



Internet access and use among adult residents of Cuyahoga County

*Key results of phone survey conducted for OneCommunity's
Connect Your Community Project*

What follows is a summary of the key findings of a random telephone survey of 1,261 adult Cuyahoga County residents, designed to provide information regarding the extent of broadband Internet adoption and use by the county's residents.

The survey, conducted in October 2012, was commissioned by OneCommunity's Connect Your Community (CYC) Project, and carried out by a team of researchers from the University of Iowa, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Eagleton Center of Rutgers University. The principal authors are Dr. Caroline Tolbert of the University of Iowa and Dr. Karen Mossberger of the University of Illinois, with support from CYC Project Assistant Director Samantha Schartman-Cycyk. Tolbert and Mossberger have collaborated on several important national and local studies of "the digital divide", the most recent of which is *Digital Cities: The Internet and the Geography of Opportunity* (with William Franko), published in November 2012 by Oxford University Press.

The full Cuyahoga County survey report is available at www.connectcommunity.org/research/cuyahoga-county-Internet-survey/.

It includes data and discussion regarding the extent of Internet use, home broadband connection and mobile Internet connection by county residents in a variety of standard demographic categories including age, race, income, educational attainment, Hispanic ethnicity, parental status, etc. It also correlates Internet access with respondents' participation in various public programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Home Energy Assistance, employment services, free and reduced school lunch, transit subsidies, etc.

Finally, in addition to data for Cuyahoga County residents as a whole, the survey report provides the same data for 686 respondents who live in what we call "Inner Core" communities... i.e. the city of Cleveland and nine adjacent municipalities¹ with significant levels of household poverty, indicated by Ohio Directions Card participation by 25% or more of their households.

The next three pages present highlights of the full survey report, as follows:

- The percentages of all County residents and Inner Core residents who lack home broadband Internet service, by key demographic categories;
- The percentages of all County residents and Inner Core residents who lack home broadband Internet service, by respondents' participation in selected community services; and
- Additional data and discussion on County and Inner Core residents' access to the Internet through mobile devices.

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¹ Bedford Heights, East Cleveland, Euclid, Garfield Heights, Highland Hills, Maple Heights, Newburgh Heights, North Randall, Warrensville Heights.

Adult Cuyahoga County residents lacking broadband Internet service at home

	Cuyahoga County	Inner Core
All adults	34%	43%
	<i>These percentages represent about 360,000 County residents without home broadband, including 190,000 Inner Core residents.</i>	
With annual household incomes below \$20,000	68%	71%
	<i>About 24% of the County's 538,000 households are in this income range.</i>	
Age 65 and older	56%	67%
African-American	52%	54%
Hispanic	43%	53%
Education: Less than high school graduate	73%	78%
Education: High school diploma or GED only	52%	57%
Parents of children below age 18	20%	28%
	<i>80% of parents of children below 18 report having home broadband, including 72% of those in Inner Core communities.</i>	

Many government services, including safety net services for the disadvantaged and elderly, are attempting to improve efficiency by shifting their client contact and information functions from physical offices and the telephone to the Internet. The success of these efforts, as well as their impact on vulnerable clients, will depend largely on whether clients are able to access and navigate Web interfaces.

Our survey asked respondents about their use of some of these community services, and correlated the responses with their broadband access.

**Percent of adult users of selected community services in Cuyahoga County
who lack broadband Internet service at home**

	Cuyahoga County	Inner Core
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	59%	67%
Medicaid	58%	62%
Social Security Disability	58%	64%
Women, Infants and Children Nutrition (WIC)	50%	56%
Home Energy Assistance	49%	54%
Ohio Directions Card	48%	53%
Homestead Property Tax Exemption	41%	43%
Healthy Start	37%	41%
Senior/disabled RTA pass	66%	71%
Foster parent	52%	56%
Senior center	42%	52%
Ohio Work First	36%	41%
Employment Connection	31%	43%

<i>Also noteworthy:</i> Veteran, or live in household with veteran	42%	49%
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In addition to home broadband Internet access (i.e. cable modem, DSL or fixed 4G wireless service), a significant but still limited number of adult County residents have Internet access only through mobile devices. These mobile-only Internet users are described by Mossberger and Tolbert as “less-connected,” as they have a form of access that is more limited for performing functions such as filling out forms or for reading-intensive activities online.

Impact of “mobile only” access on high speed Internet access at home

	Cuyahoga County		Inner Core	
	No broadband Internet service at home, but have access via a mobile device	Have neither home broadband nor mobile Internet access	No broadband Internet service at home, but have access via a mobile device	Have neither home broadband nor mobile Internet access
All adults	6%	28%	8%	35%
With annual household incomes below \$20,000	10%	58%	11%	60%
Age 65 and older	2%	54%	1%	66%
African-American	11%	41%	12%	42%
Hispanic	15%	28%	16%	37%
Education: Less than high school graduate	8%	65%	9%	69%
Education: High school diploma or GED only	8%	47%	10%	49%
Parents of children below age 18	5%	15%	8%	20%

The prevalence of smartphone use and the increasing offerings of mobile applications are making Internet use on mobile devices more productive and common, but this growing resource comes with significant shortfalls. While the highest of mobile data transfer speeds are becoming competitive with broadband, this service quality is not offered everywhere, and not all devices are capable of taking advantage of these speeds when they are available. Also, the mobile platform often requires specific formatting and layout modifications in order to be seen, read, and navigated. *The survey finds that mobile-only users in Cuyahoga County are less likely than home broadband users to engage in many of the online activities we measured, including use of the Internet for health information, voting information, online training, banking, and access to a variety of government services.*