

ORANGEBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

A Roadmap for Kickstarting Our Digital Economy
Ecosystem (DEE)

JULY 2022



**“WE NEED TO SET
A DIGITAL SHIFT IN
MOTION.”**

ORANGEBURG AT A GLANCE

ORANGEBURG COUNTY

- **Population: 82,962**
- **Unemployment rate: 7.1% (2021); 5.8% (5/22)**
- **In-commuters: 35.3%, Out-commuters: 36.3%, Work and live in county: 28.3%**
- **Racial demographics: 61.8% Black, 34.9% white**
- **Number of households (2016-2020): 33,629**
- **Median household income (2016-2020): \$36,802**
- **Per capita income (2016-2020): \$21,337**
- **People living in poverty: 19.15%**
- **Primary industries: manufacturing, education, health care, county government, retail**
- **Top occupational openings: education, management, healthcare, retail, supervisory**
- **Education: 35.43% high school graduates; 11.22% bachelor's degree; 7.96% associate's degree; 17.30% some college; 13.5% 9-12 grade with no diploma; 7.22% below grade 9**
- **Households with a computer (2016-2020): 81.7%**
- **Households with internet subscriptions in 2022: 72.5%**
- **Broadband Coverage: 83.4%**

CITY OF ORANGEBURG

- **Population: 13,240**
- **Racial demographics: 72.7% Black; 24.7% White**
- **Number of households: 4,435**
- **Median household income (2016-2020): \$28,587**
- **Per capita income: \$17,722**
- **People living in poverty: 29%**
- **Education: 87.4% high school graduate; 27.1% bachelor's degree**
- **Households with a computer (2016-2020): 85.8%**
- **Households with broadband (2016-2020): 80.5%**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the digital economy included 5.1 million jobs in 2017 with an average compensation of \$132,223, but rural communities like Orangeburg continue to trail behind.

Despite a towering education presence by South Carolina State University, Claflin University, and Orangeburg Calhoun Technical College, far too many citizens in Orangeburg County are not fully participating in today's growing digital economy. One of the poorest counties in the state, Orangeburg struggles with a declining population, an escalating crime rate, an unemployment rate above the national median, and a lack of success retaining college graduates. It's time to shift.

SOURCES:

SC Broadband Office

SC Department of Employment and Workforce Data
<https://lmi.dew.sc.gov/lmi%20site/Documents/CommunityProfiles/04000075.pdf>

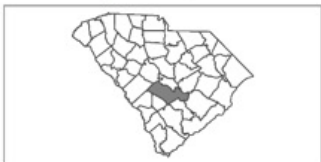
United States Census Bureau. 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office. Web. 17 March 2022.

United States Census Bureau. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010, to July 1, 2019. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Web. May 2020.
<http://www.census.gov/>.

United States Census Bureau. "P2 Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race." 2020 Census State Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File. U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census. Web. 12 August 2021. <https://www.census.gov/>.

Orangeburg County South Carolina Best Available Technology

September 30, 2021



Best Available Technology (type | capability)

- Fiber | Speeds \geq 100 Mbps/100 Mbps (symmetric)
- Cable (DOCSIS 3.1+) | Speeds \geq 100 Mbps/100 Mbps
- Cable (DOCSIS 3.0) | Speeds \geq 100 Mbps/20 Mbps
- Cable (DOCSIS < 2.0) | Speeds \geq 25 Mbps/3 Mbps
- VDSL (Fiber-To-The-Curb) | Speeds \geq 10 Mbps/1 Mbps
- ADSL2+ / ADSL2 | Speeds \geq 6 Mbps/1 Mbps
- Fixed Wireless | Speeds \geq 10 Mbps/1 Mbps
- DSL | Speeds \geq 3 Mbps/768 kbps
- No Internet Service Available
- Zero Households

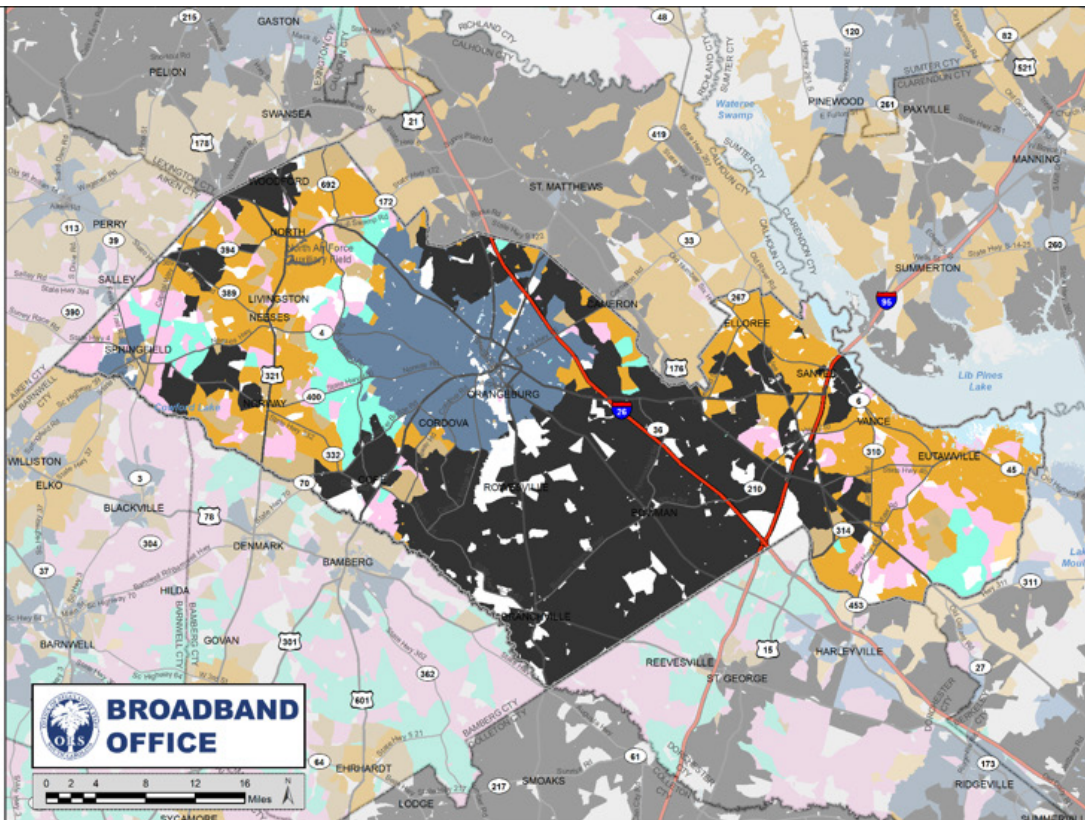
Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office analysis of FCC Form 477, Dec. 31, 2020 (pub. Oct. 29, 2021). In addition, multiple Internet Service Providers have contributed their FCC Form 477, Jun. 30, 2021 data to augment and update the base dataset. Satellite and mobile broadband services are excluded. Demographic data based on US Census 2010 information that was enhanced with ESRI premise level information through Jun. 30, 2020.

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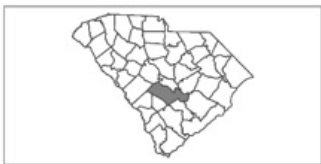


BROADBAND OFFICE

0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles

Orangeburg County South Carolina Areas of Need

September 30, 2021



Speed Tiers (download / upload)

- \geq 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)
- \geq 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps
- \geq 25 Mbps / 3 Mbps

Density of Unserved Households (per sq. mi.)

- 200 or More
- 25 - 199
- 1 - 24
- > 0 and < 1
- Zero

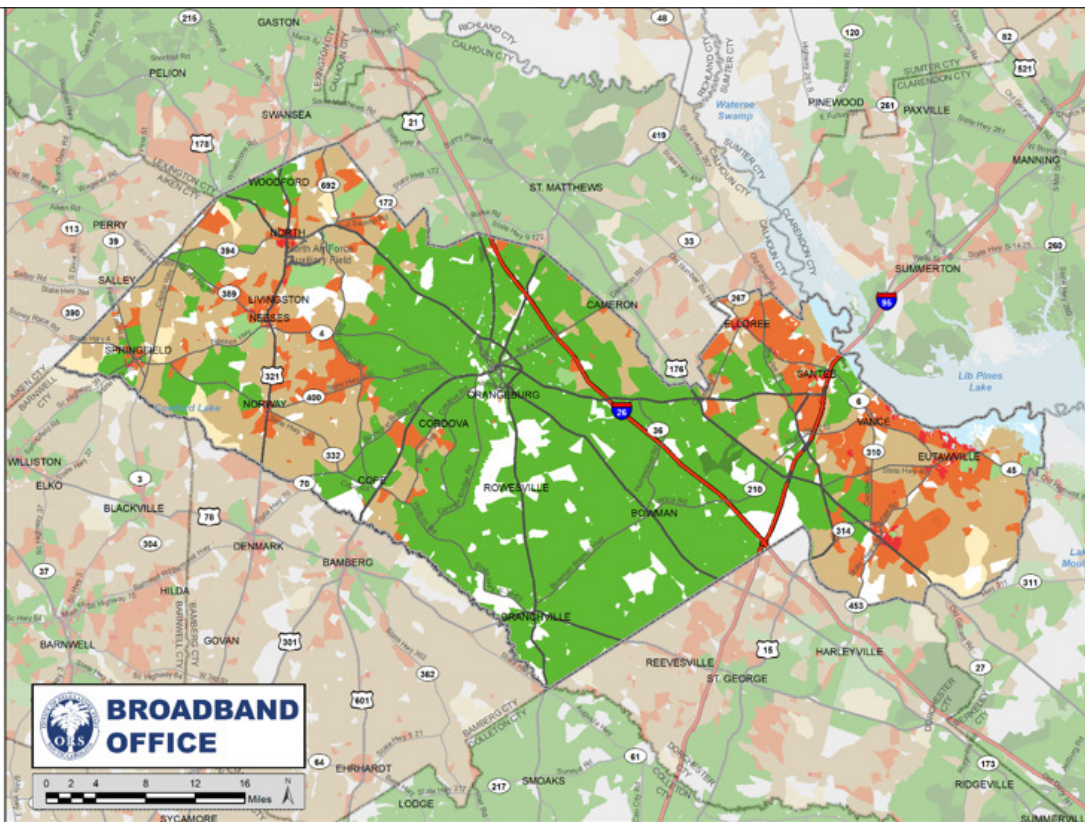
Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office analysis of FCC Form 477, Dec. 31, 2020 (pub. Oct. 29, 2021). In addition, multiple Internet Service Providers have contributed their FCC Form 477, Jun. 30, 2021 data to augment and update the base dataset. Satellite and mobile broadband services are excluded. Demographic data based on US Census 2010 information that was enhanced with ESRI premise level information through Jun. 30, 2020.

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BROADBAND OFFICE

0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles

DEFINING A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM

A digital economy ecosystem (DEE) is an interconnected system of people, programs, and structures working together to make it possible for technology-based entrepreneurs, businesses, and workers to thrive. A DEE generates talent, jobs, remote work, and startup companies, and builds wealth in the local community.

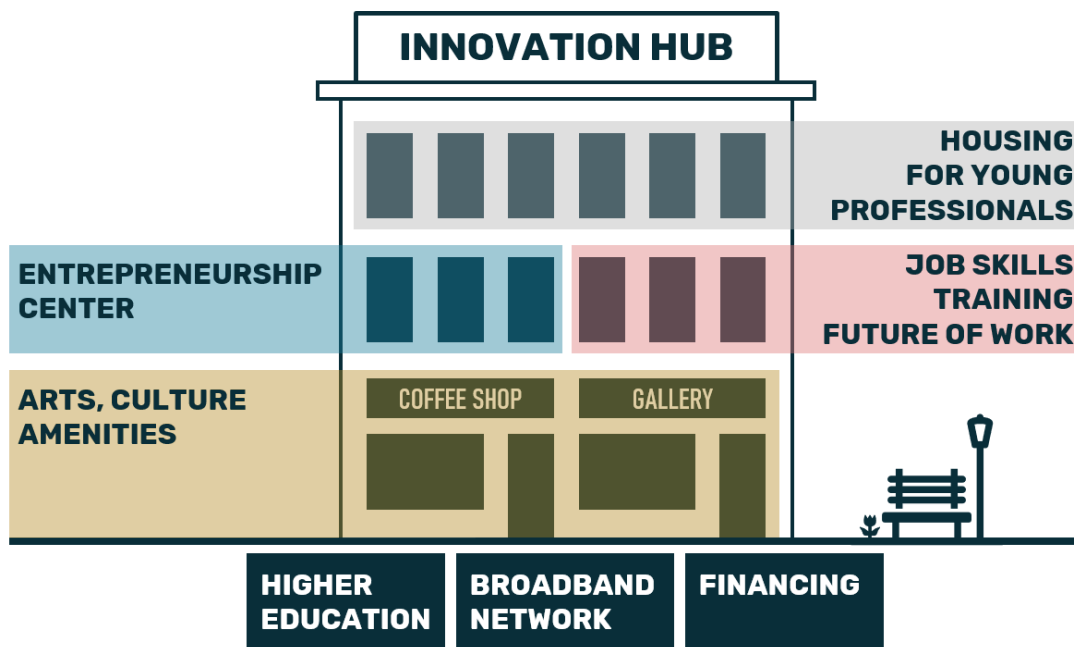
CRITICAL INGREDIENTS FOR BUILDING A DEE COMMUNITY ARE:

- High-speed internet
- Available space
- Low cost of living
- Attractive downtown
- Outdoor amenities
- Colleges and universities
- Strong community connections

THE PRIMARY GOALS OF A DEE INCLUDE:

- Improving digital literacy
- Establishing digital skills training
- Introducing remote work opportunities
- Identifying and supporting entrepreneurial efforts
- Changing the conversation and culture around the future of work

Every community kickstarts DEE revitalization from a different starting point, using a community assessment and identifying leading opportunity assets to guide the process. A readiness assessment leads to developing strategies, timelines, and an action plan that organically becomes the framework or roadmap for igniting community buy-in, attracting funding/investors, and building momentum for a new way of life.



UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

Google. Uber. Amazon. Airbnb. PayPal. TikTok. LinkedIn. YouTube. Slack. Asana.

The digital economy is the financial output of the worldwide network of economic activities, commercial transactions, and professional interactions enabled by information and communications technologies. If you purchase groceries online, pay your water bill, or download a yoga app, you participate in the digital economy.

While technology is making some jobs obsolete, many never-before-imagined jobs continue to emerge, forcing companies of all sizes and types to change how they do business. This shift is forcing people to continue honing their skills.

A sampling of digital job opportunities in the Palmetto State includes:

- App designer
- PR and social media manager
- Digital content creator
- Virtual assistant
- Digital health biostatistician
- Web designer
- Transcriptionist
- Search engine evaluator
- Virtual recruiter
- Paid search specialist



DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

JOBS OF THE FUTURE

- Are tech-based and often remote
- Modernize the travel, education, healthcare, housing, and agriculture industries, among others
- Integrate e-commerce, online shopping, social media marketing, and other digital advances
- Require new and evolving skills



CRITICAL SKILLS FOR DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

- Digital literacy
- Strong written & oral communication skills
- Eager to learn new things & interested in current events
- Strong organization & time management skills
- Problem solver, team player, creative thinker

EXAMPLES OF DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

- App Developer
- Cloud Computing Programmer
- Consumer Experience Manager
- Cybersecurity Specialist
- Product Designer
- Research Specialist
- Software Engineer
- Web Developer
- Bookkeeper
- Customer Service
- Data Entry Specialist
- Graphic Designer
- Medical Billing & Coding
- Search Specialist
- Social Media Manager
- Virtual Assistant



DID YOU KNOW?

More than 4.3 million people in the USA work remotely, including for these major companies:

- Amazon
- CVS
- Google
- Microsoft
- Shopify
- Walmart

Source: Guthrie Jensen Consultants

50% of jobs

are vulnerable to automation.

Food preparation is the industry most vulnerable to automation, followed by construction and cleaning jobs.

By 2030, 63%

of jobs will center on soft skills.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEED FOR DEE ROADMAPS IN RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA

The Center on Rural Innovation (CORI), headquartered in Springfield, Vermont, launched in 2017 to address the dramatic opportunity gap between rural and urban communities by empowering rural communities to build thriving digital economies that support scalable entrepreneurship and local tech job creation.

CORI founder Matt Dunne visited South Carolina in 2018 at the request of South Carolina's Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN) to discuss utilizing CORI's model to build a network of digital economy ecosystem (DEE) communities across the Palmetto State.

In 2019, CORI partnered with Rural Innovation Strategies, Inc. (RISI) to deploy data-driven strategies, leading-edge geospatial tools, and digital economy expertise to advance its rural equity and opportunity work. Today, nearly 30 DEE communities have formed across the U.S., not including the three originating in South Carolina or the two other communities in the pipeline.

By 2030, CORI wants 15% of the nation's digital jobs to match each rural region's race & gender demographics.

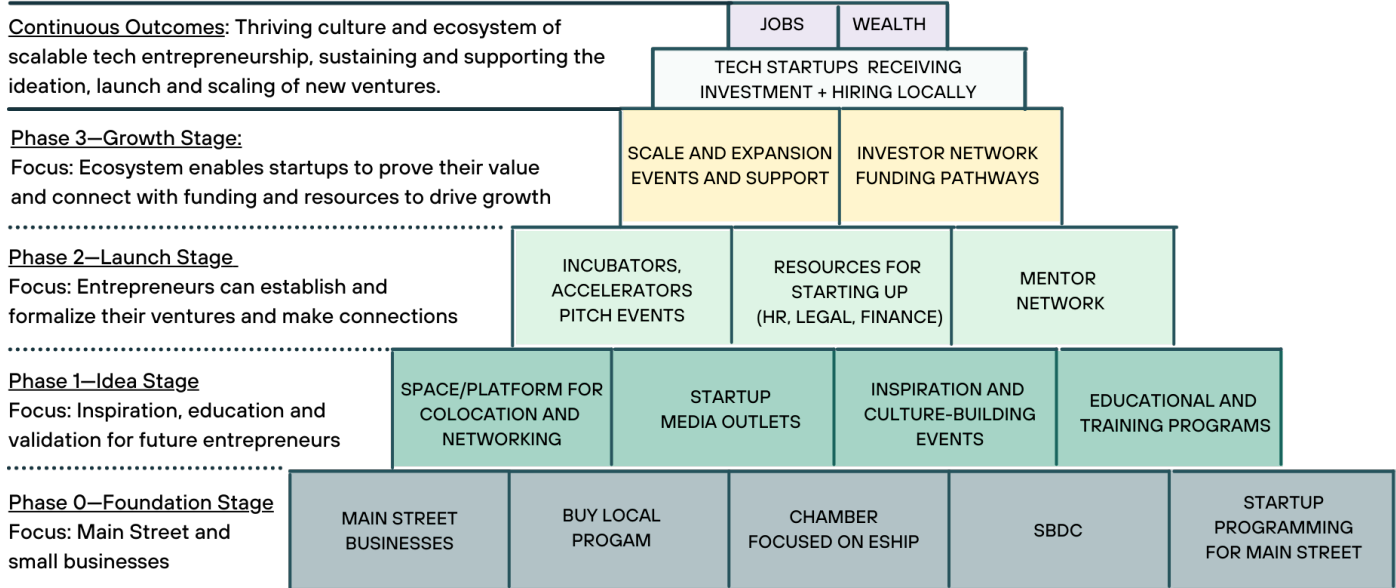
“Rural America wants to be part of the growing tech economy. We know because rural Americans have told us. In a national survey, nearly 60% of rural adults expressed interest in tech jobs and careers. Who could blame them? The digital economy has been a reliable growth engine, expanding 3.5 times faster than the U.S. economy as a whole from 2006 to 2019.”

- Matt Dunne, CORI Founder



Building Blocks of a Scalable Tech Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

How can rural communities create and support local scalable tech startups? By providing targeted efforts at every stage of a startup's journey, communities can elevate their startup ecosystem by focusing on key assets and initiatives to support founders through all phases of growth and maturity. The Center On Rural Innovation is a nonprofit action tank working to advance economic prosperity in rural America through the creation of inclusive digital economy ecosystems that support entrepreneurship and job creation.



SOUTH CAROLINA'S GROWING DIGITAL ECONOMY SUCCESS

In 2019, South Carolina's Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN) and the South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH) joined forces to close the digital equity gap, increase skills and jobs, and create healthier rural communities. With financial support from USDA, the organizations assessed 20 prospective communities before selecting Barnwell and Williamsburg counties to be the first in the state to develop DEE Roadmaps as a starting point for transforming their economies.

Diverse groups of community citizens came together to form DEE "dream teams," meeting monthly or weekly to address challenges, assets, opportunities, and goals. Over 10 months, Barnwell and Williamsburg counties developed custom roadmaps with robust action plans specific to their community needs, and established strategic projects to kickstart change.

With additional support from USDA, SCRIN and SCORH extended their work agreements and entered into implementation phases with Barnwell and Williamsburg counties in fall 2021.

BARNWELL COUNTY'S DEE SUCCESS

- Launched the Palmetto Innovation Center with co-working space under the Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Opened Just Co-Work in Williston
- Hosted a Summer Tech Institute for rising 7th-9th graders in 2021 and 2022
- Hosted a bridge event for public schools to showcase academic progress, including digital and STEM programs, to the business and manufacturing communities
- Hired a DEE coordinator to manage DEE projects via the Innovation Center
- Launched a DEE communications plan
- Launched digital skills training courses (E-commerce for Rural Business and Social Media for Rural Business)
- Launched digital pipeline programs for elementary and middle schools
- Established a telehealth partnership

Additionally, Barnwell recently partnered with USC Salkehatchie to secure USDA funding to develop the Propel Business Lab, a 12-week business accelerator with 20-person cohorts in Barnwell and Allendale counties. The program will culminate in a pitch competition with startup funding for participants.

“Just this week, I helped one 60-year-old member produce her first 30-second TikTok; helped shape a future drive-in movie theater budget, and hosted an information session with a local photographer to help people acquire professional headshots.”

- Bob Snead, Program Director, Palmetto Innovation Center

WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY'S DEE SUCCESS

- Launched a telehealth center in Lane
- Launched a downtown farmer's market in Kingstree
- Added new drone courses at Williamsburg Technical College
- Added new website design course at Williamsburg Technical College
- Opened the Digital Lane Innovation, Co-Working and Training Center
- Hosted a Summer Tech Institute for rising 7-9th graders
- Launched the Tech Connects networking group
- Hosted digital skills training courses

Williamsburg's DEE and the Digital Lane are developing an agribusiness program to introduce ag tech and tools, land management, access to new markets, and farm-to-table opportunities.

“Our objective is to expand our pie so that all can join the new digital world.”

- Helen McFadden, retired attorney and community champion

PARTNERING FOR PROSPERITY IN ORANGEBURG: A FAST-PACED COLLABORATION TO BUILD A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM ROADMAP

Developing a vibrant digital economy in Orangeburg is critical to the community's future. A DEE will create jobs locally and through remote-work opportunities, and spark wealth creation through community-wide entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital businesses.

In September 2021, Orangeburg became the third Palmetto State community to embark on the creation of a custom roadmap with support from the SC Office of Rural Health (SCORH), a Rural Business Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and facilitation and technical assistance provided by the S.C. Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN).

Selected from a pool of 20+ communities seeking to modernize its economic development model, Orangeburg stood out from the crowd because of its eagerness to address its lack of digital skill opportunities and jobs, break down silos, and improve communication.

Collaboration among community leaders kicked into high gear with four critical steps: 1) understanding the availability and accessibility of high-speed internet; 2) identifying leading foundational elements, direct drivers, and community assets; 3) developing key strategies and action plans, and 4) building a visionary team of leaders to carry the roadmap across the finish line and into an active implementation phase.

TIMELINE

September 2022 - Broadband Champion Training

- Introducing community members to what's available and what's lacking with broadband connectivity

November 2021 - March 2022 - Interviews with Community Residents

- Gathering information and personal stories through conversations about assets, gaps, and goals

April-May 2022 - Small Group Work Sessions and Strategy Development with Community Leaders

- Educating community members on what a DEE is and how a roadmap will guide implementation
- Exposing members to active DEE communities and leaders in other states
- Conducting a readiness assessment to evaluate existing foundational elements and direct drivers
- Performing an asset mapping exercise to highlight community strengths
- Providing resources, such as videos, one-pagers, articles, and guest speakers to educate and further engage community stakeholders

June-July 2022 - Strategy Development and Creation of an Action Plan

- Defining the challenge and opportunity
- Creating mission and vision statements
- Identifying the approach – five focus areas
- Creating a team structure
- Outlining execution plans and metrics
- Determining resources/budget
- Explaining why Orangeburg will achieve success

“For all our strengths, one of our biggest weaknesses is a lack of collaboration and support. The sooner we change that, the sooner we’ll become the thriving community we’re destined to be.”

- Jim Johnson, Region Director, South Carolina State University Small Business Development Center

THE ROAD TO A RURAL DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM IN SOUTH CAROLINA

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS:



Broadband infrastructure



An attractive live-work downtown with culture and entertainment options



Quality K-12 education focused on digital skills and STEM

DIRECT DRIVERS:



Access to digital jobs



Digital workforce development and support



Leadership and engagement from private sector, non-profits and higher ed



Access to capital



Co-working, networking and social spaces



Entrepreneur support and incubation

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Quality digital employment opportunities that empower local entrepreneurs to create wealth in their community.



“All thriving communities need and want to grow. I’m excited that Orangeburg is embarking on a digital economy ecosystem project to build jobs, collaborations, and a skilled workforce.”

- Dee Robinson, deputy director, Tri-County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

LEADERS COMMITTED TO MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN: OUR DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM DREAM TEAM

The Orangeburg “dream team” is comprised of a diverse group of 15 community champions working together toward a common goal. The tenacious group of visionaries collectively represents many races, ages, backgrounds, occupations, skill sets, and life experiences.

Through weekly virtual meetings, they collaborated to create a strategic roadmap for kickstarting a new economy.

- Anna Bowers, PR director, Orangeburg County School District
- Wendy Crider, PR coordinator, Orangeburg Calhoun Technical College
- Candace Cruz, health and wellness coach and health equity advocate
- Twaina Harris, director of career pathways, Claflin University
- Tehran Jones, PPP agent, Bamberg
- Wendy Mahuron, Lower Savannah Council on Government
- Marion Martin, small business owner and IT professional
- Charlene Nimmons, director, DSS
- Merry Piccolino, assistant superintendent for communications, business and community partnerships, Orangeburg County School District
- Donnessa Rickenbacker, executive assistant, Orangeburg Regional Innovation Center
- Renee Ritter, adult education director, Orangeburg Technical College
- Candice Roberson, executive director, Orangeburg Downtown Revitalization Association (DORA)
- Dee Robinson, deputy director, Tri-County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Gary Robinson, executive director, Orangeburg Regional Innovation Center
- Ciara Williams, project manager, Orangeburg County Economic Development Commission

HOW DIFFERENT WILL ORANGEBURG BE?

Provide Digital Skills Training

Create a Hub of Expert DEE Trainers & Coaches

Promote Digital Jobs

Build a Dedicated Talent Pipeline

Open More Doors to Remote Work

Launch a Media Production Lab for Small Biz & the Arts

Establish a Modern Digital Communication Tool

Change the Conversation Around the Future of Work & Create a Culture of Opportunity

ROADMAP KICKOFF: ASSESSING OUR READINESS AND MAPPING OUR COMMUNITY'S ASSETS

When it comes to kickstarting a digital economy, some communities have more of what it takes than others — those necessary ingredients like a stable economy and readily available, easily accessible high-speed internet. To more clearly understand Orangeburg's level of readiness, we evaluated the existing framework of foundational elements and direct drivers, which allowed for the prioritization of areas where gaps are limited, and the opportunity to build momentum stood out.

Foundational elements include STEM education, public safety, and community leadership. Direct drivers encompass resources such as access to tech jobs, effective digital workforce development, and a support structure for entrepreneurs and innovation. For a community to maximize the impact of a DEE, it must develop seven critical foundational elements and five crucial direct drivers. Through a series of question-and-answer sessions, worksheets, and group discussions, we narrowed the scope of our community's assets to create a starting point for strategy development.

A READINESS ASSESSMENT OF FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Certain critical elements within a community, such as an attractive live-work downtown and good schools, enable a digital economy ecosystem to thrive.

The seven foundational elements critical to creating a DEE are 1) attractive live-work downtown; 2) culture and entertainment options; 3) quality K-12 education focused on digital skills and STEM; 4) broadband infrastructure; 5) public safety; 6) community leadership and engagement; and 7) public sector leadership and support.

We evaluated these elements and identified quality K-12 education, public sector leadership and support, and community leadership and engagement as the highest ranking based on their capacity to accelerate efforts to develop the main drivers of our new DEE.

A READINESS ASSESSMENT OF DIRECT DRIVERS

Direct drivers enable communities to compete in a digital economy by focusing on building local capacity and successfully providing access to jobs, money, and support.

The five direct drivers critical to creating a DEE are 1) digital workforce development and support; 2) access to digital jobs; 3) scalable tech entrepreneur support and incubation; 4) access to capital; and 5) inclusive tech culture building, or co-working, networking, and social spaces.

We evaluated these drivers and identified scalable tech entrepreneur support and incubation, and inclusive tech culture building, or co-working, networking and social spaces as the highest ranking based on existing efforts, opportunities, and critical priorities for growth.

ASSET MAPPING OUR STRENGTHS

Hundreds of rural communities across our country are planning and implementing innovation and economic development strategies. They're leveraging their strengths to create digital economies that allow them to chart their courses toward prosperity.

Because evaluating critical assets motivates communities to acknowledge existing capabilities and competitive advantages, we utilized asset mapping to prioritize short and long-term goals and create roadmap strategies that leverage existing strengths.

We evaluated eight community assets: 1) education and training programs, 2) physical, 3) cultural, 4) economic, 5) people, 6) policy levers, 7) philanthropic and funding sources, and 8) social institutions/civic groups before determining our leading opportunity assets and core concentrations clusters.

We categorized Orangeburg's primary assets into these concentration clusters:

Leading Education Assets

- Orangeburg County School District
- Claflin University
- South Carolina State University
- Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College
- OCSD Advanced College w/ dual enrollment
- Orangeburg Career and Technology Center
- Lower Savannah COG/SC Works

Leading Cultural Assets

- Ballparks, walking trail and golf courses
- Fine arts center
- Orangeburg Players
- Rose garden and museums
- Rich in history

Leading Enrichment Assets

- Committed group of community champions
- New interest in digital skill training, jobs and remote work
- Action-oriented economic development corporation
- Action-oriented SBDC
- Action-oriented chamber of commerce
- Action-oriented 1890 research and extension
- Growing energy around broadband connectivity

IDENTIFYING LEADING OPPORTUNITY ASSETS

We identified four leading opportunity assets to use in building our DEE strategies and action plan because successfully kickstarting a DEE relies on accessibility to support, talent, ideas, opportunities, and a community's commitment to change. These assets represent projects already in motion with growing visibility.

1. New innovation center and co-working space
2. New library and conference center
3. Entrepreneurial activity and small business creation
4. Downtown revitalization and railroad corner project

ASSET MAP HIGHLIGHTS



ASSET CONCENTRATIONS

Education
Industry/Manufacturing
Healthcare
Entrepreneurism
Agriculture



EDUCATION ASSETS

Claffin University
SC State University
Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College
OCSD & Advanced College w/ Dual Enrollment
Orangeburg Career & Technology Center
Lower Savannah COG/SC Works



LEADING OPPORTUNITY ASSETS

Orangeburg County Library & Conference Center
Innovation Center & Co-Working Space(s)
Entrepreneurial Activity & Small Business Creation
Downtown Revitalization & Railroad Corner Project



CULTURAL ASSETS

Ballpark, Walking Trail & Golf Courses
Fine Arts Center
Orangeburg Players
Rose Garden, Museums
Rich in History



ENRICHMENT ASSETS

Committed Group of Community Champions
New Interest in Digital Skill Training, Jobs & Remote Work
Action-Oriented Economic Development Corporation
Action-Oriented SBDC
Action-Oriented Chamber of Commerce
Action-Oriented 1890 Research & Extension
Growing Energy Around Broadband Connectivity



sc ruralinnovation.org

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GAP: DEFINING OUR PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

By zeroing in on the gaps preventing our community from establishing a digital economy, we identified essential assets to leverage in developing one. Our weaknesses and strengths clarified our aspirations and reminded us WHY we are leading a charge for change.

Working collaboratively, we assembled the community's critical challenges into a singular overarching problem and devised a robust solution to guide future strategies and action plans.

OUR PROBLEM

Orangeburg's digital economy is ripe with potential. A variety of activities are already underway. However, we lack cohesive coordination of projects, clear communication, and a strategic plan with targeted objectives, measurements, and outcomes.

OUR SOLUTION

To create the digital economy we know we are capable of, we must first develop a framework of engaged leaders and priority projects with goals, responsibilities, and timelines. We must establish a master plan for coordination, communication, funding, sustainability, and celebration.

“The question people need an answer to is what is the difference between a digital job and a technical job? We’ve got to paint a clear picture of the jobs and skills we want our community to embrace.”

- Gary Robinson, executive director, Orangeburg Regional Innovation Center

CREATING STRATEGY: DEVELOPING OUR VISION AND MISSION

A thriving digital economy is characterized by the creation of quality digital employment and wealth creation through local entrepreneurship.

Despite external barriers to creating DEE success, such as equitable access to high-speed internet, tech talent and capital, we are committed to eliminating internal obstacles like fear of change, lack of communication, and lack of coordination.

Other internal barriers include closed mindsets and a lack of awareness around the opportunities that can and will be made available to residents in a digital economy. These opportunities, including skills training, networking, coaching, and mentoring, change the scope of what’s possible for employment, employability, and building a concentration of innovative startup companies.

Using the mantra “Creating jobs and careers you can be proud of in a community that you love,” we recognize the significance of building a culture that will grow and support a DEE. We strive for inclusivity, resource development, and a communications plan that will keep residents interested, informed, and engaged.

VISION STATEMENT

To be a leader in our state and country, leveraging our community’s education-focused culture to assemble a thriving consortium of digital training and communication experts. We will prepare our citizens and those in other rural communities for modern jobs, develop solutions to digital equity challenges, and create innovative approaches to scaling digital economies.

MISSION STATEMENT

To put our community on the “digital map” by developing experts in digital skill training, communication, and small business innovation. We will establish a headquarters for digital collaboration that builds on Orangeburg’s long-standing commitment to education and empower our citizens to achieve their highest personal potential and quality of life by acquiring and embracing new skills and mindsets.

CREATING FOCUS AREAS: DEVELOPING CORE STRATEGIES

With well-defined problem and solution statements in place to explain the critical gaps facing our community, along with vision and mission statements to frame our future transformational aspirations, we took strategy development to a higher level by narrowing our scope of concentration clusters and primary focus areas for roadmap strategy development.

The concentration clusters represent the most evident themes where change is possible.

These focus areas represent short-term strategies and priority projects that we will implement throughout 2022 and 2023. They will remain part of our core roadmap structure as new projects, plans, and deadlines emerge.

To effectively evaluate our progress through the implementation and operation of our DEE, we established key performance indicators (KPIs) for each focus area.

ROADMAP CONCENTRATION CLUSTERS

1. Education
 - a. Digital training programs
 - b. Talent pipeline programs
 - c. Programs for manufacturing
 - d. Programs for healthcare
 - e. Programs small business and entrepreneurs
2. Downtown revitalization
3. News, culture and entertainment

ROADMAP FOCUS AREAS

COHESIVE STRUCTURE

Harnessing and aligning existing and new initiatives to create a connected, cohesive approach to building a successful DEE.

KPIs: Having a DEE director in place and meeting objectives, number of people participating, number of training opportunities, number of new businesses, number of jobs filled or created, increased communication and collaboration

CENTERS OF GRAVITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Growing entrepreneurs, businesses, and people skills through technology; utilizing our centers of gravity or places and spaces that signify action, innovation, and movement toward establishing an inclusive DEE.

KPIs: Open and operational centers, number of members, number of participants, number of trainings and events, profit/loss, visibility (media mentions, Google alerts)

LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Building DEE sustainability through quality leadership, investments, and the creation of diverse revenue streams.

KPIs: Hiring a talented leader, amount of dollars raised, dollars earned, partnerships and collaborations, community engagement and ambassadors

TALENT PIPELINE, READY-TO-WORK AND INCREASED INNOVATION

Creating education initiatives that expose the talent pipeline to DEE skills and careers; training initiatives that prepare our ready-to-work population for local and remote jobs; and innovation initiatives that help small businesses grow with the help of digital tools.

KPIs: Number of programs, number of participants, number of people trained, number of jobs, number of new businesses, number of existing businesses helped, geographic reach

COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTIVITY

Developing digital mechanisms for sharing news, information, opportunities, and more while simultaneously growing digital literacy across municipalities.

KPIs: Number of people utilizing apps, community management tools and social media for DEE information, number of people joining online groups and pages, number of people participating in courses and events as a result of communication and digital tools



DEVELOPING A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A shared vision and key concepts comprising a community's strategy document are the driving forces behind developing a tech-skilled workforce, promoting innovation-based jobs, energizing entrepreneurship, and establishing an ecosystem that attracts positive attention, investment, and momentum.

Vision

How will we be different?

Mission

What's our big idea?

Challenge & Opportunity

What gaps are we filling?

Approach

What are our 3-4 focus areas, and how will we leverage existing assets?

Team

What is our team's structure, and how will we work together to position our community for success?

Execution Plan

What activities will we deploy, and what's our timeline?

Success Metrics

What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) for each focus area?

Resources/Budget

How much do we need to implement activities critical to achieving our goals?

Conclusion

Why our team and community WILL achieve success.

CREATING ACTION GROUPS: DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP MODEL

Orangeburg’s leadership team identified nine strategies and priority projects with descriptions, action steps, budgets, and action group leaders using the selected focus areas as a guide. The goal is to grow each action group with new members from outside the DEE “dream team” to continue enhancing the roadmap and the perspective, energy, and visibility of each project.

OUR ACTION GROUPS INCLUDE:

- Framework
- Leadership and sustainability
- Education
- K-12
- Ready-to-work, adult ed
- Entrepreneurs
- Business and industry
- Healthcare and telehealth
- Job access and networking support
- Innovation
- Communication

DEVELOPING A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM: ACTION PLANNING

Community efforts toward building a digital and innovation-based economy require skilled project management, open communication lines, and an action-tracking system with regular progress reports.

Action Plan Structure

Key Themes, Focus Areas, Descriptions

Team Members, Roles/Assigned Focus Areas, Primary Responsibilities

Action Steps, Due Dates, Objectives, Notes

Phase One

Get Organized

Build Out Action Plan

Assign Roles, Actions & Deadlines

Phase Two

Exploration & Stakeholder Engagement

Example

Key Theme

Innovation Center

Focus Area

Business & Entrepreneurship

Description

Create a visible center of gravity for entrepreneurial activities, resources, and opportunities

Action Steps

- Assess innovation centers in urban areas to look for patterns
- Assess tech skill needs from local industry
- Identify training opportunities, programs, and qualified trainers
- Identify technology and space needs
- Secure resources & support
- Develop a calendar and communication plan
- Launch training program

OUR DEE ROADMAP: KICKSTARTING OUR DIGITAL ECONOMY

Nine strategies with aligned technical projects and a budget totaling approximately \$258,386 create the engine that is Orangeburg's DEE roadmap. Inclusive of critical themes like leadership, education, skilling up, and communication, this framework of priority projects will kickstart a new economy, ignite transformation, alter mindsets, and create a welcome path to prosperity for all residents of the greater Orangeburg community.

During the development of short-term projects, the Orangeburg DEE deployed three surveys to uncover digital skilling needs in the manufacturing and healthcare industries as well as in the general population. Data collection is ongoing.

The community also identified three long-term projects.

1. Create a cohort of expert trainers
2. Develop custom digital courses to support specific industry needs
3. Develop a media production collaborative to specialize in marketing small businesses and local arts and entertainment

CREATE DIGITAL SKILLING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE READY-TO-WORK POPULATION (AGES 16 AND UP)

Focus Area

Talent pipeline, digital training and innovation culture

Description

Develop and deliver training opportunities to help community members grow their digital skills to position them for higher-paying local or remote jobs or entrepreneurship

Action Groups

Education, business and industry, healthcare, job access and networking

Action Group Lead

Gary Robinson

Resources Needed

Funding, locations, trainers, curriculum, registration, technology, partnerships with DEE network, subscriptions, marketing

Timeline

4-6 months to launch

KPIs:

courses offered, # people trained, # jobs, # startups

Action Steps

Conduct surveys, develop course list and calendar, determine fees and locations, raise money, hire trainers and facilitators, develop website and deploy marketing

Stakeholders

Community members, business and industry, healthcare, economic development

Budget

\$51,750

CREATE ACCESS TO DIGITAL JOBS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF A MOTIVATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE

Focus Area

Communication and connectivity

Description

Develop a network of local and remote companies and organizations seeking digital talent and create access to local and remote job opportunities

Action Groups

Job access and networking, communication

Action Group Lead

Twaina Harris

Resources Needed

Introductions, CRM software, email marketing, collaboration tools, tracking and analytics, social media, promotional campaigns

Timeline

6-12 months

KPIs

hiring partners, # jobs promoted to the community, # jobs filled

Action Steps

Conduct surveys, utilize HR contacts, partner with SC Works, develop database, build relationships

Stakeholders

Community members, business, industry and healthcare

Budget

\$8,898

CREATE ACCESS TO REMOTE JOBS THROUGH CO-WORKING SPACES AND SATELLITE INCUBATORS WITH HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

Focus Area

Centers of gravity

Description

Enhance existing co-working spaces and create new ones across the community, providing access to high-speed internet and remote work jobs

Action Groups

Framework, job access and networking, communication

Action Group Lead

Gary Robinson

Resources Needed

Locations, furniture, free Wi-Fi marketing

Timeline

6-12 months

KPIs

spaces, # desks, # people, geographic reach

Action Steps

Take inventory, assess needs, develop fee structure, develop partnerships, open doors to companies hiring remote workers, market and grow visibility

Stakeholders

Community members, economic development

Budget

\$52,480

CREATE A FORMAL NETWORKING PROGRAM TO FACILITATE JOBS, IDEAS, RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Focus Area

Communication and connectivity

Description

Develop a monthly gathering opportunity (Game Changers) for residents interested in obtaining digital skills, jobs, and information about resources and opportunities

Action Group Lead

Donnessa Rickenbacker

Timeline

2-4 months

Resources Needed

Meeting spaces, hosts, refreshments, guest speakers, speaker stipends, marketing and promotion, pop-up signage

KPIs

events, # attendees, # adopters, # members, geographic reach, diversity

Action Steps

Organize speakers, dates and locations; determine marketing and promotion

Stakeholders

Community members, SCBD, chamber, economic development

Budget

\$5,240

CREATE A DIGITAL TALENT PIPELINE THROUGH CAREER EXPOSURE PROGRAMS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Focus Area

Talent pipeline, digital training and innovation culture

Description

Plan and implement an afterschool or summer camp experience to introduce students to digital skills, jobs, and careers; work with counselors to create visibility at career fairs

Action Groups

Education (K-12)

Action Group Lead

Merry Piccolino

Resources Needed

Funds, speakers, teachers, snacks, equipment, technology, marketing

KPIs

students, # teachers, # opportunities/career fairs, community awareness

Timeline

6-12 months

Action Steps

Develop scope, identify teachers, create curriculum, build budget, market

Stakeholders

Community members, business and industry, talent pipeline

Budget

NA

CREATE A DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR SHARING INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES ABOUT TRAINING AND JOBS; POTENTIALLY PARTNERING WITH STREAMING TV, PODCASTS AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Focus Area

Communication and connectivity

Description

Develop an app for communicating information about the DEE with partners, potential partners and participants

Action Groups

Innovation and communication

Action Group Leads

Marion Martin, Wendy Crider, Tony DeAloia

Resources Needed

App developer, writer, photographer, content developer, audio/visual technicians

KPIs

subscribers, # advertisers, # hits

Timeline

6-12 months

Actons Steps

Seek out developer, raise funds, build platform, develop content, market

Stakeholders

Community members

Budget

\$12,013

HIRE A DEE DIRECTOR TO LEAD COORDINATION, FUNDRAISING AND SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Focus Area

Leadership and sustainability

Description

Hire a passionate and capable individual to align DEE projects, create a brand/culture for the ecosystem, and carry out roadmap objectives

Action Groups

Framework and leadership

Action Group Lead

Candace Cruz, Marion Martin, Gary Robinson

Resources Needed

Job description, salary, expectations, laptop, business cards, phone stipend, other business essentials

Timeline

6-12 months

KPIs

applicants, funds raised, visibility, expectations met/exceeded

Action Steps

Write job description, raise funds, set expectations, hire

Stakeholders

EDC, chamber, education community, downtown revitalization

Budget

\$76,710

DEVELOP A DEE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Focus Area

Communication and connectivity

Description

Create a DEE presence via social media, website, newsletter, grassroots presentations, earned media and more

Action Group

Communication

Action Group Leads

Ciara Williams, Wendy Crider, Marion Martin

Resources Needed

Funding, content creators, graphic designers, printing services, collateral, domain

KPIs

unique messages, # website visitors, # shares, # mentions, # followers

Timeline

4-6 months

Action Steps

Develop landing page, social media, news releases, promotional flyer/rack card, establish email database, meet with other DEE Leaders across the South Carolina to collaborate

Stakeholders

Community members, business, industry, healthcare

Budget

\$46,600

DEVELOP A THINK TANK OF DEE CHAMPIONS TO HELP US ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

Focus Area

Cohesive structure

Description

Create an action group of doers and thinkers to support the cohesive structure and success of the DEE with a focus on the economic interests of Orangeburg through communication, critical thinking, and quantitative research. The think tank will be the source of information, analysis, and policy innovation.

Action Groups

Framework and leadership sustainability

Action Group Leads

Marion Martin and Dee Robinson

Resources Needed

Meeting locations, meeting sponsors, collaboration tools, shared cloud storage

Timeline

1-2 months

KPIs

members, # industries, # projects planned, # projects completed

Action Steps

Form a group of existing DEE members, plan first meeting, create recurring meeting schedule, select and set up collaboration tools and storage, recruit members, share content to grow visibility

Stakeholders

Community members, economic development

Budget

\$4,695





OUR FORMULA FOR SUCCESS: THE WHY BEHIND OUR ROADMAP

“Orangeburg will successfully implement our DEE Roadmap because we are committed to eliminating our weaknesses, building upon our strengths, and helping all citizens reach their highest potential.”

- Orangeburg DEE Dream Team

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RURAL HEALTH
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