

National Evaluation of ConnectHome

Client: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Overview

The ConnectHome initiative, launched in July 2015, was a collaboration of communities, the private sector, and the federal government to expand high-speed internet across the country and bridge the digital divide for families with school-aged children. The initiative sought to enable more than 275,000 low-income households—and nearly 200,000 children—to access the internet at home. ConnectHome was piloted in 27 cities and 1 tribal nation. The goal of the study was to evaluate the initiative’s effectiveness and determine whether ConnectHome increased internet access in the communities, qualitatively assess how internet access affected residents’ quality of life, and describe the implementation experience of participating communities.

The multipronged evaluation had three primary components:

- Mail survey with in-person and telephone follow-up: assessed baseline levels of internet access across the 28 participating communities
 - Insight helped develop and pretested the survey instrument; designed and implemented the sampling strategy; developed a database for entering the data; received, entered, and cleaned the survey data; developed survey weights; analyzed the survey findings; and summarized the findings in a policy brief
- Telephone survey: assessed how and for what purposes residents of the communities used the internet, how internet access affected families’ lives, and levels of digital literacy
 - Insight developed and pretested the telephone survey instrument, fielded the survey, cleaned and analyzed the data, and developed a summary report of findings



Case studies of participating communities: included three focus groups per community, to probe further how internet access affected residents’ lives and how communities had implemented the ConnectHome initiative at the local level

- Insight developed focus group protocols for public housing residents who were ConnectHome subscribers and nonsubscribers; developed semistructured interview protocols for local implementation staff; recruited case study communities; and prepared training materials for communities to recruit focus group resident participants
- Insight conducted the focus groups, analyzed the data, and developed the case study reports

Products

Mail survey and associated materials; telephone survey and associated materials; webinars; baseline access summary brief; five case study reports; telephone survey summary report of findings