Digital Inclusion & Regional Workforce Plan

Eastern Maine Development Corporation

Submitted by:

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Axiom

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At Axiom, we believe rural broadband deployment is about much more than a fast connection — it is about people's livelihoods, education, and well-being.

While much of the report you are reading is about how to better connect communities to the internet, this part of our report deals with what you do *once you have connectivity*. The structure of this report is intended to walk you through four major themes:

- ✓ Results of Community and Business Surveys and what they tell us
- ✓ A Digital Inclusion section with a plan and pricing
- ✓ Workforce Investment strategies
- ✓ An Employers Initiative Program

Taken one at a time, or simultaneously these programs are an investment in the citizens of the communities and enhances a larger regional connectivity effort such as what is being contemplated by Eastern Maine Development Corporation's (EMDC) region and the four communities contained in this report.

Benefits include:

- **Higher Take-rates**, as people understand the value of an internet connection to their lives, they are more likely to take service
- **Reduces barriers** to adoption and helps community members access learning tools for increased on-line presence
- People with service are more likely to **upgrade service,** again increasing the viability of a project being successful
- **Helps businesses understand how to leverage on-line tools and cloud services** to add value and productivity to their business
- Helps individual community members **access life enhancing content, including e commerce, telemedicine services and educational opportunities**
- **Bridges the Digital Divide**, helping teach disadvantaged members of the community to participate in what is increasingly an on-line world

> *By removing barriers and exposing people and businesses to educational opportunities that improves their understanding of on-line benefits Axiom believes we can change the economic status of a region*

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Surveys, Interviews and Meeting Results

Axiom interviewed businesses, community and municipal leaders, as well as residents in Blue Hill, Bucksport, Greenbush and Hampden to discuss Computer Skills/Digital Literacy Training and Workforce Skills Training.

Business

For the business community, an online survey was distributed, followed by interviews. Each town identified key businesses to target during this process. In addition to the survey being available to all businesses in each community, Axiom contacted 144 businesses via email or phone calls, local Chamber of Commerce's sent out the business survey link, and it was posted on the town's website and/or FaceBook page. A total of 81 businesses responded to the survey and/or interviews. (See Addendum 1 – Business & Workforce Needs Survey Results)

Residential

As with business, community & municipal leaders, the residential community was invited to participate in a Community Broadband Survey by each town's broadband team. It was the goal of the survey for residents to become engaged in providing better broadband for their communities. A total of 388 residents completed the survey. (See Addendum 2 - Community Internet Survey Results)

Community & Municipal

A series of meetings occurred to gauge the interest, as well as the skill level of the community. Discussions were facilitated to ensure that the communities were aware of what is technologically possible to do when you have a broadband connection. Demonstrating distance learning education, telehealth, telecommuting, cloud-based services and software begins the process of developing a Digital Literacy Plan for a community.

Each community was unique, and through the interview and survey process, Axiom identified key focal points for each community.

Blue Hill:

Aging in Place

Blue Hill, with a population of 2,686 residents, has a median age of 49.9; 50% of Blue Hill's population is over 50 years old, per the 2010 American Census Survey.
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk

Blue Hill should consider exploring technology tools and offering classes and workshops that will assist their residents in remaining in their homes as they become older. Current technology programs available are medication reminders; pill dispensers; health management (monitor blood pressure, pulse, heartbeat, blood glucose levels); nutrition guides; fitness tools; and brain games. Also available are home monitoring systems; personal emergency response systems; and GPS tracking systems.

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A study on the aging economy was completed by the Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine, and presented at the Blaine House Conference on Aging in September 2006.

The report, "Maine's Aging Economy and the Economy of Aging" http://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/data/issuebriefdemographics.pdf stated, "*that within Maine, the growth in Maine's elderly population will not occur evenly, with the result that some parts of Maine will be distinctly "older" than others. In the critical decade between 2010 and 2020, the fastest growing counties for a growing elderly population will be the coastal counties from York through Knox. The combined forecast for Hancock and Washington counties masks what will most likely also be a strong growth in the elderly in the **Blue Hill**, Ellsworth, and Bar Harbor area.*"

Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center" (NDEC) can provide training to Blue Hill's senior population and to family members to leverage available technologies. NDEC can provide the community with trained educators to teach seniors, caregiver alliances or remote classes for family caregivers. The senior citizen and the family member can learn firsthand how to use the online monitoring systems or even use something as basic as an iPad for communicating and visual check-ins. Patients can connect to providers for care and support via videoconference (telehealth), as well as including family members to actively participate in the care of a loved one.

Collaborating partners to consider are:

- Washington Hancock Community Agency www.whcacap.org/at-home/downeast
- Blue Hill Memorial Hospital http://bhmh.org
- EMHS' VNA Hancock County HomeCare & Hospice www.emhs.org/Locations/VNA-Home-Health-Hospice/Hancock-County-HomeCare-Hospice.aspx
- Gateway Seniors Without Walls http://gatewayseniorswithoutwalls.org

Bucksport:

Tourism
Bucksport, with a population of 4,924 residents, has a median age of 43, per the 2010 American Census Survey.
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

Bucksport should consider exploring technology tools by offering classes and workshops that will assist businesses and residents in promoting tourism. Bucksport is a gateway to popular destinations on the Blue Hill peninsula, Acadia National Park and the Downeast and coastal region. Bucksport boasts a beautiful redeveloped downtown waterfront, as well as a stunning harbor with many amenities for cruise ships and the boating population. Visitors can stroll along a mile-long waterfront walkway, and bicyclers can take advantage of bicycle friendly lodging. The town's old railroad station houses the Historical Society and the Penobscot Narrows Bridge & Observatory, a 420-foot observation tower, and the Historic Fort Knox, are popular tourist destinations.

Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center" (NDEC) can train Bucksport's businesses and to interested community members to leverage available technologies to increase and promote the town's tourism industry. NDEC can provide the community with trained educators.

Businesses and community members can learn firsthand how to create and update websites, leverage the power of social media, as well as utilize apps for walking tours and points of interest.

Collaborating partners to consider are:

- Bucksport Bay Area Chamber of Commerce www.bucksportbaychamber.com
- Downeast Acadia http://downeastacadia.com
- Maine Woods Consortium http://www.mainewoodsconsortium.org/mwtti/welcome-me
- Maine Office of Tourism https://visitmaine.com
- Maine Invites You www.mainetourism.com

Greenbush:

Business & Community Center
Greenbush, with a population of 1,491 residents, has a median age of 40, per the 2010 American Census Survey.
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

One of the questions posed in the Community Broadband Survey was "**Do you think a business center in the town of Greenbush would make sense?**" Over 42% of the residents responded yes. Greenbush should consider exploring establishing a community and/or business center. 50% of businesses that completed the Business Survey state that they are either sole entrepreneurs or have less than 5 employees.

The Business & Community Center can offer classes and workshops that will assist Greenbush. in the ever-changing technology world. Funding for the project should include a installing a public computer center with multiple computers and videoconferencing capability. The Business & Community Center could also encourage new entrepreneurs and start-ups as a place to establish a new venture without committing to long-term overhead costs as they explore the viability of new business products or services.

The Business & Community Center can be a place for the community to gather for different types of activities. The following weblinks are good resources to assist Greenbush in exploring establishing the center.

- www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Community-Center
- http://peopleof.oureverydaylife.com/start-community-center-5093.html
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_centre

Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center" (NDEC) can provide a budget for establishing a public computer center, as well as provide training to businesses and residents to leverage available technologies.

Collaborating partners to consider are:

- Foster Center for Student Innovation https://umaine.edu/innovation
- Maine Small Business Development Centers www.mainesbdc.org

- Top Gun Entrepreneurship Acceleration www.mced.biz/programs-services/top-gun-program
- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_centre

Hampden:

Business Growth and Support

Hampden, with a population of 7,257 residents, has a median age of 40.8; however, 20% of the population is over age 55, per the 2010 American Community Survey. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

Currently, there are 133 businesses listed on the Town of Hampden's Business Directory, www.hampdenmaine.gov. With a high population of residents over 55 years of age, it is important to focus on business growth, development and sustainability.

Of the businesses that responded to the Hampden Business Survey, **71% of businesses expect training will be needed** for new and existing staff over the next year; 61% of businesses report that they currently offer training programs to their staff; **80% state they are interested in offering computer skills classes** to their employees; 33% of Hampden businesses do not have a website; and 44% of businesses would like to offer customer service training.

The Hampden Community Survey reports that residents use the internet for both home and business, and 34% report that someone in the household works from home.

Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center" (NDEC) can organize training for the Hampden business community to leverage available technologies and industry specific instruction. NDEC can provide the community with educators to hold classes, as well as collaborate with local organizations to provide training. The business and community members can learn firsthand how to create and update websites, increase technical proficiency and industry specific knowledge.

Collaborating partners to consider are:

- Hampden Business Association www.hampdenbusiness.com
- Hampden Business & Commerce Park www.hampdenmaine.gov
- Maine Small Business Development Centers www.mainesbdc.org
- Maine Kiwanis Club www.facebook.com/Hampden-Maine-Kiwanis-Club-224905087545841
- Orono-Hampden-Old Town Adult Ed Partnership http://orono-hampden.maineadulted.org
- Welcome ME (Customer Service Training) www.welcomemetraining.com

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All Communities:

Websites and Domain Email
Within the four communities, 39% of businesses report that they do not have a website, and 55% state that they do not use a business domain for email addresses.

Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center" (NDEC) can provide a train-the-trainer program for EMDC and the communities' businesses.

We recommend collaborating with TechHire, www.projectlogin.com/techhire-maine. Axiom is a "TechHire" company. We believe that valuable tech employees do not necessarily come through the traditional route of a computer science degree in college. Axiom recruits and hires candidates based on their demonstrated technology skills regardless of where they gained them.

NDEC can collaborate and provide TechHire with trained educators to teach WordPress and Social Media to TechHire students, who in turn would teach and support businesses in developing websites and establishing a social media presence.

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Digital Inclusion Plan

Digital inclusion is a national priority in the United States, and increasingly a priority in Maine. High-speed internet access is widely recognized as a necessity for full participation in today's society. Employers, educators, businesses, healthcare providers, and civic institutions expect people to have access to computers and broadband connectivity. However, accessible, reliable, and affordable broadband service continues to be out of reach for millions of Americans and thousands of Mainers, many of whom live in low-income, rural households. This gap in adoption of high-speed Internet and the lack of skills needed to use broadband-enabled tools in meaningful ways continue to be significant problems that policymakers, researchers, and practitioners need to focus on in the United States and in Maine.

The Digital Inclusion Program for EMDC includes four components:

1. Affordable Internet – Cost continues to be a major barrier to broadband adoption. EMDC and the communities should consider addressing "ability to pay". The following providers in the EMDC region offer low-cost broadband options:

- **Consolidated Communications (FairPoint Communications):**
  - Eligible low-income Consolidated Communication residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.

  - Eligible Consolidated residential customers residing on tribal lands may qualify for an additional federal discount of up to $25 per month and installation assistance.

  - Further information, including applications forms, can be found at: www.fairpoint.com/home/residential/phone/lifeline.html

- **Charter Communications (formerly Time Warner Cable):**
  - Charter offers "Spectrum Internet Access", which is a low-cost broadband offering. www.SpectrumInternetAssist.com.

  - Plan includes:
    - $14.99 for 30/4 Mbps with no data caps
    - Internet Modem Included
    - No Contracts Required
    - Add in-home WiFi for $5.00 more per month
    - Customers must not have been a Charter Communications subscriber within 60 days of signing up for Spectrum Internet Assist.

  - Eligibility requires participation in one of the following:
    - National School Lunch Program (NSLP); free or reduced cost lunch
    - Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of NSLP
    - Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (>age 65 only)
    - Residents may visit Charter Communication's website or call 844-525-1574 to determine eligibility

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- **TDS Telecom:**
    - Eligible low-income TDS residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.

    - Further information, including applications forms, can be found at: https://tdstelecom.com/content/dam/tdstelecom/pdfs/lifeline/LifelineApplication.pdf

- **OTT Communications:**
    - Eligible low-income OTT residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.

    - Further information, including applications forms, can be found www.ottcommunications.com/lifeline-information

- **EMDC/Local Community Technology Fund:**
    - A fund could be established to offer a discount to low-income families to address broadband adoption and take-rate.

2. Affordable Equipment Assessment – Low-cost or free computers are often just as important as having access to low-cost or free Internet options, particularly for people in low-income communities.

- **PC's for Maine** www.pcsformaine.org offers refurbished, used computers that are donated by businesses in Maine and are available to low-income families.

- **PC's for Maine** will consider installing a kiosk at a local business to sell low-cost computers locally. Axiom will work with local businesses in each community and facilitate a conversation with PC's for Maine, should the community or EMDC decide to move forward.

- **Goodwill's "Good Tech"** program offers refurbished, used computers to low-income residents. https://goodwillnne.org/stores/goodtech

- **Lending Library of Devices**, laptops, desktops, iPads, etc., could be established for residents to borrow on an "as-needed" basis. The devices might be donated or grant funds sought to purchase equipment.

3. Digital Literacy Training – Computer Skills Training plays a critical role in technology and workforce development training.

- **Axiom Education & Training Center's National Digital Equity Center** offer Digital Literacy classes for residents and businesses, and would be pleased to organize a Digital Literacy Program. The program will collaborate with Adult & Community Education programs, the region's CareerCenters, and local community programs.

- **Adult & Community Education**, if available, often offer digital literacy training. A listing of available Adult Education programs is listed under each Appendix for Blue Hill, Bucksport, Greenbush, and Hampden.

- **Maine Department of Labor's CareerCenter** is committed to assist with workforce development skill efforts and is listed under each Appendix for Blue Hill, Bucksport, Greenbush, and Hampden.

  In rural communities, time, distance, travel is a barrier to educational attainment; holding classes that are in accessible locations that are familiar and not intimidating will increase participation. Geographic coverage throughout the designated service area ensures strong, widespread participation and good, measurable impacts.

  We recommend offering residents of each community digital literacy courses over a 12-month period of time, one class per week in each of the four towns, rotating the locations to multiple locations in each town. This would ensure that the program has predictability over some period for full residential and business participation.

Recommended Classes include:

- Introduction to Computer
- Windows 7, 8, 10
- Internet Safety
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- QuickBooks
- PhotoShop
- Social Media including FaceBook for Business & Individuals, Twitter, etc.
- WordPress
- Video Streaming
- iPad
- Gmail
- Google Docs, etc.
- Classes designed for Senior Citizen population

*See pricing below.

Axiom will work with the communities and EMDC to pursue funding for digital literacy classes for residents and businesses.

4. Public Computer Access – Increasing public access computing allows residents to access technology in places they feel comfortable and supported is essential. If a business or resident cannot afford equipment or an internet subscription, and if broadband is not available at their location, Public Computer Access is essential. A list of Public Computer Access locations are included in the Appendix for Blue Hill, Bucksport, Greenbush, and Hampden.

- **Community HotSpots** are open access networks that allow citizens in a downtown or other public spaces access to the Internet. This is a simple, straightforward way to help a town or region get more connected. It is an affordable, convenient solution to help visitors and residents easy, seamless connectivity. Several Community HotSpots are being recommended for the communities located in the EMDC region.

Digital Literacy Budget

Digital Literacy is the greatest opportunity to investing in the region's future. As more citizens' livelihoods, ability to obtain new skills, understanding of an emerging digital economy are tied to a broadband connection, regions with the forethought to face this new reality will outpace other regions in productivity, increased economic activity and sustained family attraction and wealth. Axiom is committed to working with EMDC, its regional, state and federal partners to deliver a world-class regional Digital Literacy program- customized to the region's businesses and citizens.

Teacher/Instructor (Fringe & Salary)	$ 80,000
Travel	$ 8,000
Survey Monkey (includes Annual Fee)	$ 816
Supplies	$ 4,000
Academic Services Group (curriculum)	$ 3,184
Administration	$ 24,000
Total Budget	$120,000

- ❖ Budget based on 1-year program, 1 class per week in four towns
  Budget based on 10 students per class

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Workforce Development Skills Analysis

The Business Surveys included questions pertaining to workforce development skills and needs. Following is an overview of the results.

Business Survey Results

- **51% see a need for computer skills training for their employees**

- 36% see a need in training for specific software

- 22% of businesses report computer skills are "average"; 33% are "good"; 31% are "excellent". Only 8% rates their computer skills as "poor"

- 34% of employees' computer skills are "average"; 36% are "good"; 11% are excellent. Only 9% rate their employees' skills as "poor"

- 77% of employees learn best "hands-on", followed by 27% learn best by self-instruction

- 81% prefer on-site instruction

- Businesses are interested in offering the following computer skills (digital literacy classes):
    - Introduction to Computers
    - Windows 7,8,10
    - Microsoft Programs including: Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Publisher, Office 360
    - QuickBooks
    - PhotoShop
    - Social Media including: FaceBook, Twitter, Skype, Instagram for Business & Personal
    - Internet Security
    - Video-Streaming
    - iPad
    - Google Docs, etc.
    - WordPress

    Other classes:

    - Selling/Purchasing items online
    - Graphics
    - Cloud-Based programs
    - CAD
    - Event Management
    - Point of Sale
    - Square
    - Adobe In-Design, Illustrator

- **88% are sole entrepreneurs; 45% have 2-5 employees**; 10% have 5-10 employees; 7% 10-25 employees; 8% over 25 employees

- Businesses requiring different skill levels include:
  - 17% Unskilled labor
  - 50% Skilled labor
  - 45% High School Diploma
  - 22% 2-year Associate Degree
  - 28% 4-year Bachelors' Degree
  - 17% Master Degree
  - 39% Special Licenses or Certification

- **59% expect training will be needed for new and existing employees over the next year.**

- **Businesses have difficulty recruiting new employees stating the following reasons:**
  - 24% Labor shortage supply
  - 22% Skills not adequate
  - 19% Compensation benefits

- The following training/workshops would be beneficial:
  - 25% Marketing
  - 4% Government Contracting
  - 28% Customer Service
  - 11% Becoming Bankable
  - 7% OSHA Training: Safety Works
  - 4% HACCP Training
  - 4% WorkReady (Soft-Skills) (Maine Certification) (National ACT Certification)

- 25% will be implementing new software programs in the next year

- 45% currently offer training programs to their staff including:
  - OSHA Seminars
  - Auto CAD
  - Lynda.com
  - Company specific training (includes grocery, retail, veterinary, agriculture)
  - Manager/Supervisor training
  - Municipal Government courses
  - HIPPA training

The results of the business survey in each community point to the need for an employer initiated workforce development program targeted at small businesses throughout the region. Pooling resources and working together, EMDC should strongly consider focusing local and regional resources on employee training that enhances their skills and viability in the marketplace, while also adding value in their current employment situation.

Takeaway #1: Employers are interested in assistance based on the number of respondents to the surveys.

Takeaway #2: Employee training is needed to help employers become more proficient or efficient in the workplace

Takeaway #3: A strong workforce development-training program will begin to alleviate the difficulty in recruiting new talent as existing resources are pooled and directed to assist both employers and employees get the skills they need

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Employers' Initiative Program

To address the outcome of the Business Surveys completed by regional businesses, an **Employers' Initiative Program (EIP)** is recommended. It is designed, and can be implemented, to strengthen businesses through enhancing the skills and knowledge of the workforce. It is centered on employer engagement and provisioning of business support services.

The program has four primary components:

- ✓ Employer outreach & recruitment
- ✓ Business assessment
- ✓ Education and training programming
- ✓ Evaluation & assessment

Through these program components, an Employers' Initiative Program will:

Support local employer business development by focusing and enhancing education and skills training
- Provide business development needs assessments focused on technology and learning needs
- Based on individual and organizational assessments, provide training that meets employer preferences and business development needs while considering individual employee aspirations and strengths
- Leverage local partnerships and educational resources, regional business development and learning services

Decrease the barriers for continued and advanced educational attainment for adult learners:
- Increase awareness of educational resources and opportunities
- Create pathways to access educational resources
- Bring the educators and trainers to the place of employment

Enhance relevance of local educational training programs and support services to better meet the needs of employers:
- Engage employers to support, inform, and utilize local career pathways programming
- Create opportunities through customized resources and training that are a "win-win" for both the employer and employee

Program Components:

Employer Outreach
- **Goals:** Increase employer engagement in businesses and educational support services
- **Objectives:** Enroll 100+ businesses into the Employers' Initiative Program
- **Outcomes:** Employers support and encourage employee education and advancing their workforce

Business Needs Assessment
- **Goals:** Strengthen relationship between employers and educational providers
- **Objectives:** Determine what the employers' needs are, evaluate their current employees, and match training and educational programming that addresses both employer needs and individual employee aspirations
- **Outcomes:** Business develops short-term and long-term technology plan and education plan

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Education and Training Program

- **Goals:** Increase skill levels of incumbent workers strengthening the ability of businesses to to adapt to industry changes, expand operations, and, ultimately increase the value of their business
- **Objectives:** Provide customized training solutions based on employer needs and employee skills levels
- **Outcomes:** Create a more skilled workforce enabling an employer to grow and sustain their business

Evaluation & Assessment

An **EMDC Employer Initiative Program** should include a robust **Evaluation & Assessment** component throughout the program to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the employer and the employee, and can be adjusted as needed.

- **Goals:**
  ### For Adult Learners:
  - Transferable skills that can be applied to other employment opportunities
  - Potential higher wages for skilled workforce
  - Increased skill levels and productivity in current employment position

  ### For Employers:
  - Enhanced ability to communicate current and future employment needs to educational and community partners
  - Better trained workforce for employers
  - Less turnover and more opportunity to receive a position with more responsibility
  - More opportunity to attract quality employers

  ### For Educational Institutions (K-12, higher education, and training providers):
  - Inform programming by providing real-time data on current job opportunities, growth industries, and the skills sought by employers

- **Objectives:**
  - Establish regular reporting system focused on increasing awareness of job opportunities and skills training among target audiences
  - Translate data into meaningful action steps that meet the unique needs of employers, employees, and educational partners
  - Provide information on specific skills needed regionally and affecting the local economy
  - Connect real-time job opportunities data to prior learning assessment (PLA) paths - PLA is a key component to degree completion and has benefits to the individual and employer. A PLA decreases the time it takes to receive a degree, validating past learning, and further emphasizing the connections between industry needs, adult learners' life experiences, and degree completion

- **Outcomes:**
  ### Assess newly acquired technical skills
  - Design and create an unbiased methodology of gathering and measuring newly acquired skills
  - Measure the skills that have been learned through an assessment that will provide effective instruction to students

Instruction Effectiveness

- Review effectiveness of instructional methodologies students throughout the project. This assessment will be ongoing from the onset of the project
- Address changes made if certain instructional applications are demonstrated to challenge students as well as instructional methods showing signs of significant success

Impacts to Business: Financial and Operational

- Conduct a complete survey of the business and employees' post-instruction to best assess near-term impact of the acquisition of new skills - increased effectiveness and efficiencies in performance of individual and companywide tasks
- Measure the potential and actual impact on company's revenues - measuring company's use of technology to enhance sales, reach new markets, and better penetrate existing markets
- Increase efficiencies to internal operations as a result of newly acquired tech skills - sales, inventory controls, supply chain relationships, and increase abilities re financial controls
- Measure effectiveness of decisions involving capital and technological upgrades
- Increased employment and employment effectiveness opportunities - inducing New employee hires as a result of tech instruction

Conclusion

As part of a Digital Inclusion and Regional Workforce Plan, a strong Employers Initiative Program can work hand in hand to align resources, focus on small business capacity and job growth and most importantly invest in giving people the tools and skills they need to succeed in an increasingly digital economy.   **Any or all of these plans can be developed into fundable projects and Axiom and the Axiom Education & Training Center stand ready to work with you to bring these programs to life.**

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Grant Funding Resources

State Grant Funding Resources

The ConnectME Authority offers two types of grants - Infrastructure and Community Broadband Planning Grants. For the purposes of this report, the planning grant is not a consideration. We would recommend looking toward Infrastructure grants, details can be found here:
http://maine.gov/connectme/grants/

Axiom has extensive knowledge of these grants, and has received over $1Million in funding.

- Grant proposals must meet the state standard of 10/10Mbps
- Grant limits are suggested, but typically $100,000, which must be matched 1 to 1 with a combination of cash and in-kind services
- Area targeted must be unserved or severely underserved (service that is less than 1.5Mbps download

Typically, ConnectME grants open for applications in the March- April timeframe, but is not clear when grants may be available in 2018.

The Maine Community Foundation has regional grants that can support initiatives up to $10,000.
http://www.mainecf.org/GrantsNonprofits/AvailableGrantsDeadlines/CommunityBuildingGrantProgram.aspx

- Grants available up to $10,000
- Local decision makers by county
- Various criteria that needs review
- Deadline February 15th of each new year

Northern Boarder Regional Commission Grants, http://www.nbrc.gov. The Commission accepts grant applications from across the northern border regions of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.

- Requires at least a 1 to 1 cash match
- Must be tied to quantifiable job creation
- Very competitive

Contact: Andrea Smith at (207) 624-9813 or andrea.smith@maine.gov for information on deadlines and program parameters.

Federal Grant Funding Resources

U.S. Department of Commerce- Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides funding for economic development projects across the state of Maine. Maine projects are reviewed and administered by EDA's local representative, Alan Brigham at (215) 316-2965 or abrigham@eda.gov. Programs and eligibility can be found at www.eda.gov

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- Various funding programs
- Guidelines encourage regions to incorporate BB investments in their regional strategies (CEDS)
- Funding requires match

U.S. Department of Commerce- Broadband USA is helping communities nationwide ensure they have the broadband infrastructure, digitally literate workforce and engaged citizens to thrive in the Digital Economy. Details can be found here: https://www2.ntia.doc.gov/

- Provides direct (one-to-one) assistance to communities
- Resource rich website- no direct grants
- Building a self-assessment tool for communities

U.S Department of Agriculture- Rural Development has a number of grant programs worth investigating. Local office in Bangor, contact Tommy Higgins, Acting State Director, (207) 990-9160. More information on programs in Maine can be found here: www.rd.usda/me

- Rural Broadband Access Loans and Loan Guarantees Program
  - o 2017 Program has not been announced
- Several other competitive grant programs to explore eligibility and criteria

U.S. Department of Treasury- New Markets Tax Credits (NMTC) has recently clarified the eligibility of broadband infrastructure and related activities are eligible for NMTC provided they meet certain criteria located here:
https://www.cdfifund.gov/Documents/2015%20NMTC%20Application%20QA%20FINAL.pdf

- Axiom is exploring the potential of NMTC funding
- Eligible census tracks are being reviewed
- It's unclear without investigation if EMDC or parts of EMDC may be eligible

Broadband Opportunity Council Funding Report- U.S. Dept. of Commerce and USDA released a report in January 2017 listing all federal broadband funding resources - See Addendum 3.

Attachment A

Town of Blue Hill

Surveys, Interviews and Meeting Results

Axiom interviewed businesses, community, municipal leaders, and residents to discuss Computer Skills/Digital Literacy Training and Workforce Development Skills Training.

Business

The Town of Blue Hill identified key businesses to target during this process. Online surveys and interviews were administered. Axiom contacted 68 businesses via email or phone calls, the Chamber of Commerce sent out the business survey link, and it was posted on the town's website. A total of 30 businesses responded to the survey and/or interviews. (See Addendum 1 – Blue Hill Business & Workforce Needs Survey Results)

Business Survey Results:

- 80% of businesses state that broadband is extremely important for their business
- 75% of businesses state that they could work and sell more efficiently online
- 16% of businesses are sole entrepreneurs, 30% have 5 employees or less
- 75% of businesses have a website
- 40% of businesses do not use a domain email address
- 80% of businesses do not use VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone service
- 62% of businesses use the internet for online sales
- 71% of businesses use the internet for social media
- **48% of businesses state that internet speeds have not kept up with business needs over the past few years**
- 52% of businesses state improved broadband will be critically important to their business in the next 1-2 years
- 56% of businesses do not offer telecommuting
- 67% of businesses that do offer telecommuting report that employees struggle with it
- **54% of businesses see a need for computer skills training**

Takeaways: 25% of businesses do not have a website, and 40% do not use a domain email address. Developing website classes may be a valuable resource for businesses in Blue Hill, specially targeting small businesses and sole entrepreneurs. Almost 54% of businesses state that they see a need for computer skills training.

Residential

As with business, community and municipal leaders, the residential community was invited to participate in a Community Broadband Survey by the Town of Blue Hill's Broadband Team. It was the goal of the survey for residents to become engaged in providing better broadband to Blue Hill. A total of 107 residents completed the survey. (See Addendum 2 - Blue Hill Community Internet Survey Results)

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Community Survey results:

- 91% of homes have internet
- 31% of homes use the internet for home and business
- **71% of homes state they are not happy with their current internet service**
- 27% state that they would pay more for faster speeds; 10% for better reliability and 56% are not interested in paying more for internet service
- 75% state that they would like internet television; 37% for VoIP, 8% for home security and 4% for home automation
- **66% state they are frustrated with their internet connection**
- **42% state they have children or adults that use the internet for homework – 39% are children and 43% are adults**
- **28% of residents are interested in computer class training**
- 48% think more people would live in Blue Hill if there was better internet
- 44% think that visitors would stay longer if there was a good internet connection
- **43% think a business center in Blue Hill that would make sense**

Takeaways: 71% of homes state that they are not happy with their current service and 66% are frustrated with their internet connection. 42% state that they have children and adult learners that use the internet for homework. Blue Hill should be mindful of homes with school-age children to and further evaluate whether homes with children do not subscribe to the internet because of cost. Blue Hill ~could~ consider a Technology Fund to assist homes that cannot afford broadband, specifically in homes with school-age children to address the Homework Gap, as well as letting their residents know of the low-cost broadband options offered by providers.

Out of the 107 Community responses, 40% of Blue Hill's residents expressed a need for training on using the Internet. This is a significant number as it clearly indicates that residents (many own home-based businesses) would like to increase their technical proficiency. Blue Hill and EMDC could seek funding to offer a Digital Literacy program to its residents and businesses.

The Digital Inclusion Program for the Town of Blue Hill includes four components:

1. Affordable Internet – Cost continues to be a major barrier to broadband adoption. The Town of Blue Hill should consider addressing "ability to pay". The following providers have been contacted regarding low-cost broadband options:

- **Consolidated Communications (FairPoint Communications):** Eligible low-income FairPoint residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.
  - Eligible FairPoint residential customers residing on tribal lands may qualify for an additional federal discount of up to $25 per month and installation assistance.

  - Further information, including applications forms, can be found at: www.fairpoint.com/home/residential/phone/lifeline.html

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- **Charter Communications (formerly Time Warner Cable):**
  - Charter offers "Spectrum Internet Access", which is a low-cost broadband offering. www.SpectrumInternetAssist.com

  - Plan includes:
    - $14.99 for 30/4 Mbps with no data caps
    - Internet Modem Included
    - No Contracts Required
    - Add in-home WiFi for $5.00 more per month
    - Customers must not have been a Charter Communications subscriber within 60 days of signing up for Spectrum Internet Assist.

  - Eligibility requires participation in one of the following:
    - National School Lunch Program (NSLP); free or reduced cost lunch
    - Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of NSLP
    - Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (>age 65 only)
    - Residents may visit Charter Communication's website or call 844-525-1574 to determine eligibility

- **Town of Blue Hill Technology Fund:**
  - A fund could be established to offer a discount to low-income families to address broadband adoption and take-rate

  - The Town of Blue Hill Broadband Committee may opt to explore the feasibility of establishing a fund

2. Affordable Equipment Assessment – Low-cost or free computers are often just as important as having access to low-cost or free Internet options, particularly for people in low-income communities.

- **PC's for Maine** www.pcsformaine.org offers refurbished, used computers that are donated by businesses in Maine and are available to low-income families.

- **PC's for Maine** will consider installing a kiosk at a local business to sell low-cost computers locally. Axiom will work with a local business and facilitate a conversation with PC's for Maine, should the Town of Blue Hill decide to move forward.

- **Goodwill's "Good Tech"** program offers refurbished, used computers to low-income residents. https://goodwillnne.org/stores/goodtech

- **Lending Library of Devices**, laptops, desktops, iPads, etc., could be established for residents to borrow on an "as-needed" basis. The devices might be donated or the Town of Blue Hill could seek grant funds to purchase equipment. The Blue Hill Public Library might be considered as the lending institution.

3. Digital Literacy Training – Computer Skills Training plays a critical role in technology and workforce development training. The following digital literacy options are available for the Town of Blue Hill:

- **Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center"** offers Digital Literacy classes for residents and businesses. We recommend offering the residents of Blue Hill digital literacy courses over a 6 to 12-month period, one class per week, ensuring that the program has predictability over some period of time for full residential and business participation. The program can collaborate with Adult & Community Education programs, the region's CareerCenters, and local community programs.

- **The Island Institute** is providing two free Digital Literacy classes to businesses located in Blue Hill. There is a short survey that has been emailed to businesses that will help determine what classes will be offered in Fall/Winter 2017. The survey can be accessed at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/bluehillislandinstitute

  - **Class choices include:**
    - QuickBooks: Set Up and Customize (3 hours)
    - QuickBooks: Sales, Transactions & Payables (3 hours)
    - QuickBooks: Advanced Transactions, Payroll & Utilities (3 hours)
    - QuickBooks: Closing Your Books (3 hours)
    - Facebook for Business: Set Up and Use (3 hours)
    - Facebook for Business: Marketing and Analytics (2 or 3 hours)
    - Social Media for Business: Explore Twitter & LinkedIn (2 or 3 hours)
    - Social Media for Business: Manage Your Accounts with Hootsuite (2 hours)
    - LinkedIn for Business: Set Up and Use (2 hours)
    - Online Marketing Directories: Explore Yelp & TripAdvisor (2 hours)
    - WordPress for Business: Create Your Website (3 hours)
    - WordPress for Business: Marketing & Mobile Applications (2 or 3 hours)

- **Maine Department of Labor's CareerCenter**, www.mainecareercenter.gov/locations office is located in Bangor and a satellite office is located at the Eastern Maine Development Corp. office at 248 State St., Ellsworth. The CareerCenter collaborates with the Axiom Education & Training Center, and is committed to assist with workforce development skills efforts.

- **Ellsworth Adult Education** http://ellsworth.maineadulted.org offers digital literacy classes at Ellsworth school facilities and at other locations in the community. Their headquarters are located at 248 State St., Ellsworth. The digital literacy classes that are offered are included in their Fall catalog, available online at:
http://ellsworth.siteturbine.com/uploaded_files/ellsworth.maineadulted.org/files/EAE_2017_Fall_Catalog.pdf

Recommended Class Locations:
- Blue Hill Public Library http://www.bhpl.net/
- Business Locations

Recommended Classes include:
- Introduction to Computer
- Windows 7, 8, 10

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- Internet Safety
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- QuickBooks
- PhotoShop
- Social Media including FaceBook for Business & Individuals, Twitter, etc.
- WordPress
- Video Streaming
- iPad
- Gmail
- Google Docs, etc.
- Classes designed for Senior Citizen population

Digital Literacy Budget

Teacher/Instructor (Fringe & Salary)	$ 20,000
Travel	$ 2,000
Survey Monkey (includes Annual Fee)	$ 204
Supplies	$ 1,000
Academic Services Group (curriculum)	$ 796
Administration	$ 8,000
Total Budget	$ 30,000

- ❖ Budget based on 1-year program, 1 class per week
  Budget based on 10 students per class

Axiom will work with the Town of Blue Hill to pursue funding for digital literacy classes for residents and businesses.

4. Public Computer Access – Increasing public access computing allows residents to access technology in places they feel comfortable and supported is essential. If a business or resident cannot afford equipment or an Internet subscription, and if broadband is not available at their location, Public Computer Access is essential.

- **Blue Hill Public Library** has 6 computers available for public use. Wireless internet is also available for residents and businesses with their own equipment to use during library hours.

- **Community HotSpots** are open access networks that allow citizens in a downtown or other public spaces access to the Internet. This is a simple, straightforward way to help the town get more connected. It is an affordable, convenient solution to help visitors and residents easy, seamless connectivity.

  In additional to the Blue Hill Public Library, WiFi is available at a variety of business locations in the Blue Hill region. Community HotSpot(s) for the downtown are recommended for the Town of Blue Hill.

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Attachment B

Town of Bucksport

Surveys, Interviews and Meeting Results

Axiom interviewed businesses, community, municipal leaders, and residents to discuss Computer Skills/Digital Literacy Training and Workforce Development Skills Training.

Business

The Town of Bucksport identified key businesses to target during this process. Online surveys and interviews were administered. Axiom contacted 23 businesses via email or phone calls, and the town sent out the business survey link. A total of 15 businesses responded to the survey and/or interviews. (See Addendum 1 – Bucksport Business & Workforce Needs Survey Results)

Business Survey Results:

- 65% of businesses state that broadband is extremely important for their business
- 54% of businesses state that they could work and sell more efficiently online
- 21% of businesses are sole entrepreneurs, 64% have 5 employees or less
- 79% of businesses have a website
- 21% of businesses do not use a domain email address
- 50% of businesses do not use VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone service
- 36% of businesses use the internet for online sales
- 71% of businesses use the internet for social media
- **29% of businesses state that internet speeds have not kept up with business needs over the past few years**
- 52% of businesses state improved broadband will be critically important to their business in the next 1-2 years
- 54% of businesses do not offer telecommuting
  33% of businesses that do offer telecommuting report that employees struggle with it
- **57% of businesses see a need for computer skills training**

Takeaways: 21% of businesses do not have a website, and 21% do not use a domain email address. Developing website classes may be a valuable resource for businesses in Bucksport, specially targeting small businesses and sole entrepreneurs. 57% of businesses state that they see a need for computer skills training. A combined total of businesses that are sole entrepreneurs and have 5 employees are less total 75%.

Residential

As with business, community and municipal leaders, the residential community was invited to participate in a Community Broadband Survey by the Town of Bucksport's Broadband Team. It was the goal of the survey for residents to become engaged in providing better broadband to Bucksport.

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A low number of responses were collected; five residents completed the survey. (See Addendum 2 - Bucksport Community Internet Survey Results)

Community Survey results:

- 100% of homes have internet
- 40% of homes use the internet for home and business
- **60% of homes state they are not happy with their current internet service**
- 20% state that they would pay more for faster speeds and better reliability and 80% are not interested in paying more for internet service
- 50% state that they would like internet television; 50% for VoIP
- **20% state they have children that use the internet for homework – 100% are children**
- **20% of residents are interested in computer class training**
- **60% would support adding WiFi to the waterfront**

Takeaways: 60% of homes state that they are not happy with their current service; 100% state that they have children that use the internet for homework. Bucksport should be mindful of homes with school-age children and further evaluate whether homes with children do not subscribe to the internet because of cost. Bucksport ~could~ consider a Technology Fund to assist homes that cannot afford broadband, specifically in homes with school-age children to address the Homework Gap, as well as letting their residents know of the low-cost broadband options offered by providers.

Out of the five Community responses, 20% of Bucksport's residents expressed a need for training on using the Internet. This indicates that residents (40% home-based businesses) would like to increase their technical proficiency. Bucksport and EMDC could seek funding to offer a Digital Literacy program to its residents and businesses.

The Digital Inclusion Program for the Town of Bucksport includes four components:

1. Affordable Internet – Cost continues to be a major barrier to broadband adoption. The Town of Bucksport should consider addressing "ability to pay". The following providers have been contacted regarding low-cost broadband options:

- **Consolidated Communications (FairPoint Communications):**
    - Eligible low-income FairPoint residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.
    - Eligible FairPoint residential customers residing on tribal lands may qualify for an additional federal discount of up to $25 per month and installation assistance.
    - Further information, including applications forms, can be found at: www.fairpoint.com/home/residential/phone/lifeline.html

EMDC-Digital Inclusion & Regional Workforce Plan

- **Charter Communications (formerly Time Warner Cable):**
  - Charter offers "Spectrum Internet Access", which is a low-cost broadband offering. www.SpectrumInternetAssist.com

  - Plan includes:
    - $14.99 for 30/4 Mbps with no data caps
    - Internet Modem Included
    - No Contracts Required
    - Add in-home WiFi for $5.00 more per month
    - Customers must not have been a Charter Communications subscriber within 60 days of signing up for Spectrum Internet Assist.

  - Eligibility requires participation in one of the following:
    - National School Lunch Program (NSLP); free or reduced cost lunch
    - Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of NSLP
    - Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (>age 65 only)
    - Residents may visit Charter Communication's website or call 844-525-1574 to determine eligibility

- **Town of Bucksport Technology Fund:**
  - A fund could be established to offer a discount to low-income families to address broadband adoption and take-rate

  - The Town of Bucksport Broadband Committee may opt to explore the feasibility of establishing a fund

2. Affordable Equipment Assessment – Low-cost or free computers are often just as important as having access to low-cost or free Internet options, particularly for people in low-income communities.

- **PC's for Maine** www.pcsformaine.org offers refurbished, used computers that are donated by businesses in Maine and are available to low-income families.

- **PC's for Maine** will consider installing a kiosk at a local business to sell low-cost computers locally. Axiom will work with a local business and facilitate a conversation with PC's for Maine, should the Town of Bucksport decide to move forward.

- **Goodwill's "Good Tech"** program offers refurbished, used computers to low-income residents. https://goodwillnne.org/stores/goodtech

- **Lending Library of Devices**, laptops, desktops, iPads, etc., could be established for residents to borrow on an "as-needed" basis. The devices might be donated or the Town of Blue Hill could seek grant funds to purchase equipment. The Buck Memorial Library might be considered as the lending institution.

3. Digital Literacy Training – Computer Skills Training plays a critical role in technology and workforce development training. The following digital literacy options are available for the Town of Bucksport:

- **Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center"** offers Digital Literacy classes for residents and businesses. We recommend offering the residents of Bucksport digital literacy courses over a 6 to 12-month period, one class per week, ensuring that the program has predictability over some period of time for full residential and business participation. The program can collaborate with Adult & Community Education programs, the region's CareerCenters, and local community programs.

- **The Island Institute** has offered to provide two free Digital Literacy classes to businesses located in Bucksport. There is a short survey that has been emailed to businesses that will help determine what classes will be offered in Fall/Winter 2017. The survey can be accessed at:
  www.surveymonkey.com/r/bucksportislandinstitute

  - **Class choices include:**
    - QuickBooks: Set Up and Customize (3 hours)
    - QuickBooks: Sales, Transactions & Payables (3 hours)
    - QuickBooks: Advanced Transactions, Payroll & Utilities (3 hours)
    - QuickBooks: Closing Your Books (3 hours)
    - Facebook for Business: Set Up and Use (3 hours)
    - Facebook for Business: Marketing and Analytics (2 or 3 hours)
    - Social Media for Business: Explore Twitter & LinkedIn (2 or 3 hours)
    - Social Media for Business: Manage Your Accounts with Hootsuite (2 hours)
    - LinkedIn for Business: Set Up and Use (2 hours)
    - Online Marketing Directories: Explore Yelp & TripAdvisor (2 hours)
    - WordPress for Business: Create Your Website (3 hours)
    - WordPress for Business: Marketing & Mobile Applications (2 or 3 hours)

- **Maine Department of Labor's CareerCenter**, www.mainecareercenter.gov/locations office is located in Bangor and Rockland. There is a satellite office located at the Eastern Maine Development Corp. office at 248 State St., Ellsworth. The CareerCenter collaborates with the Axiom Education & Training Center, and is committed to assist with workforce development skills efforts.

- **RSU 25 Adult & Community Education** offers digital literacy classes at multiple locations in Bucksport. Their headquarters are located at 102 Broadband, Suite One, Bucksport. The digital literacy classes that are offered are included in their Fall catalog, available online at:
  http://rsu25.siteturbine.com/uploaded_files/rsu25.maineadulted.org/files/2017_Fall_Catalog.pdf

Recommended Class Locations:
- Buck Memorial Library www.buckmemoriallibrary.50megs.com
- Bucksport Town Office www.bucksportmaine.gov
- Business Locations

Recommended Classes include:

- Introduction to Computer
- Windows 7, 8, 10
- Internet Safety
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- QuickBooks
- PhotoShop
- Social Media including FaceBook for Business & Individuals, Twitter, etc.
- WordPress
- Video Streaming
- iPad
- Gmail
- Google Docs, etc.
- Classes designed for Senior Citizen population

Digital Literacy Budget

Teacher/Instructor (Fringe & Salary)	$ 20,000
Travel	$ 2,000
Survey Monkey (includes Annual Fee)	$ 204
Supplies	$ 1,000
Academic Services Group (curriculum)	$ 796
Administration	$ 8,000
Total Budget	$ 30,000

- ❖ Budget based on 1-year program, 1 class per week
  Budget based on 10 students per class

Axiom will work with the Town of Bucksport to pursue funding for digital literacy classes for residents and businesses.

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4. Public Computer Access – Increasing public access computing allows residents to access technology in places they feel comfortable and supported is essential. If a business or resident cannot afford equipment or an Internet subscription, and if broadband is not available at their location, Public Computer Access is essential.

- **Buck Memorial Library** has two computers available for public use. Wireless internet is also available for residents and businesses with their own equipment to use during library hours.

- **Community HotSpots** are open access networks that allow citizens in a downtown or other public spaces access to the Internet. This is a simple, straightforward way to help the town get more connected. It is an affordable, convenient solution to help visitors and residents easy, seamless connectivity.

  In additional to the Buck Memorial Library, WiFi is available at a variety of business locations in the Bucksport region. Community HotSpot(s) for the downtown are recommended for the Town of Bucksport.

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Attachment C

Town of Greenbush

Surveys, Interviews and Meeting Results

Axiom interviewed businesses, community and municipal leaders, as well as residents to discuss Computer Skills/Digital Literacy Training and Workforce Development Skills Training.

Business

The Town of Greenbush identified key businesses to target during this process. Online surveys and interviews were administered. Axiom contacted 29 businesses via email or phone calls, and the town sent out the business survey link. A total of 9 businesses responded to the survey and/or interviews. (See Addendum 1 – Greenbush Business & Workforce Needs Survey Results)

Business Survey Results:

- 78% of businesses state that broadband is extremely important for their business
- 50% of businesses state that they could work and sell more efficiently online
- 44% of businesses are sole entrepreneurs, 44% have 5 employees or less
- 22% of businesses have a website
- 67% of businesses do not use a domain email address
- 0% of businesses do not use VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone service
- 38% of businesses use the internet for online sales
- 75% of businesses use the internet for social media
- **67% of businesses state that internet speeds have not kept up with business needs over the past few years**
- 50% of businesses state improved broadband will be critically important to their business in the next 1-2 years
- 50% of businesses do not offer telecommuting
- 50% of businesses that do offer telecommuting report that employees struggle with it
- **56% of businesses see a need for computer skills training**

Takeaways: 22% of businesses do not have a website, and 67% do not use a domain email address. Developing website classes may be a valuable resource for businesses in Greenbush, specially targeting small businesses and sole entrepreneurs. 56% of businesses state that they see a need for computer skills training.

Residential

As with Business, Community & Municipal leaders, the residential community was invited to participate in a Community Broadband Survey by the Town of Greenbush's Broadband Team. It was the goal of the survey for residents to become engaged in providing better broadband to Greenbush. A total of 15 residents completed the survey. (See Addendum 2 - Greenbush Community Internet Survey Results)

Community Survey results:

- 73% of homes have internet
- 33% of homes use the internet for home and business
- **62% of homes state they are not happy with their current internet service**
- 50% state that they would pay more for faster speeds and better reliability and 36% are not interested in paying more for internet service
- 75% state that they would like internet television; 17% for VoIP, and 17% for home security
- **86% state they are frustrated with their internet connection**
- **87% state they have children or adults that use the internet for homework – 54% are children and 38% are adults**
- **47% of residents are interested in computer class training**
- 53% think more people would live in Greenbush if there was better internet
- 47% think that visitors would stay longer if there was a good internet connection
- **42% think a business center in Blue Hill that would make sense**

Takeaways: 73% of homes state that they are not happy with their current service and 66% are frustrated with their internet connection. 87% state that they have children and adult learners that use the internet for homework. Greenbush should be mindful of homes with school-age children and further evaluate whether homes with children do not subscribe to the internet because of cost. Greenbush ~could~ consider a Technology Fund to assist homes that cannot afford broadband, specifically in homes with school-age children to address the Homework Gap, as well as letting their residents know of the low-cost broadband options offered by providers.

Out of the 15 Community responses, 47% of Greenbush's residents expressed a need for training on using the Internet. This is a significant number as it clearly indicates that residents (many own home-based businesses) would like to increase their technical proficiency. Greenbush and EMDC could seek funding to offer a Digital Literacy program to its residents and businesses. Also noted is that the 42% of residents support a business center.

The Digital Inclusion Program for the Town of Greenbush includes four components:

1. Affordable Internet – Cost continues to be a major barrier to broadband adoption. The Town of Greenbush should consider addressing "ability to pay". The following providers have been contacted regarding low-cost broadband options:

- **Consolidated Communications (FairPoint Communications):**
  - Eligible low-income FairPoint residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.

  - Eligible FairPoint residential customers residing on tribal lands may qualify for an additional federal discount of up to $25 per month and installation assistance.

  - Further information, including applications forms, can be found at: www.fairpoint.com/home/residential/phone/lifeline.html

- OTT Communications:
    - Eligible low-income OTT residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.

    - Further information, including applications forms, can be found www.ottcommunications.com/lifeline-information

- **Town of Greenbush Technology Fund**: A fund ~could~ be established to offer a discount to low-income families to address broadband adoption and take-rate
    - A fund could be established to offer a discount to low-income families to address broadband adoption and take-rate

    - The Town of Greenbush Broadband Committee may opt to explore the feasibility of establishing a fund

2. Affordable Equipment Assessment – Low-cost or free computers are often just as important as having access to low-cost or free Internet options, particularly for people in low-income communities.

- **PC's for Maine** www.pcsformaine.org offers refurbished, used computers that are donated by businesses in Maine and are available to low-income families.

- **PC's for Maine** will consider installing a kiosk at a local business to sell low-cost computers locally. Axiom will work with a local business and facilitate a conversation with PC's for Maine, should the Town of Greenbush decide to move forward.

- **Goodwill's "Good Tech"** program offers refurbished, used computers to low-income residents. https://goodwillnne.org/stores/goodtech

- **Lending Library of Devices**, laptops, desktops, iPads, etc., could be established for residents to borrow on an "as-needed" basis. The devices might be donated or the Town of Greenbush could seek grant funds to purchase equipment. The Greenbush Town Office might be considered as the lending institution.

3. Digital Literacy Training – Computer Skills Training plays a critical role in technology and workforce development training. The following digital literacy options are available for the Town of Greenbush:

- **Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center"** offers Digital Literacy classes for residents and businesses. We recommend offering the residents of Greenbush digital literacy courses over a 6 to 12-month period, one class per week, ensuring that the program has predictability over some period of time for full residential and business participation. The program can collaborate with the region's CareerCenters, and local community programs.

- **Maine Department of Labor's CareerCenter**, office is located at 45 Oak St., Bangor. The CareerCenter collaborates with the Axiom Education & Training Center, and is committed to assist with workforce development skills efforts.

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- **Adult & Community Education** is not available in the Town of Greenbush. The closest adult and community education is located in Old Town. http://orono-hampden.maineadulted.org/ Digital Literacy classes are available in the Old Town and Hampden. The course curriculum is available online at: https://orono-hampden.coursestorm.com/category/technology

Recommended Class Locations:
- Greenbush Town Office www.townofgreenbushmaine.org/
- Helen S. Dunn School http://hsdgreenbush.org/
- Business Locations

Recommended Classes include:
- Introduction to Computer
- Windows 7, 8, 10
- Internet Safety
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- QuickBooks
- PhotoShop
- Social Media including FaceBook for Business & Individuals, Twitter, etc.
- WordPress
- Video Streaming
- iPad
- Gmail
- Google Docs, etc.
- Classes designed for Senior Citizen population

Digital Literacy Budget

Teacher/Instructor (Fringe & Salary)	$ 20,000
Travel	$ 2,000
Survey Monkey (includes Annual Fee)	$ 204
Supplies	$ 1,000
Academic Services Group (curriculum)	$ 796
Administration	$ 8,000
Total Budget	$ 30,000

- ❖ Budget based on 1-year program, 1 class per week
  Budget based on 10 students per class

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Axiom will work with the Town of Greenbush to pursue funding for digital literacy classes for residents and businesses.

4. Public Computer Access – Increasing public access computing allows residents to access technology in places in they feel comfortable and supported is essential. If a business or resident cannot afford equipment or an Internet subscription, and if broadband is not available at their location, Public Computer Access is essential.

- **The Town of Greenbush** does not have a public library. The closest libraries are the following:
  - ○ **Cole Memorial Library is** located in Enfield has 1 computers available for public use
  - ○ **Old Town Public Library** is located in Old Town and has 4 desktop computers and 8 laptop computers available for public use
  - ○ Both libraries offer wireless internet that is available for residents and businesses with their own equipment to use during library hours

- **Community HotSpots** are open access networks that allow citizens in a downtown or other public spaces access to the Internet. This is a simple, straightforward way to help the town get more connected. It is an affordable, convenient solution to help visitors and residents easy, seamless connectivity.

  WiFi is available at a variety of business locations in the Greenbush region. Community HotSpot(s) for the downtown are recommended for the Town of Greenbush.

Attachment D

Town of Hampden

Surveys, Interviews and Meeting Results

Axiom interviewed businesses, community and municipal leaders, as well as residents to discuss Computer Skills/Digital Literacy Training and Workforce Development Skills training.

Business

The Town of Hampden identified key businesses to target during this process. Online surveys and interviews were administered. Axiom contacted 26 businesses via email or phone calls, and the town sent out the business survey link. A total of 17 businesses responded to the survey and/or interviews. (See Addendum 1 – Hampden Business & Workforce Needs Survey Results)

Business Survey Results:

- 72% of businesses state that broadband is extremely important for their business
- 71% of businesses state that they could work and sell more efficiently online
- 7% of businesses are sole entrepreneurs, 43% have 5 employees or less
- 67% of businesses have a website
- 53% of businesses do not use a domain email address
- 40% of businesses do not use VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) telephone service
- 40% of businesses use the internet for online sales
- 93% of businesses use the internet for social media
- **60% of businesses state that internet speeds have not kept up with business needs over the past few years**
- 53% of businesses state improved broadband will be critically important to their business in the next 1-2 years
- 67% of businesses do not offer telecommuting
- 43% of businesses that do offer telecommuting report that employees struggle with it
- **36% of businesses see a need for computer skills training**

Takeaways: 33% of businesses do not have a website, and 53% do not use a domain email address. Developing website classes may be a valuable resource for businesses in Hampden, specifically targeting small businesses and sole entrepreneurs. 36% of businesses state that they see a need for computer skills training.

Residential

As with Business, Community & Municipal leaders, the residential community were invited to participate in a Community Broadband Survey by the Town of Hampden's Broadband Team. It was the goal of the survey for residents to become engaged in providing better broadband to Hampden. A total of 261 residents completed the survey. (See Addendum 2 - Hampden Community Internet Survey Results)

Community Survey results:

- 98% of homes have internet
- 20% of homes use the internet for home and business
- **63% of homes state they are not happy with their current internet service**
- 32% state that they would pay more for faster speeds and better reliability and 62% are not interested in paying more for internet service
- 64% state that they would like internet television; 35% for VoIP, 19% for home security and 11% for home automation
- **64% state they are frustrated with their internet connection**
- **51% state they have children or adults that use the internet for homework – 45% are children and 46% are adults**
- **22% of residents are interested in computer class training**
- 32% think more people would live in Hampden if there was better internet

Takeaways: 63% of homes state that they are not happy with their current service and 66% are frustrated with their internet connection. 51% state that they have children and adult learners that use the internet for homework. Hampden should be mindful of homes with school-age children to and further evaluate whether homes with children do not subscribe to the internet because of cost. Hampden ~could~ consider a Technology Fund to assist homes that cannot afford broadband, specifically in homes with school-age children to address the Homework Gap, as well as letting their residents know of the low-cost broadband options offered by providers.

Out of the 261 Community responses, 22% of Hampden's residents expressed a need for training on using the Internet. This is a significant number as it clearly indicates that residents (many own home-based businesses) would like to increase their technical proficiency. Hampden and EMDC could seek funding to offer a Digital Literacy program to its residents and businesses.

The Digital Inclusion Program for the Town of Hampden includes four components:

1. Affordable Internet – Cost continues to be a major barrier to broadband adoption. The Town of Hampden should consider addressing "ability to pay". The following providers have been contacted regarding low-cost broadband options:

- **Consolidated Communications (FairPoint Communications):**
  - Eligible low-income FairPoint residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.

  - Eligible FairPoint residential customers residing on tribal lands may qualify for an additional federal discount of up to $25 per month and installation assistance.

  - Further information, including applications forms, can be found at: www.fairpoint.com/home/residential/phone/lifeline.html

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- **TDS Telecom:**
  - Eligible low-income TDS residential customers can quality for a discount on qualified internet service at their primary residence under the Lifeline Program. The discount consists of federal monthly support of $9.25.

  - Further information, including applications forms, can be found at: https://tdstelecom.com/content/dam/tdstelecom/pdfs/lifeline/LifelineApplication.pdf

- **Town of Hampden Technology Fund:** A fund ~could~ be established to offer a discount to low-income families to address broadband adoption and take-rate
  - A fund could be established to offer a discount to low-income families to address broadband adoption and take-rate

  - The Town of Hampden Broadband Committee may opt to explore the feasibility of establishing a fund

2. Affordable Equipment Assessment – Low-cost or free computers are often just as important as having access to low-cost or free Internet options, particularly for people in low-income communities.

- **PC's for Maine** www.pcsformaine.org offers refurbished, used computers that are donated by businesses in Maine and are available to low-income families.

- **PC's for Maine** will consider installing a kiosk at a local business to sell low-cost computers locally. Axiom will work with a local business and facilitate a conversation with PC's for Maine, should the Town of Hampden decide to move forward.

- **Goodwill's "Good Tech"** program offers refurbished, used computers to low-income residents. https://goodwillnne.org/stores/goodtech

- **Lending Library of Devices**, laptops, desktops, iPads, etc., could be established for residents to borrow on an "as-needed" basis. The devices might be donated or the Town of Hampden could seek grant funds to purchase equipment. The Edythe L. Dyer Community Library might be considered as the lending institution.

3. Digital Literacy Training – Computer Skills Training plays a critical role in technology and workforce development training. The following digital literacy options are available for the Town of Hampden:

- **Axiom Education & Training Center's "National Digital Equity Center"** offers Digital Literacy classes for residents and businesses. We recommend offering the residents of Hampden digital literacy courses over a 6 to 12-month period, one class per week, ensuring that the program has predictability over some period of time for full residential and business participation.

- **Maine Department of Labor's CareerCenter**, office is located at 45 Oak St., Bangor. The CareerCenter collaborates with the Axiom Education & Training Center, and is committed to assist with workforce development skills efforts.

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- **Orono-Hampden-Old Town Adult Ed Partnership** http://orono-hampden.maineadulted.org offers digital literacy classes at their location. Their headquarters are located at 14 Goodridge Dr., Orono. The digital literacy classes that are offered are included in their Fall catalog, available online at: https://orono-hampden.coursestorm.com/category/technology

Recommended Class Locations:
- Edythe L. Dyer Community Library http://www.edl.lib.me.us
- Hampden Town Office http://www.hampdenmaine.gov
- Business Locations

Recommended Classes include:
- Introduction to Computer
- Windows 7, 8, 10
- Internet Safety
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Outlook
- Microsoft Publisher
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- QuickBooks
- PhotoShop
- Social Media including FaceBook for Business & Individuals, Twitter, etc.
- WordPress
- Video Streaming
- iPad
- Gmail
- Google Docs, etc.
- Classes designed for Senior Citizen population

Digital Literacy Budget

Teacher/Instructor (Fringe & Salary)	$ 20,000
Travel	$ 2,000
Survey Monkey (includes Annual Fee)	$ 204
Supplies	$ 1,000
Academic Services Group (curriculum)	$ 796
Administration	$ 8,000
Total Budget	$ 30,000

- ❖ Budget based on 1-year program, 1 class per week
  Budget based on 10 students per class

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Axiom will work with the Town of Hampden to pursue funding for digital literacy classes for residents and businesses.

4. Public Computer Access – Increasing public access computing allows residents to access technology in places in which they feel comfortable and supported is essential. If a business or resident cannot afford equipment or an Internet subscription, and if broadband is not available at their location, Public Computer Access is essential.

- **Edythe L. Dyer Community Library** has 1 desktop computer and 3 laptop computers available for public use. Wireless internet is also available for residents and businesses with their own equipment to use during library hours.

- **Community HotSpots** are open access networks that allow citizens in a downtown or other public spaces access to the Internet. This is a simple, straightforward way to help the town get more connected. It is an affordable, convenient solution to help visitors and residents easy, seamless connectivity.

  In additional to the Edythe L. Dyer Community Library, WiFi is available at a variety of business locations in the Hampden region. Community HotSpot(s) for the downtown are recommended for the Town of Hampden.

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