Digital Inclusion

City of Austin

District 4

Relevancy & Advocacy Report

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Statement of Purpose: Serving the Community

The 2014 Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan lays out the City Council's resolution calling for a roadmap that addresses access and adoption of digital technology within Austin. The foundation of the Austin Digital Inclusion Strategy is an evolving set of Taking Action: Initiatives centered on objectives that can help overcome identified challenges.   The Digital Inclusion Strategy is based upon the outcomes of the Austin Digital Assessment, a residential technology usage study conducted every three years, that evaluates and assesses residents' access to technology resources and literacy and training programs.

The Austin Digital Inclusion Strategy highlights five broad initiatives that together will realize Austin's vision for digital inclusion. Three of these are foundational strategies that enable Austin's residents and relevant sectors to be digitally-connected and engaged. Two growth strategies build on this foundation of technological strength to ensure coordinated service delivery. Together, these five initiatives provide the path to ensure every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in digital society.

Connect: The City and its partners in digital inclusion should embrace technological innovation to help connect residents to programs and services.

Engage: The City and its partners recognize ongoing community engagement is essential to emphasize the importance of having everyone connected.

Include: The City and its partners endeavor to enhance the ability of digital inclusion program providers to serve local residents, and explore new ways of advancing digital inclusion directly to residents.

Integrate: The City should work with its partners to integrate the Digital Inclusion Strategy with community planning initiatives across all sectors.

Coordinate: To coordinate these efforts and increase the scale of digital inclusion initiatives, the City and its partners should raise additional funds and plan for efficient implementation of important programs and services.

The Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's 25 initiatives will drive many specific benefits for Austin, city residents, and engaged sectors. These benefits fall into six goal areas, which are displayed throughout the Plan to indicate progress on the digital inclusion indicators.

Goals	2014 Baseline Indicators
To Understand and Increase Usage of Digital and Communications Technology	8% of adults do not use the Internet on any device
To Address Potential Barriers to Digital Inclusion	Relevancy is a barrier to non-users; 40% are not interested in using the Internet
To Understand the Need for Digital Literacy Training	42% of non-users would need someone to help them to get online
To Understand the Need for Access via Reliable & Affordable Devices	Nearly all adults own cell phones, and 83% own smart phones
To Understand the Need for Language & Disability Accommodations	1 in 4 non-users feel they do not speak English well enough to use the Internet
To Develop Relevancy & Advocacy Campaigns Within Specific Communities & Populations	Internet non-users primarily live in Southeast Austin

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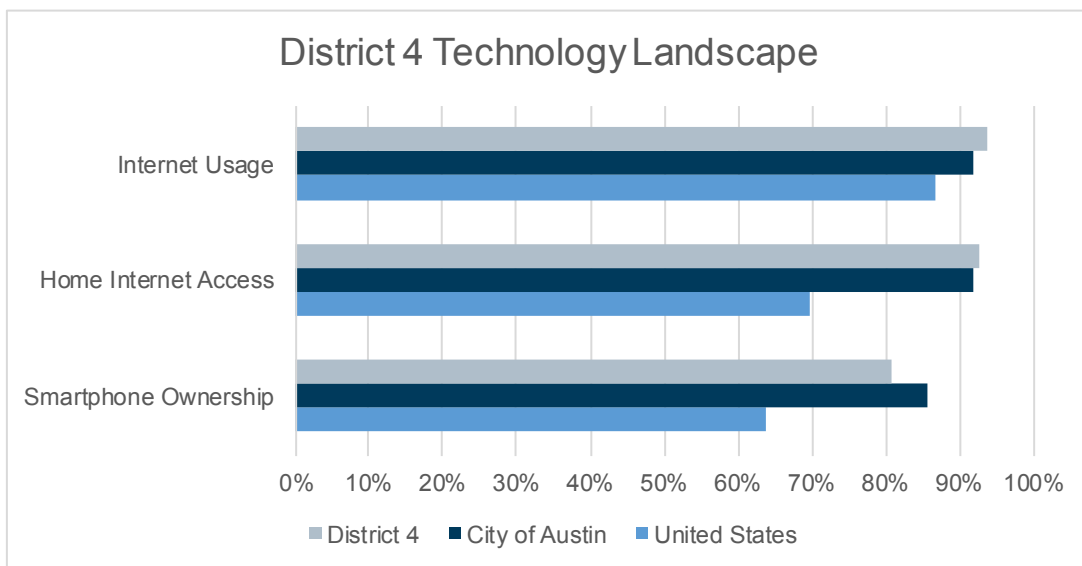## Digital Inclusion in Austin's District 4

Austin residents demonstrate every day what amazing and creative possibilities can come from creating and using digital and communications technology. But 55,000 adult residents living in our city today are disconnected from this increasingly connected world, with most living in underserved communities.

Vision for Digital Inclusion

The City of Austin's vision is for every resident to have access to the knowledge and resources needed to participate in our emerging digital society. We need affordable and available devices for all residents. And it is critical that all Austinites understand technology and its relevancy to their daily lives, whether for helping with their kids' homework, looking for jobs, getting access to health information, or accessing online government information.

Restore Rundberg is a neightborhood revitalization effort dedicated to improving community safety and quality of life for District 4 residents.

District 4 Technology Landscape

Legend: District 4 | City of Austin | United States

District 4 Overview

Representing North Central Austin, District 4 includes some of Austin's most diverse and livable neighborhoods. It is home to two libraries, several recreation and community centers, the workforce development facility Workforce Solutions Capital Area, programs for children like Child, Inc., prominent neighborhood efforts like Restore Rundberg and more. Austin benefits from having greater access to and knowledge of technology, and it exceeds the national average in Internet usage, home Internet access, and smartphone ownership. District 4 as a whole is similar to the citywide norms in technology access, but significant diversity among neighborhoods and residents within District 4 creates unique challenges and opportunities in ensuring all District 4 residents are able to build their digital skills.
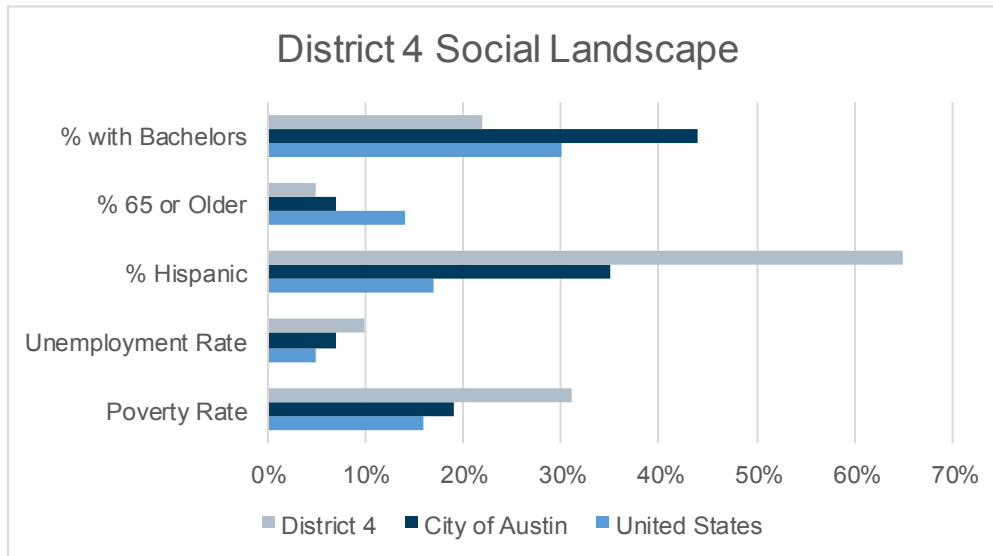
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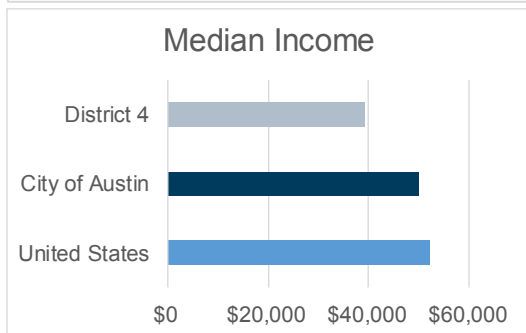
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District 4 Barriers to Using the Internet and Social Landscape

District 4 Social Landscape

Legend: District 4, City of Austin, United States

Categories: % with Bachelors, % 65 or Older, % Hispanic, Unemployment Rate, Poverty Rate

Median Income

District 4, City of Austin, United States ($0 – $60,000)

Barriers to Using the Internet
District 4 in Rank Order

#1 Too expensive

#2 No one to teach them

#3 Privacy & security concerns

#4 Using the Internet is too difficult

#5 Not enough time

#6 Not interested in using the Internet

#7 Someone else uses the Internet for them

#8 Do not speak English well enough

Internet Usage Trends
In a City of Austin / UT survey conducted in 2014, 6 percent of District 4 residents said they did not use the Internet, less than the citywide average of 8 percent non-users. District 4 is similar to the citywide average in home Internet access, with 93 percent reporting home access in District 4 compared to 92 percent across the city. 81 percent of District 4 residents own smartphones compared to 86 percent citywide.

Barriers to Using the Internet
Internet non-users in District 4 face some major challenges in accessing and using technology. More than 9 in 10 Internet non-users in District 4 said that expense was one of the reasons they do not use the Internet. Having no one to teach them was the second-highest rated reason in District 4, and the high difficulty of using the Internet was also a high-ranking barrier. This suggests that many District 4 Internet non-users could benefit from community-based technology training programs. Although a lack of English skills was not recorded as a top-ranked barrier, an estimated 3 in 10 residents do experience this challenge in District 4, where two-thirds of residents identify as Hispanic.

Social Landscape
Certain social factors may contribute to many District 4 residents lack of digital usage and access. Only 22 percent of District 4 residents have a Bachelor's Degree or higher, which is roughly half of the citywide average of 44 percent. One in ten District 4 residents is unemployed, and nearly one-third live in poverty. Many programs in Austin are dedicated to teaching residents how to use technology and the Internet to improve their quality of life through financial management, educational resources, finding low-cost transportation options, and more.

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Digital Inclusion Partners & Resources in District 4

Austin Free-Net operates a public computer lab at District 4's St. John Community Neighborhood Center. Residents can use the computers to apply for jobs, check email, receive free one-on-one training and more.

Digital Inclusion Community Partners

Austin is fortunate to have a robust system of nonprofit, community and City organizations committed to digital inclusion, many of which support District 4. The City has a long history of supporting front-line programs that help residents overcome technological barriers. Austin Free-Net is a City-funded nonprofit that provides free training throughout the city, including the St. John's Neighborhood Center in District 4. All of Austin Public Libraries have computers available for public use, and some libraries offer free one-on-one training. The City's Digital Inclusion Community Engagement Strategy involves working with neighborhood and community associations including the North Austin Civic Association and Restore Rundberg and to connect with residents with technology resources.

Competitive Broadband Marketplace

Austin also benefits from a competitive broadband market represented by four Internet providers: AT&T, Google Fiber, Grande Communications and Time Warner Cable. All four providers contribute to ensuring Austin residents, businesses and organizations have access to reliable and affordable Internet. Google Fiber partnered with the City of Austin for the Community Connections Program to award 100 nonprofit and public facilities a free gigabit-speed Internet connection to spark social innovation. District 4 will be home to nine Community Connection sites including two public libraries and a public high school.

Representatives from Texas Time Warner Cable, Google Fiber, Grande Communications and AT&T speaking at Austin's Broadband Providers Forum about how they connect Austin.

Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

The City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan calls on the City to leverage these community assets to promote digital inclusion in Austin. We can empower District 4 residents through increased digital skills that contribute to improved education, job preparedness, health resources, social connections and more.

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District 4 Community Assets

Public Access Computer Labs and Computer Training Facilities

Public Access was identified as a fundamental **principle of digital inclusion** in the International City/County Management Association's *Building Digital Communities: A Framework for Action* (2011). *Public Access* and other principles have been integrated into the City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan as guiding elements around which the City and its partners should dedicate programmatic time, resources, strategic development and more. Ensuring that all residents have access to safe and reliable spaces for digital access is a top priority for Austin's digital inclusion strategy.

The public access computer labs and computer training facilities below represent some of District 4's most highly utilized facilities for digital inclusion programming. But this list is not complete, and there is great need for more facilities in District 4 and across the city. It is the hope of the City of Austin Digital Inclusion program that these relevancy and advocacy reports will result in the recruitment and development of additional public computer labs.

Public Access Computer Labs and Computer Training Facilities	
St. John's Neighborhood Center *7500 Blessing Avenue*	An Austin Free-Net location with 5 public access computers and one-on-one free training.
HACA Georgian Manor *1211 E. Rundberg Lane*	Skillpoint Alliance offers a 10-week Empower Computer Literacy class for adults at HACA Georgian Manor. The class focuses on professional development skills, such as Microsoft Office, Internet, Email, and Outlook.
Goodwill Community Center *1015 Norwood Park Boulevard*	Provides residents with 14 public access computers and job readiness training, which is now open to the public. There are also computer literacy classes for Goodwill clients.
Workforce Solutions North Center *6505 Airport Boulevard*	Providing East Austin residents with public access computers and one-on-one job readiness training. Workforce Solutions also offers computer literacy classes for residents.
YMCA North Austin *1000 W. Rundberg Lane*	This YMCA facility provides the public with 9 open access computers, the only requirement being that they sign up for the free membership.
Asian American Resource Center *8401 Cameron Road*	As an integral facility for the Asian community, this site provides the Austin community with 8 public access computers as well as computer and technology classes.
Little Walnut Creek Library *835 W. Rundberg Lane*	An important facility for the Rundberg community, this Austin Public Library branch provides a public access computer lab and occasional job hunt assistance classes.
St. John Branch Library *7500 Blessing Avenue*	An Austin Public Library Branch with a public access computer lab.

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District 1 Community Assets

Community Connections Sites

Availability was identified as a fundamental **principle of digital inclusion** in the International City/County Management Association's *Building Digital Communities: A Framework for Action* (2011). *Availability* and other principles have been integrated into the City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan as guiding elements around which the City and its partners should dedicate programmatic time, resources, strategic development and more. *Availability* of affordable, high-speed Internet and devices is an essential component of digital inclusion. *Availability* needs to become more ubiquitous both in individual households and in multi-user environments that can empower local communities to stay connected.

Google Fiber partnered with the City of Austin for the Community Connections program. Community Connections awarded a free gigabit-speed Internet connection for ten years to 100 nonprofit and public facilities in fiberhoods that qualify for Google Fiber service. District 4's selected facilities include a school, libraries, a recreation center and nonprofit organizations.

Community Connections Sites	
Gus Garcia recreation Center *1201 E. Rundberg Ln.*	Google Fiber will enable the Gus Garcia Recreation Center's computer lab to accommodate more patrons and would facilitate the development of an online tutoring program.
Lanier High School *1201 Payton Gin Rd.*	AISD will use Google Fiber to improve student, staff, and parent access to their online resources such as grades, college readiness programs, learning resources, and professional development opportunities through the many devices that AISD provides.
BIG Austin *5407 North IH-35 Suite 200*	Google Fiber will enhance BIG Austin's counseling services, training classes, and communication with its loan clients.
Child, Inc. *818 E. 53rd St.*	Child Inc. will utilize google fiber to expand their existing initiatives such as parent development, health awareness, and parent connections to their child's learning.
Workforce Solutions Capital Area *6505 Airport Blvd Suite 101*	Google Fiber will allow this organization to explore offering an virtual career center, and to increase capacity for computer training
Goodwill Industries of Central Texas *1015 Norwood Park Blvd*	Google Fiber will enable Goodwill to better serve clients through teleconferencing, assistive technology, computer training and more
YMCA of Austin *1000 W. Rundberg Ln*	Google Fiber will improve the user experience at the YMCA's computer lab and enable them to offer more trainings on high-bandwidth programs like multimedia production.
Austin Public Libraries *(Little Walnut Creek, St. John)*	The Austin Public Libraries will use Google Fiber to better accommodate bandwidth usage needs in their public access computer labs, meeting rooms, and the programs that select branches offer.

District 4 Community Assets

Neighborhood Organizations and Associations & Planning Contact Teams

Relevance was identified as a fundamental **principle of digital inclusion** in the International City/County Management Association's *Building Digital Communities: A Framework for Action* (2011). *Relevancy* and other principles have been integrated into the City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan as guiding elements around which the City and its partners should dedicate programmatic time, resources, strategic development and more. *Relevancy* is an ongoing challenge for those residents who do perceive Internet access to be an unnecessary or unaffordable luxury, as opposed to a critical utility to meet daily living needs in our increasingly digital world. Neighborhood-based groups are tuned into their residents' needs and can be great assets in communicating the importance of digital literacy.

Below are the neighborhood and planning organizations located in Council District 4. Each of these are important to engage with in order to develop a grassroots campaign. These community leaders are our connections to the communities. One example of how the City of Austin Digital Inclusion program has engaged with these organizations is by giving presentations to and engaging conversations with several of the organizations including Restore Rundberg and the North Austin Civic Association. These conversations hope to empower citizens and neighborhood leaders to be digital inclusion advocates.
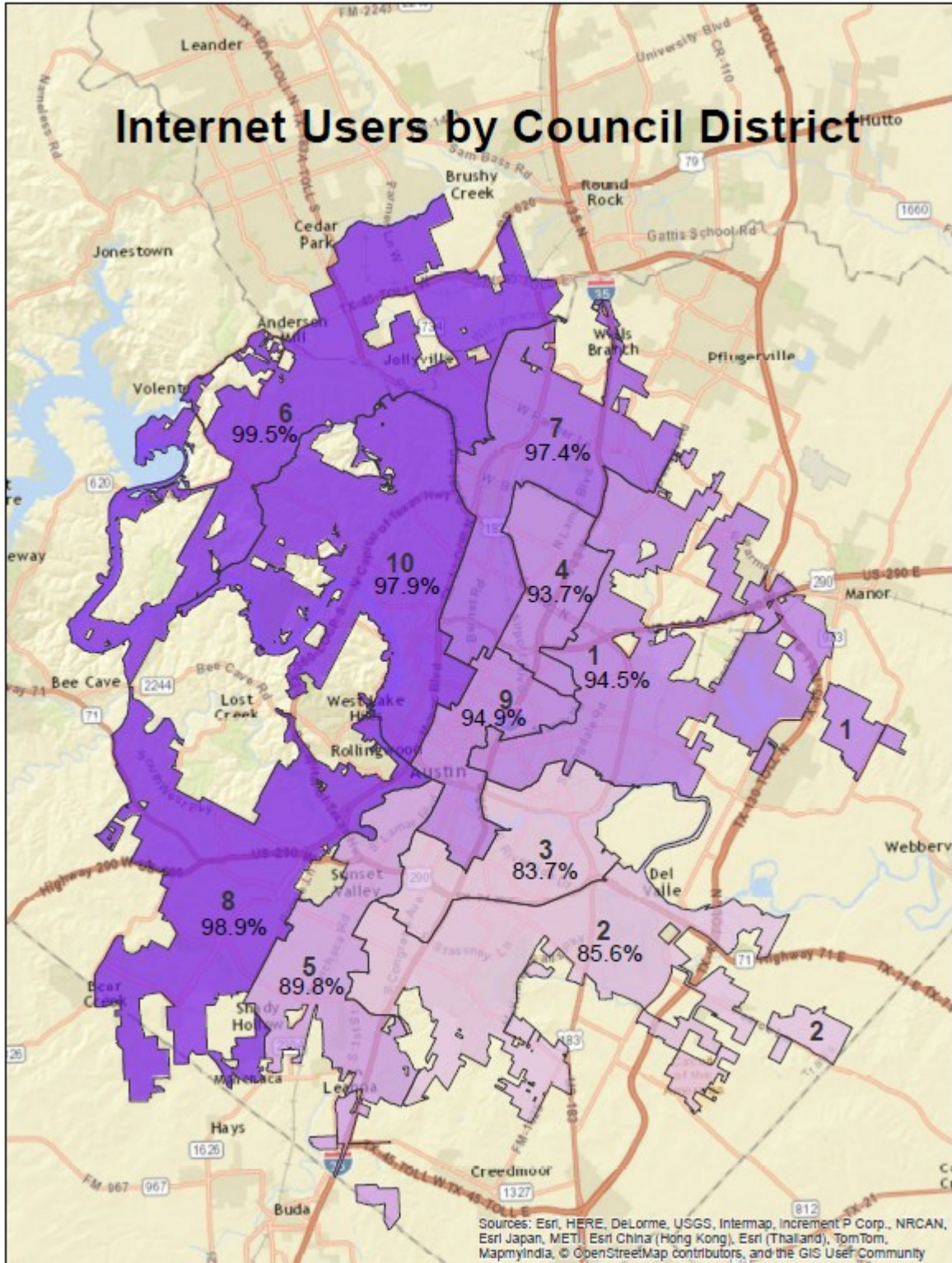
Planning Contact Teams & Neighborhood Associations and Organizations			
Highland/Skyview Neighborhood Plan Contact Team	St. John Neighborhood Assn.	Georgian Acres Neigh. Assn.	Quail Hollow Neighborhood Association
St. Johns Contact Team	Highland Neighborhood Association	TechRidge Neighbors	NorthStar Neighborhood Association
Heritage Hills/Windsor Hills Combined Neighborhood Contact Team	Skyview Neighborhood Assn.	Windsor Hills Neighborhood Assn.	Thurmond Heights Neighborhood Association
North Lamar Combined Neighborhood Plan Contact Team	St. Johns Community Assn.	Georgian Manor Neighborhood Association	Restore Rundberg
Windsor Park Neighborhood Plan Contact Team (Multiple districts)	Heritage Hills-Woodbridge Neighborhood Association	North Austin Civic Assn.	Windsor Park Neighborhood Association (Multiple Districts)
Ridgetop Neighborhood Association	Mockingbird Hill Neigh. Assn.	North Austin Civic Association Plan Contact Team	Edward Joseph Developments LTD (Multiple Districts)

Other Community Assets	
Foundations Communities: Springs Terrace *7101 North Interstate 35*	A Foundations Communities facility for senior citizens where Austin Free-Net provides computers for residents.

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Internet Users by Council District

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Acknowledgements & Data Sources

Data Sources: District 4 Technology Landscape
Austin Digital Assessment (2014)
Pew Research Center Internet Project Survey (2014)

Data Sources: District 4 Social Landscape
Decennial Census, U.S. Census Bureau (2010)
American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau (2013)

Data Sources: Median Family Income
American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau (2013)

Data Sources: Barriers to Using the Internet
Austin Digital Assessment (2014)