

Resource Guide

The resources below, organized by the [Berkshire Regional Planning Commission](#), focus on the digital needs of Berkshire County residents from youth to older adults. In addition to those listed, all Berkshire County libraries offer free internet access, and some lend computer devices and hotspots to card holders to use on-site or at home. Similarly, senior centers may run occasional computer classes or bring in volunteers for individual tech support. Check with the local library or senior center for details. **Resources in languages other than English are noted in red.**

Assistive Technologies & Software	
Resource	Description
Open Office A Free Version of Microsoft Office https://www.openoffice.org/download/	A free, open-source version of Microsoft Office that can be installed on computers rather than paying for an MS license. Downloads available in multiple languages.
Choice Magazine Listening http://www.choice-magazinelistening.org or call toll free: 1-888-724-6423	A free audio magazine for adults with impaired vision or other disability. Four times a year, listeners receive 12 hours of great magazine writing. A talking book player is also provided free of charge. Recipients enjoy the issue for several weeks, then return it in a postage-free mailer. CML is also available as a download. CML is a nonprofit, and services are free.
Mass. Rehabilitation Commission, Assistive Technologies https://www.mass.gov/mrc-assistive-technology-services	Connects people with disabilities with the technology they need to live more independently. Our regional provider can be found at this link: https://www.easterseals.com/ma/programs-and-services/assistive-technology/at-at-home/ . For more information call 617-204-3851.
United Cerebral Palsy of Western Mass https://ucpwma.org/ or call: 413-442-1562	Offers free durable medical equipment, an assistive technology library, and a radio reading service through <i>Berkshire Talking Chronicle</i> over WRRS (104.3) to support children and adults with disabilities. They also offer Computer Fundamentals Webinars to teach beginning and advanced computer knowledge and skills. UCP offers services to non-English speakers.

Cybersecurity

Resource	Description
Berkshire District Attorney's Office https://berkshiredistrictattorney.com/technology-resources/	Offers online safety resources from a Cyber Tip Line to information for everyone from kids to older adults. Email Contact.BerkshireDA@mass.gov or call 413-443-5951.
Mass Attorney General: Computer and Online Privacy https://www.mass.gov/info-details/computer-and-online-privacy	Provides tips and insight into viruses, spyware, malware, and threats to computer systems, as well as phishing, hacking, and spam that can threaten personal identity and information. They can be reached by phone at 617-963-2223. Select language at top of page to read the website in the language of choice.
Mass Attorney General: Cyber Crimes https://www.mass.gov/info-details/cyber-crimes	Offers tips to ensure people know what to look for and how to avoid cybercrimes. Select language at top of page to read the website in the language of choice.

Discount Internet + Cell Service

Some internet providers offer discounted (and slower) service for people enrolled in programs such as SNAP, WIC, SSI, and veteran's benefits. Because signing up for discounted service can be complicated, contact **digital@berkshireplanning.org for extra support.**

Resource	Description
Discount Internet Service Plans The new minimum speed for internet is 100 megabits (Mbps) upload and 20 Mbps download. Most cheaper plans offer slower service of 50/10 or 25/3.	Spectrum: https://www.spectrum.com/internet/spectrum-internet-assist Verizon: https://www.verizon.com/discounts/verizon-forward/ Xfinity: https://www.xfinity.com/learn/internet-service/internet-essentials All Provider Search: https://www.digitalinclusion.org/low-cost-internet-plans/
Lifeline Cellphone Service https://www.lifelinesupport.org/	Lifeline phone service provides a small amount of data (usually 4.5 GB/month) through cellular service for free if people are income-eligible. For detailed information about the pros and cons of Lifeline and how to sign-up, see the last page of this guide. Cellphones can be used to connect to the internet if paired with a hotspot or if the person is in a location with a free, open Wi-Fi network like a café or airport.

Digital Skills: Adults

Resource	Description
Cyber-Seniors https://cyberseniors.org/	Cyber-Seniors provides FREE technology support and training for older adults. Book one-on-one tech call, find daily webinars, watch previous webinars, check out their cybersecurity center, visit their discovery hub, or connect in the community. They can be reached by phone at: 888-217-3057. Select language at top of page to read the website in the language of choice.
Digital Skills Library Online https://digitalskillslibrary.org/	The Digital Skills Library is an open website of free learning resources designed to help all adult learners develop the digital skills needed to achieve their personal, civic, educational, and career goals. Available in multiple languages including Spanish, Arabic, Hungarian, and French, Scroll down to Explore All Resources to find language options.
Digital Learn https://training.digitallearn.org/	An online hub for digital literacy support and training from the Public Library Association. Includes self-directed tutorials for users to increase their digital literacy. Modules are video-based with narration and written in plain language at an elementary to middle school level for English and Spanish speakers.
Goodwill Foundation (GCF) Global https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/	Free program to learn the essential skills to live and work in the 21st century from MS Office and email to reading, math, and social media (https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/socialmedia/). The site offers more than 300 topics, including 6,000+ lessons, 2,000+ videos, and 50+ interactive exercises and games. Select language at top of page to read the website in Spanish or Portuguese.
MA Adult Literacy Hotline 1-800-447-8844	Provides referrals to over 300 adult education programs that offer one-on-one tutoring, small-group, or classroom instruction to adult learners.
Mass Vets Advisor https://www.mass.gov/collections/vets-advisor	A website that enables veterans and their families to search for all the benefits they are entitled to in an easy one one-stop fashion. Select language at top of page to read the website in the language of choice.

Northstar via BRPC https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/launch-from/17204-Z3E9-berkshire-regional-planning-commission	Take a free digital skills assessment and online classes at the website at left by entering BRPC's PIN: Z3E9. To arrange a group class leading to certificates, email digital@berkshireplanning.org. Select language at bottom of page to read the site in the language of choice. Northstar is also available at MCLA, William Stickney Adult Learning Center, 2nd Street Second Chances, and Roots, Dreams, and Mustard Seeds,
Senior Planet - AARP https://seniorplanet.org/	Free online classes including digital skills aimed at older adults through American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Older adults can speak to a technology trainer from 9:00 am – 8:00 pm EDT Monday to Friday for free at 888-713-3495. Click on the Main Menu to find classes in Spanish and Mandarin.
Tech Boomers / Tech Life Unity https://www.techlifeunity.com/	Free tutorials that teach users how to use the most popular and trusted websites and internet apps with over 60 courses packed with videos and articles tailored to those with limited computer skills. The site is written in easily understood, non-technical language.
Tech Foundry – Tech Hub https://techhubmass.net/ https://techhubmass.ticketleap.com/	Free virtual and in-person tech classes empowering people with essential skills via a range of courses whether the person is starting out or looking to master advanced software. People can dive into topics from basic computer skills to software use. Students who complete six classes are eligible for a free device. Call 413-340-1105 or email info@techhubmass.net. Select language at top of page to read the website in English or Spanish. Their first Spanish-only class was on Computer Maintenance. They are still determining the viability of creating more Spanish classes. Some training materials have been translated into Spanish. If a minimum of 5 people are interested in a Spanish-language class, they may be able to arrange one.

Digital Skills: Youth

Resource	Description
aiEDU https://www.aiedu.org/	A nonprofit that believes everyone—especially those likely to be disproportionately impacted by AI—have access to knowledge and skills to thrive as workers, creators, consumers, and citizens. Online classes that are both self-guided and teacher-led.
Code.org https://code.org/	Expands access to computer science in schools with a focus on increasing participation by young women and students from under-represented groups. Select language at bottom of page to read the website in the language of choice.
DLCS Parent and Guardian Resources https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/dlcs/pg-resources.html	Supports parents around digital literacy and computer science with access to MassCORE and school report cards. Select drop-down at top of page to read the website in Spanish, Mandarin, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, or Vietnamese.
<u>Girls Who Code</u> https://girlswhocode.com/	Works to close the gender gap in technology and change the image of what a programmer looks like and does.
Teens Teach Tech https://connectednation.org/programs/teens-teach-tech	Invites teachers, youth-focused organizations, and community nonprofits to offer workshops, mentorship, virtual sessions, and community events that cover digital skills from computer literacy to mobile devices and staying safe on the internet. Part of <u>AT&T Connected Learning</u> .

Large-Screen Devices + Hotspots

Resource	Description
<u>Computers 4 People</u> https://www.computers4people.org/	Provides free computers to <u>income-qualifying individuals</u>. Free refurbished laptops to college-bound students in financial need; and PC Teen Building Classes and Digital Skills Classes for all ages. Computers (desktop, laptop, tablet) come loaded with the Google Chrome Suite. Users can download and install for free Apache Open Office @ https://www.openoffice.org/download/. To start the process of requesting a device, contact BRPC @ digital@berkshireplanning.org or call 413-442-1521 ext. 16.
<u>PCs 4 People</u> https://www.pcsforpeople.org/	Connects people with low-cost computers and internet services and recycles and refurbishes computers. Select language at top of page to read the website in the language of choice.
<u>Total Access</u> https://www.totalaccesscomputers.com/	Located in Adams, MA, this for-profit business offers discounts on computer trade-ins and remote support for computer viruses and other software issues.

Social Services

Resource	Description
413 Cares https://www.413cares.org/	413Cares offers a way for people to search for free and reduced-cost services in their community. 413Cares also connects people to organizations offering the needed services. Organizations can refer clients to other services and track their success.
DTA Connect https://dtaconnect.eohhs.mass.gov/	People may log into or set up DTA Connect to get SNAP /Transitional Assistance benefits or verification
Mass 211 https://mass211.org/	Mass211 is a program of local United Way offices that offers links to key resources such as food pantries, utility assistance, domestic violence, mental health, runaway assistance, transportation, and youth homelessness.

Tech Job Training + Small Businesses

Resource	Description
BreakThrough Tech https://www.breakthroughtech.org/	Seeks to increase women and non-binary students graduating with degrees in computer science and tech. They offer a one-year virtual and in-person AI program and a shorter Sprintership with tech companies. Students can apply to join either program. College students can register in December 2024.
Fiber Broadband Association OpTIC Path https://fiberbroadband.org/education-and-certification/fba-optic-path/	Provides future technicians with knowledge and skills while opening the door for a career with organizations such as telecom. and internet providers and contractors.
Mass CyberCenter Jobs Board https://jobs.masscybercenter.org/companies	Highlights jobs and internships in the Commonwealth and remote positions with Massachusetts companies focused on cybersecurity and technology jobs.
MassHire https://masshirespringfield.org/computer-skills/	Live and on-demand webinars from MassHire - Upgrade marketability with their Work Skills Learning Program. People can choose from courses that include accounting, communication, Microsoft and Google Suite. No more waiting for a specific course to appear on a calendar. Learn at the person's own pace in MassHire computer labs.
Opportunity: LinkedIn http://www.opportunity.linkedin.com/	Free learning paths mapped to in-demand jobs, discounted Microsoft certifications to validate skills, and best practices for job searching and interview prep so people can put their best foot forward.
Tech Foundry https://thetechfoundry.org/	An 18-week program to prepare people for IT careers. The program combines technical skills, professional development, and career readiness supported by experienced and committed staff teaching in-demand skills through a mix of classes, projects, and labs. Call 413-276-0609 for more information or email them at https://thetechfoundry.org/contact-us/.

Telecomm. Industry Apprenticeship Program https://www.tirap.org/	Offers former military professionals a structured pathway to earn income while learning the skills to pursue a meaningful career in the telecom sector. Email them at https://www.tirap.org/contact_us/.
Verizon Innovative Learning https://www.verizon.com/learning/about	Expands digital access support to small businesses to protect the climate and prepare people for jobs of the future.

Other Resources

Resource	Links
Chromebook	Chromebooks basics from Goodwill: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/chromebookbasics/ Google apps from Goodwill: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/googleapps/ Google Chromebook guides: https://www.google.com/chromebook/howto/
Free Online College or Advanced Courses	Coursera: https://www.coursera.org/collections/popular-free-courses EdX: https://www.edx.org/courses?q=free+online+courses Khan Academy: https://www.khanacademy.org/ MIT: https://ocw.mit.edu/ Stanford: https://online.stanford.edu/free-courses
Google	https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/googleapps/
iPhone / iPad	iPhone Basics from Goodwill: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/iphonebasics/y iPhone Guide by Apple: https://support.apple.com/guide/iphone/welcome/ios Manage photo and video storage: https://support.apple.com/en-us/105061 Optimize storage space on iPhone or iPad https://support.apple.com/en-us/108429 iPad Basics from Goodwill: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/ipadbasics/ iPad Guide by Apple: https://support.apple.com/guide/ipad/welcome/ipados YouTube guides to Apple devices and software: https://www.youtube.com/@applesupport

Microsoft	MS Office: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/training https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/subjects/office/ MS Teams: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/microsoft-teams-video-training-4f108e54-240b-4351-8084-b1089f0d21d7
Video Streaming	Discount Amazon Prime (with commercials) for SNAP recipients: https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/splash/freevee_findus/ https://www.amazon.com/58f8026f-0658-47d0-9752-f6fa2c69b2e2/qualify Hoopla and Kanopy: Many libraries across the state offer free access to online video streaming with Hoopla and/or Kanopy Check with the local library. Other: Many paid streaming services (e.g., Max, Netflix, Hulu) offer a free trial or have discounted sales on occasion. If the person does not want to pay, it's recommended to set up at least one reminder to cancel before the first bill arrives. Some monthly or annual services let the person cancel immediately but still enjoy the remainder of her/his subscription. Tubi TV: https://tubitv.com/home
Windows	Windows 10 from Goodwill: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/windows10/ Windows 11 Features & Tips: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/tips/ Windows 11 Microsoft guides: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/meetwindows11
Zoom	https://learning.zoom.us/learn https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.zoom.pwa.twa&hl=en_US&gl=US&pli=1