



## Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

March 2026

### Proposal Overview

Jackson County has an opportunity to develop a coordinated strategy for expanding broadband access and strengthening digital opportunity across the County. KC Digital Drive is pleased to submit this proposed scope of work to support development of a countywide Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan that will inform future infrastructure investments, digital inclusion initiatives, and partnerships with municipalities, service providers, and community organizations.

KC Digital Drive has worked with local governments and regional partners across the Kansas City area to assess broadband infrastructure, analyze digital equity needs, and identify practical strategies for expanding access to affordable, reliable connectivity. Building on this experience, KC Digital Drive will work with Jackson County to conduct research, stakeholder engagement, and technical analysis that will inform a clear and actionable roadmap for broadband expansion and digital inclusion.

The following scope of work outlines the proposed approach, project phases, and anticipated deliverables for development of the Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan.

### Project Summary

KC Digital Drive will develop a countywide **Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan** that will:

- Assess existing broadband infrastructure across the County
- Identify service gaps and digital equity needs
- Engage municipalities, internet service providers, community organizations, anchor institutions, and residents
- Identify potential projects and funding opportunities to expand broadband access and strengthen digital inclusion

The final Action Plan will provide Jackson County with a practical roadmap for expanding broadband access and digital opportunity over the next five years.

The work will be completed in two phases.



## Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

March 2026

**Phase 1** will provide the analysis, stakeholder input, and preliminary project pipeline needed to inform broadband investment decisions and development of the Action Plan.

**Phase 2** will build on those findings and develop a final five-year Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan for Jackson County.

### Project Plan

The project will be conducted in two phases. Phase 1 will focus on research, stakeholder engagement, and identification of potential broadband and digital equity investments. Phase 2 will translate those findings into policy recommendations and a final Action Plan.

### Phase 1 – Analysis, Engagement, and Investment Strategy

Estimated timeline: Approximately five months following execution of the agreement, with completion targeted by December 31, 2026.

Phase 1 will provide the analysis and stakeholder input needed to inform development of the Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan.

#### 1. Project Management and Stakeholder Engagement

KC Digital Drive will coordinate project management and stakeholder engagement for the project.

Activities will include:

- Conducting a kickoff meeting with County staff to confirm project priorities, timeline, and stakeholders
- Establishing a project management framework and regular meeting cadence with County staff
- Coordinating with County departments to review existing programs, initiatives, and assets related to broadband and digital equity
- Engaging external stakeholders including municipalities, internet service providers, community organizations, and anchor institutions such as schools, libraries, and healthcare providers
- Hosting four public listening sessions in eastern and central Jackson County to gather community input
- Maintaining a stakeholder engagement log documenting outreach and participation



## Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

March 2026

### 2. Broadband Infrastructure Mapping and Technical Assessment

KC Digital Drive will review broadband infrastructure availability and network performance across Jackson County.

Activities will include:

- Mapping served, underserved, and unserved broadband serviceable locations using Missouri Office of Broadband Development data
- Reviewing local government fiber assets and other infrastructure resources that could support broadband expansion
- Identifying potential infrastructure expansion areas and shovel-ready opportunities
- Reviewing available datasets to assess broadband performance including speed, reliability, and network coverage

### 3. Digital Equity and Community Needs Analysis

KC Digital Drive will assess barriers to broadband adoption and digital participation across Jackson County.

Activities will include:

- Reviewing data related to broadband affordability and broadband cost burden
- Reviewing available data on participation in broadband affordability programs
- Using KC Digital Drive's Demographics Explorer to review internet adoption, device access, and demographic indicators influencing digital access
- Mapping organizations providing low-cost devices, digital skills training, and digital navigation services
- Identifying gaps in digital inclusion services and resources across the County

### 4. Market Analysis and ISP Engagement

KC Digital Drive will review the broadband service market and engage with internet service providers operating in Jackson County.

Activities will include:

- Mapping internet service provider service areas across the County
- Identifying areas with limited broadband options or lack of provider competition
- Conducting interviews with providers to understand expansion plans and barriers to deployment



## Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

March 2026

- Identifying areas where infrastructure expansion may require public-private partnerships or subsidy support

### 5. Funding Strategy and Financial Modeling

KC Digital Drive will identify potential funding opportunities and investment approaches that could support broadband infrastructure expansion and digital equity programs.

Activities will include:

- Reviewing the Missouri Digital Opportunity Plan and other relevant state programs
- Identifying federal, state, and regional funding opportunities that may support broadband infrastructure and digital inclusion initiatives
- Developing preliminary cost estimates for potential infrastructure investments and digital equity initiatives
- Identifying potential partnership and cost-sharing opportunities

#### Additional Deliverable

Phase 1 will conclude with preparation of a **Preliminary Broadband and Digital Equity Investment Pipeline** that identifies potential infrastructure and programmatic initiatives emerging from the research and engagement process.

This pipeline may include:

- Potential broadband infrastructure expansion areas
- Digital equity program opportunities
- Preliminary cost ranges for potential projects
- Potential funding sources and partnership opportunities

Results from Phase 1 will inform development of the Phase 2 Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan.

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## Phase 2 – Action Plan Development and Policy Recommendations

Phase 2 will build on the Phase 1 findings and project pipeline to develop a comprehensive Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan for Jackson County.

Implementation of Phase 2 will be subject to County review of Phase 1 findings and future funding authorization.



## Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

March 2026

### 6. Policy and Governance Recommendations

KC Digital Drive will develop policy and governance recommendations to support implementation of broadband and digital equity initiatives.

Activities may include:

- Reviewing relevant County policies related to broadband deployment and digital inclusion
- Identifying opportunities to improve permitting processes, rights-of-way policies, and dig-once practices
- Developing model partnership approaches to support collaboration with internet service providers
- Reviewing how other local governments organize and staff broadband and digital inclusion initiatives
- Providing recommendations regarding organizational structure and staffing approaches that may support implementation within Jackson County

### 7. Development of the Five-Year Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

KC Digital Drive will prepare a comprehensive five-year Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan.

The Plan will include:

- Description of methodology and planning approach
- Background research and problem identification
- Findings from community engagement and stakeholder input
- Identification of infrastructure and digital equity gaps
- Goals, objectives, and performance measures
- Recommended broadband infrastructure projects and digital inclusion initiatives
- Potential funding opportunities and implementation strategies
- Implementation timeline and resource needs

The framework for the plan will align with **KC Digital Drive's Five Guiding Dimensions for Digital Equity**:

- Network Capacity
- Access to the Network
- Quality of Network Access
- Participation in Digital Life
- Excellence, Innovation, and Growth



## Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

March 2026

### 8. Final Deliverables and Communication

KC Digital Drive will prepare final materials to support adoption and implementation of the Action Plan.

Deliverables will include:

- Draft and final versions of the Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan
- An executive summary of key findings and recommendations
- Presentation of the plan to the Jackson County Legislature or other designated audiences
- Supporting materials to assist the County in communicating the plan to stakeholders and the public

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## Cost Proposal

The cost to produce the Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan will be structured in two phases.

Phase 1 will establish the research, stakeholder engagement, and technical analysis needed to inform broadband investment decisions and development of the Action Plan. Phase 2 will translate those findings into policy recommendations and the final five-year Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan.

The project team will be led by:

- Aaron Deacon, Managing Director – Strategy Lead
- Leslie Scott, Digital Inclusion Program Manager – Project and Policy Lead
- Leah Henriksen, Project Coordinator – Project coordination and engagement support

Additional technical and analytical support will be provided through KC Digital Drive's internal data and technology platforms.

## Phase 1 Budget

Phase 1 costs include personnel time, program infrastructure costs, and direct project expenses necessary to conduct the research, stakeholder engagement, and analysis required for development of the Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan.



## Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan

March 2026

### Total Phase 1 Cost: \$100,000

- Personnel Costs: \$55,000
- Program Costs: \$35,000
- Direct Project Expenses: \$10,000

### Budget Detail

1. **Personnel:** Estimated labor allocation -
  - Aaron Deacon – Strategy Lead
    - Estimated hours: approximately 80
    - Responsibilities include project strategy, ISP engagement, and expertise of technical analysis and strategy.
  - Leslie Scott – Project and Policy Lead
    - Estimated hours: approximately 120
    - Responsibilities include coordination with County leadership, digital equity analysis, policy research, stakeholder engagement, and development of the funding strategy.
  - Leah Henriksen – Project Coordination and Engagement
    - Estimated hours: approximately 120
    - Responsibilities include project coordination, meeting facilitation, stakeholder outreach, documentation, and support for community engagement activities.
2. **Program Cost:** A portion of the project cost reflects KC Digital Drive's enterprise-wide platforms, datasets, and planning tools used to support broadband analysis and digital equity planning. Program costs support the use of:
  - Broadband and demographic data systems used for mapping and analysis
  - KC Digital Drive's Demographics Explorer and related data tools
  - Regional broadband and digital inclusion datasets maintained by KC Digital Drive
  - Software subscriptions and analytical platforms used for infrastructure analysis
  - KC Digital Drive's Solutions Lab planning framework, which supports structured stakeholder engagement, project design, and implementation planning
  - Enterprise project management and collaboration systems used to coordinate research and engagement activities
3. **Direct Project Expenses**
  - Community listening session facilitation and engagement materials
  - Accessibility accommodations for public engagement activities as needed
  - Data acquisition and analytical tools used for broadband mapping
  - Local travel and meeting support



**Jackson County Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan**  
March 2026

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## Phase 2 Budget

Phase 2 will build on the findings from Phase 1 and focus on development of policy recommendations and preparation of the final Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan.

Activities may include:

- Development of governance and policy recommendations
- Preparation of the final Broadband and Digital Equity Action Plan
- Identification and prioritization of infrastructure and digital equity initiatives
- Preparation of implementation strategies and funding pathways
- Presentation of the final plan to the Jackson County Legislature

The scope, schedule, and budget for Phase 2 will be finalized following completion of Phase 1 and will be considered through a future Jackson County fiscal year budget process.