

DIGITAL ACCESS FOR ALL IDAHOANS

17 August 2023

Matthew May, PhD
Survey Research Director
Research Scholar

Benjamin Larsen, PhD
Research Scholar



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE



Digital Access for All Idahoans Plan

Draft plan for public comment - August 2023



OVERVIEW

Research Efforts

Vision

Strategies & Goals

Needs Assessment

Ongoing Efforts

Implementation



RESEARCH EFFORTS



**Focus
Groups**

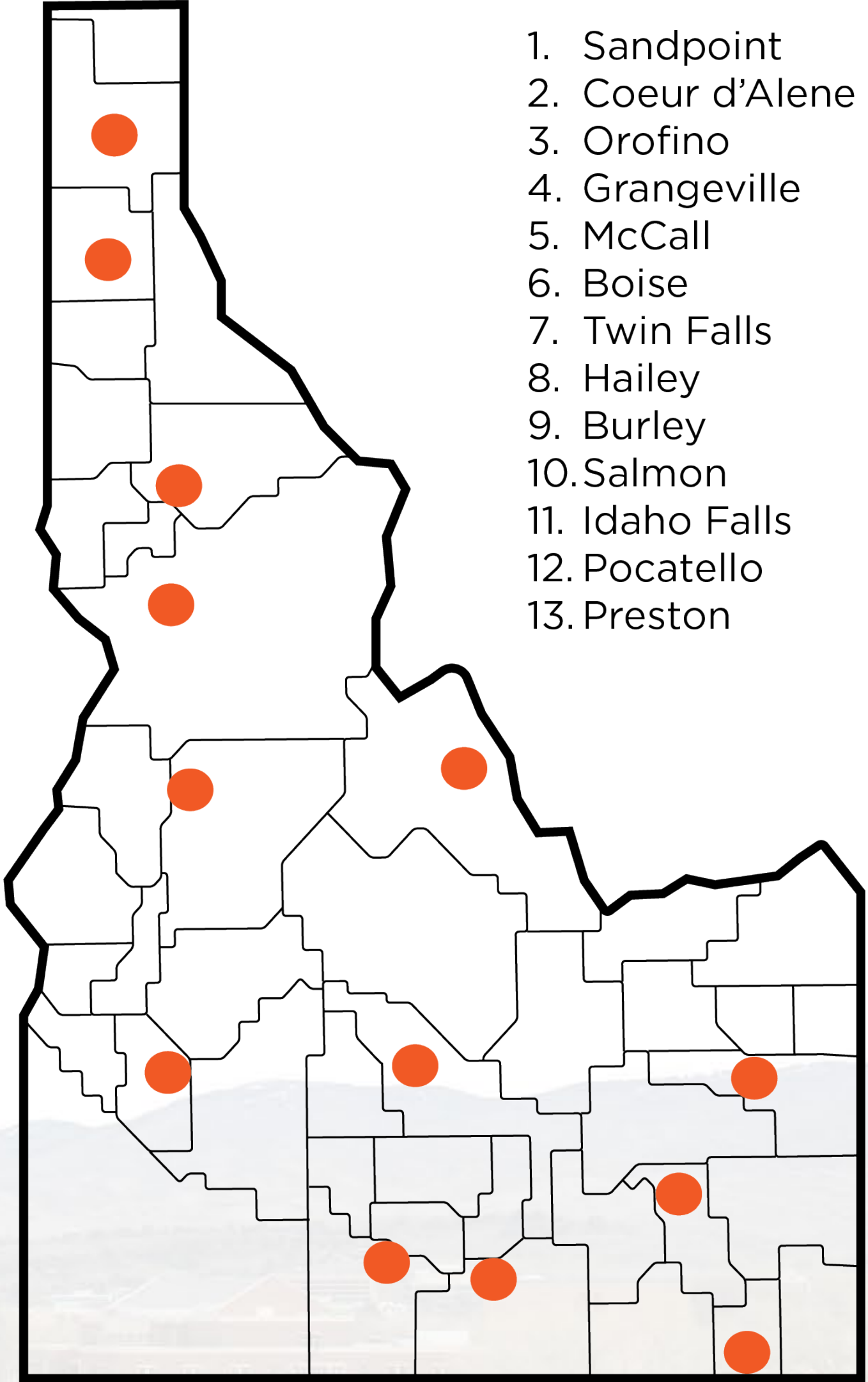
**Statewide
Surveys**

**Stakeholder
Interviews**



REGIONAL FOCUS GROUPS

93
Total
Participants



STATEWIDE SURVEY GENERAL POPULATION

Conducted May 17- 24, 2023

N = 1,000 Idaho Adults

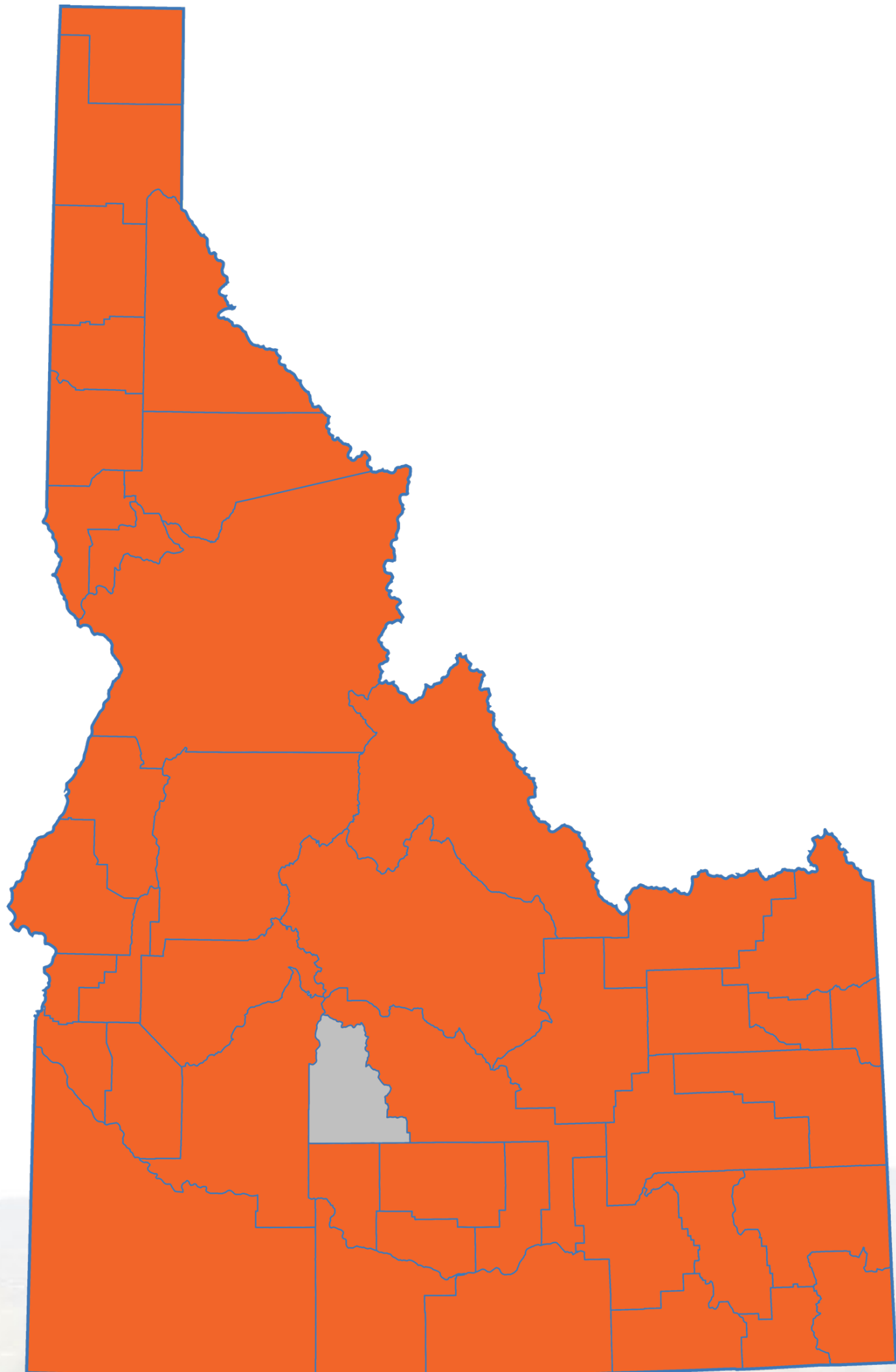
N = 400 Phone

N = 303 Online

N = 297 Text

Margin of Error: +/- 3.1%

43 of 44 counties represented in sample



STATEWIDE SURVEY SPANISH SPEAKING HOUSEHOLDS

Conducted May 17 - June 8, 2023

N = 400 Idaho Adults

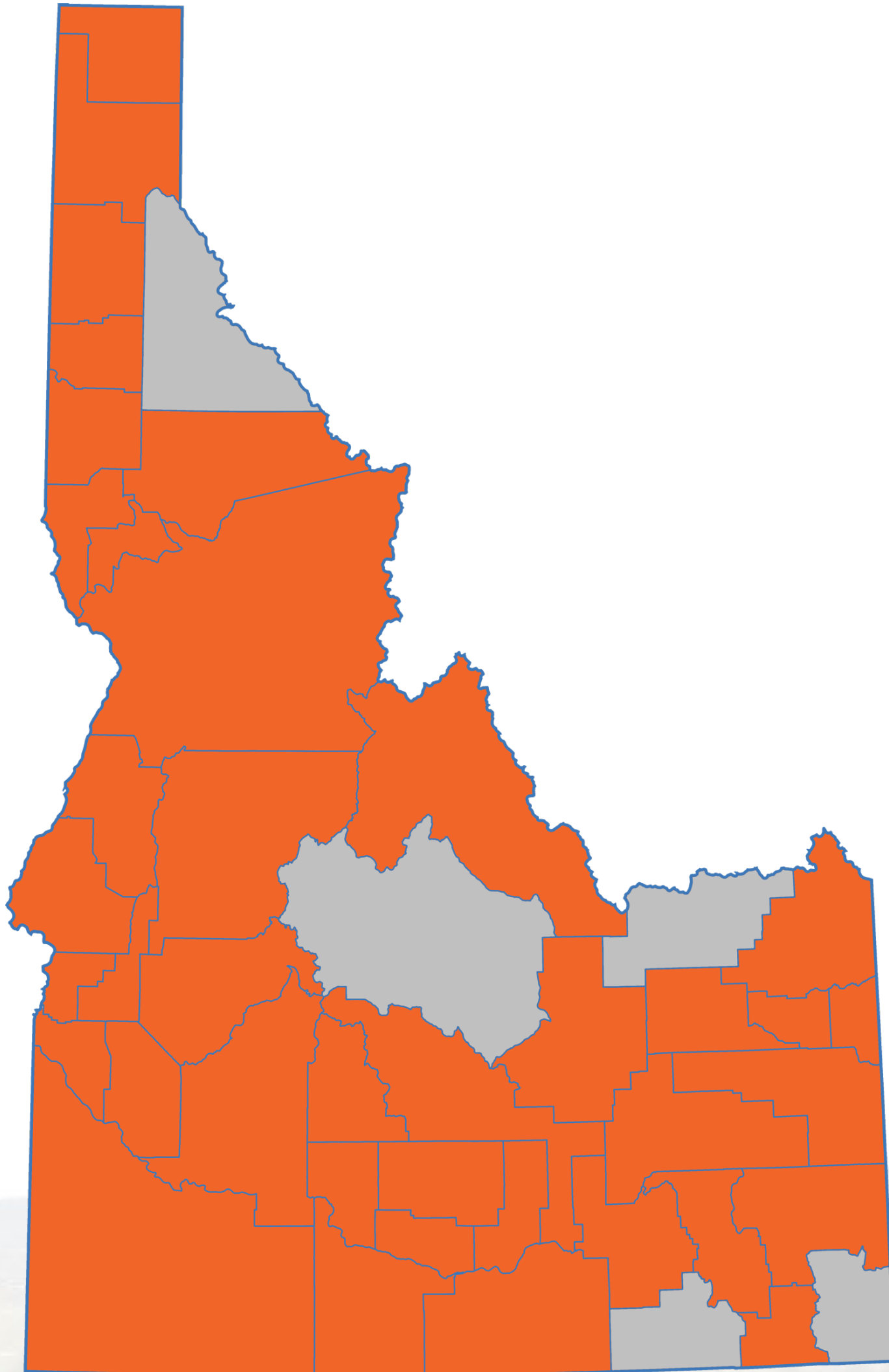
N = 201 Phone

N = 100 Online

N = 99 Text

Margin of Error: +/- 4.9%

39 of 44 counties represented in sample



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Targeted covered populations underrepresented
in focus groups and surveys

14 stakeholders interviewed

Analysis methods mirrored focus group analysis



VISION



VISION STATEMENT

Idaho's vision is to support all residents in thriving online through:

- Digital literacy, cybersecurity, and technical support – providing curated tools and resources to Idahoans to increase digital skills and online safety.
- Public services and resources – improving accessibility for Idahoans to connect and engage with local and state services.
- Affordable broadband and devices – ensuring Idahoans have broadband and internet-enabled devices that fulfill their unique work, school, and life needs.



STRATEGIES & GOALS



“I don’t even know how to live life and not use the internet...I don’t know how to live that life without it. And I don’t want to. And in all honesty, I don’t think I could, I couldn’t be employed with the work that I do without internet.”

- Focus Group Participant



*Goal 1: Increase adoption
and affordability of
broadband technology*



Goal 1: Increase adoption and affordability of broadband technology

“My client is trying to go back to school to better herself and her life for her kids, but can’t because she can’t afford the internet.”

- Focus Group Participant



Objective 1: Expand participation in Affordable Connectivity Program

Objective 2: Increase awareness of Affordable Connectivity Program

Objective 3: Increase broadband plan transparency

Objective 4: Develop a framework for lowering costs for internet services, especially in rural areas

*Goal 2: Improve online
accessibility and
inclusivity of public
resources and services*



Goal 2: Improve online accessibility & inclusivity of public resources & services

“At the end of the day, I would like to see even those that are on the fringes of the city still have access to high-speed fiber internet.”

- Focus Group Participant



Objective 1: Increase accessibility of state websites and online services

Objective 2: Increase compatibility between state websites and mobile devices

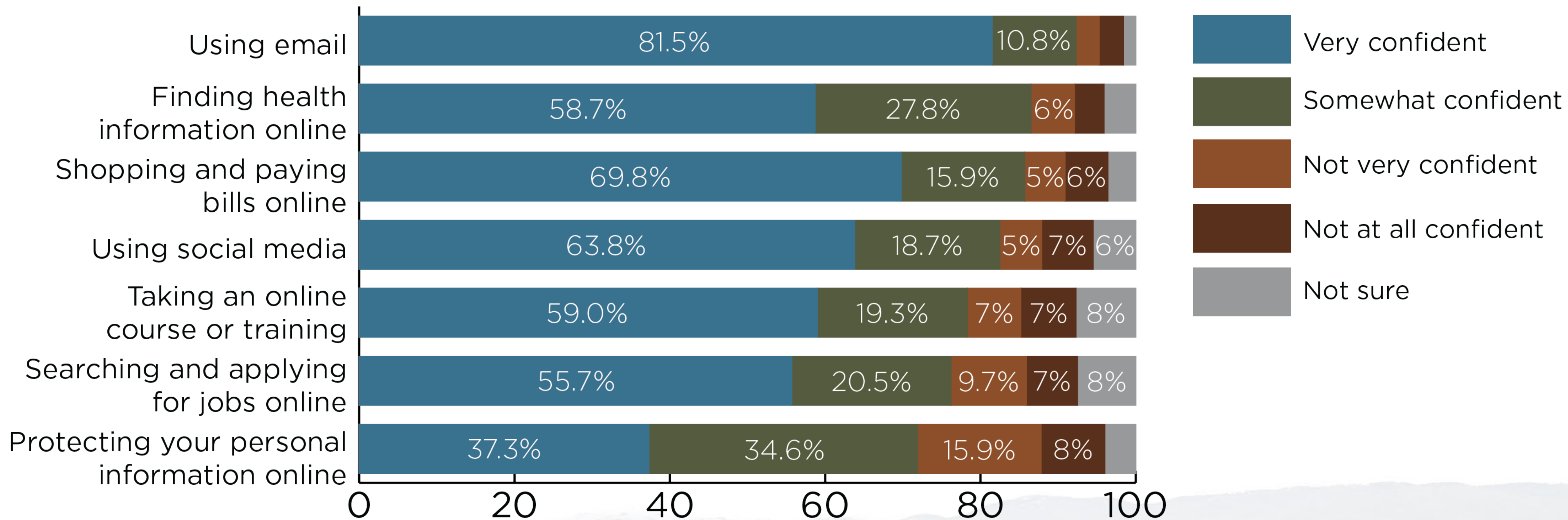
Objective 3: Ensure access to essential state services

Objective 4: Continue development and promotion of Idaho’s digital access inventory

Goal 3: Increase digital skills



How confident are you that you could successfully complete the following tasks?



N=1,000



Goal 3: Increase digital skills

“A plan for that statewide, where our students can be utilized, getting the generations together and use the knowledge that they come by so easily to help the generation who isn’t intuitive. I think that would be really excellent and would be unique to Idaho.”

- Focus Group Participant



“If you can help with just the most basic stuff that would probably have the biggest bang for the buck.”

- Focus Group Participant



Objective 1: Provide funding for basic digital and computer skill training

Objective 2: Establish a digital skills education internship program

Objective 3: Decrease social stigma surrounding digital confidence



*Goal 4: Spread awareness
of cybersecurity and
online privacy*



Goal 4: Spread awareness of cybersecurity and online privacy

Objective 1: Increase awareness of cybersecurity and protecting personal information

Objective 2: Improve cybersecurity training opportunities

“Anything that you can do in this program to educate people in cybersecurity would be money well spent.”

- Focus Group Participant



“Scammer 101 would be a great class.”

- Focus Group Participant



*Goal 5: Increase availability
and affordability of devices
and technical support*



Goal 5: Increase availability & affordability of devices & technical support

“I’m surprised my laptop is actually still in one piece, knowing how many sledge hammers we have.”

- Focus Group Participant



Objective 1: Create a digital navigator program

Objective 2: Establish statewide, regional, and local technical support options

Objective 3: Provide funding to refurbish devices for covered populations

Objective 4: Increase devices available at public libraries

“Having a local presence is key to to maintaining customer support, in my opinion.”

- Focus Group Participant



NEEDS ASSESSMENT



LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

20.7% of Idaho's population (22.4% survey)



Barriers:

- *Less consistent internet access.*
- *Expense a larger barrier to access.*
- *Greater reliance on public internet access.*
- *Lower self-reported skills levels.*

AGING INDIVIDUALS

22.6% of Idaho's population (20.4% survey)

Barriers:

- *Greater digital skills gaps.*
- *Tendency towards home internet.*
- *Less likely to seek out information online.*

“It’s not that the younger demographic is necessarily smarter, it’s just they’re growing up with the devices. The older demographic didn’t grow up with the devices.”

- Focus Group Participant



INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

0.7% of Idaho's population (N/A survey)

Barriers:

- *Limitations in training device availability.*
- *Prohibited internet access for security reasons.*
- *Limitations in digital literacy training opportunities for rehabilitation.*

“I'd like to see if there's options for any dummy tablets or dummy smartphones or Android phones that we can bring in. Students can't go anywhere, but they can actually use it, manipulate it and pretend like they're going to... look up something on YouTube or on Amazon. They can't actually go to that site, but they would at least have some type of training module...Not so much probably the younger generation, because they're probably used to that. But some of the older folks, maybe 35 plus, or some that technology's more advanced. And they haven't seen it for several years. I think that would be a huge plus for us if we can get something like that within our facilities.”

- Interview Participant



VETERANS

6.8% of Idaho's population (13.5% survey)

Barriers:

- *Veterans are demographically distinct.*
- *Less likely to have both home and cell phone internet.*
- *Greater dissatisfaction towards government websites.*
- *Lower reported digital skills than non-veterans.*



INDIVIDUALS WITH A DISABILITY

“People with disabilities are across a variety of languages and cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds...you would tend to multiply the barriers, there’s social barrier on top of barrier on top of barrier on top of barrier.”

- Interview Participant



13.9% of Idaho’s population (5.7% survey)

Barriers:

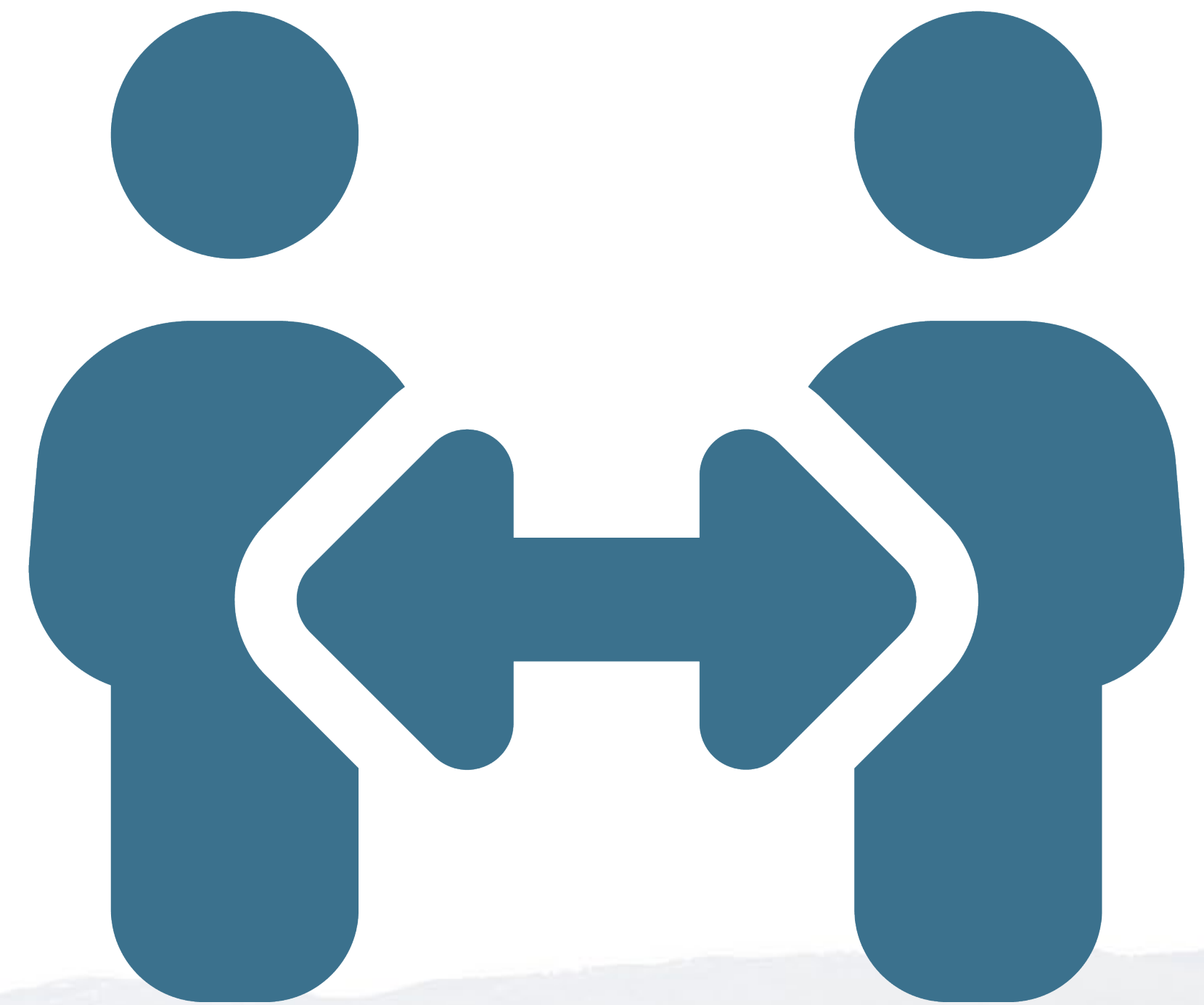
- *More reliant on home internet.*
- *Internet affordability.*
- *Website and content accessibility.*
- *Substantial gaps in digital skills assessment.*

INDIVIDUALS WITH A LANGUAGE BARRIER

13.5% of Idaho's population (survey 3.1% non-native English speakers, 17.0% household speaks Spanish)

Barriers:

- *More likely to run into barriers with English-only content.*
- *More reliant on public access.*
- *Higher confidence in digital skills.*



MEMBERS OF A RACIAL OR ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP

18.4% of Idaho's population (16.3% survey)

Barriers:

- *Likely to be members of other covered populations.*
- *No major difference in digital skills confidence levels.*
- *External trust low among Tribal communities.*
- *Economic disparities can be disproportionately felt by Tribal communities.*

“Our entire Tribal government internet has gone down, and it’s detrimental. Our tribal government cannot function. It’s millions of dollars that are lost.”

- Focus Group Participant



RURAL AREA RESIDENTS

41.8% of Idaho's population (27.3% survey)

Barriers:

- *Rural residents more likely to have no internet.*
- *Poorer perceived internet quality in rural areas.*
- *Lower confidence in digital skills levels among rural residents.*

“A lot of our residents live outside the city limits and are in the county space. There’s a lack of options for folks who aren’t directly in one of the cities.”

- Focus Group Participant



ONGOING EFFORTS



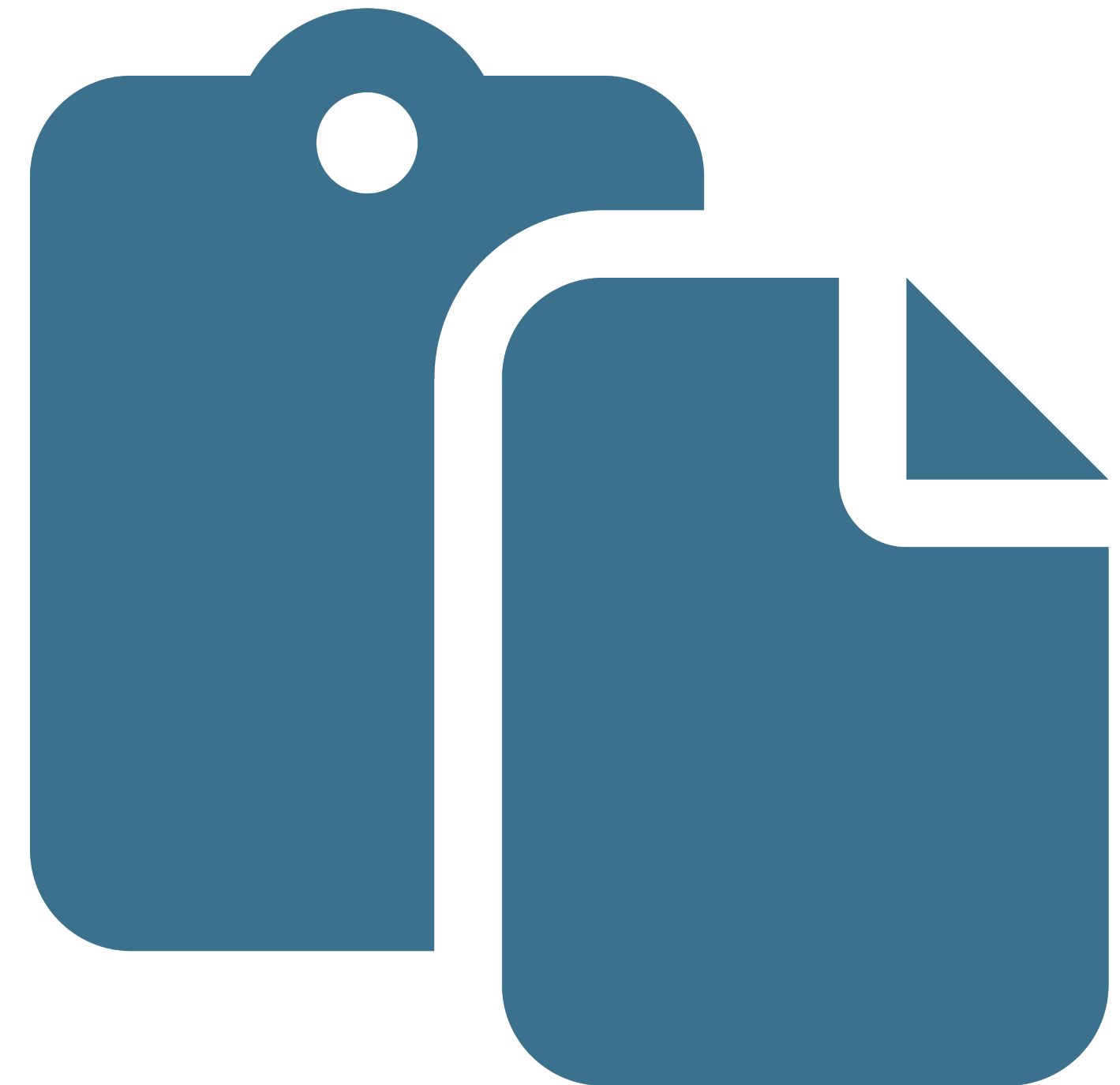
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



- *Continued engagement with current partners and stakeholders.*
- *Further development of digital asset inventory.*
- *Establish programs and subgrant opportunities.*
- *Convening working groups to address specific digital access challenges.*

ONGOING RESEARCH EFFORTS

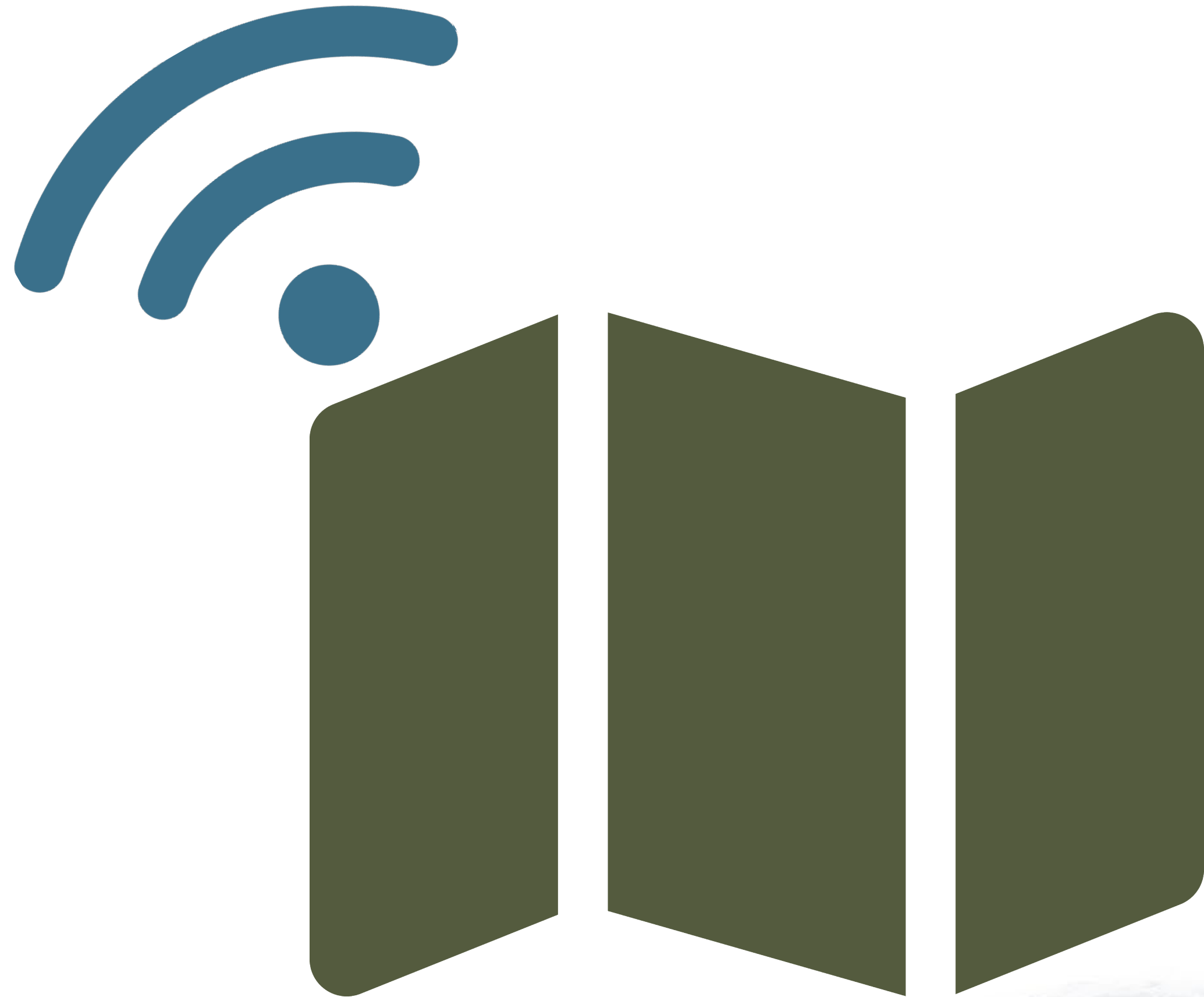
- *Track progress and refine statewide metrics.*
- *Achieve specific DAAI plan goals and objectives.*
- *Submit annual reports to the public, stakeholders, and funding sources.*



IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY



- *Plan stakeholder outreach events and initiatives.*
- *Create or expand statewide programs and initiatives.*
- *Create and award subgrants.*
- *Conduct marketing campaigns.*
- *Carry out additional research to measure progress.*

Questions?

Contact

Matthew May, PhD
matthewmay1@boisestate.edu

Benjamin Larsen, PhD
benjaminlarsen@boisestate.edu



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE