurity measures.

Individuals with limited English proficiency had the highest share of respondents unfamiliar with cybersecurity (54%), followed by immigrants (43%), and respondents living in households below 150% of the federal poverty line (40%).

Workforce Development

Certain covered populations were less likely than overall survey respondents to have hybrid or remote jobs, including low-income respondents, unhoused respondents, aging individuals, and individuals with disabilities.

55% of survey respondents rarely or never use the internet for job searches.