Who has access to information technology?

Bar chart: Percentage of Households — No computer / No internet

- Wake: No computer 4, No internet 4
- Orange: No computer 6, No internet 8
- Durham: No computer 8, No internet 8
- Johnston: No computer 10, No internet 15
- Chatham: No computer 13, No internet 5
- Moore: No computer 13, No internet 4
- Lee: No computer 17, No internet 13
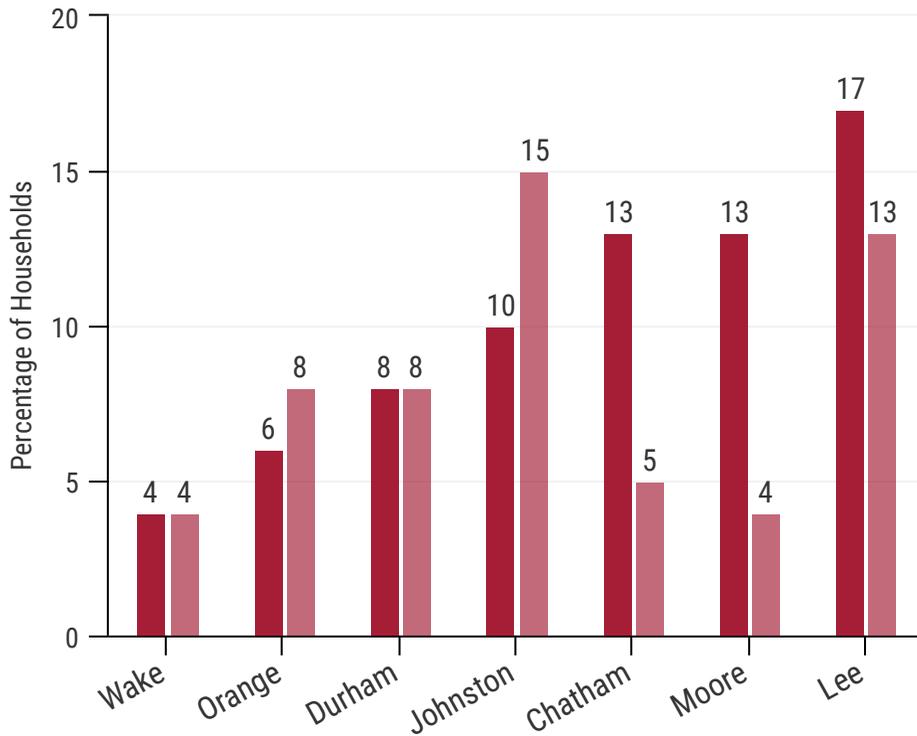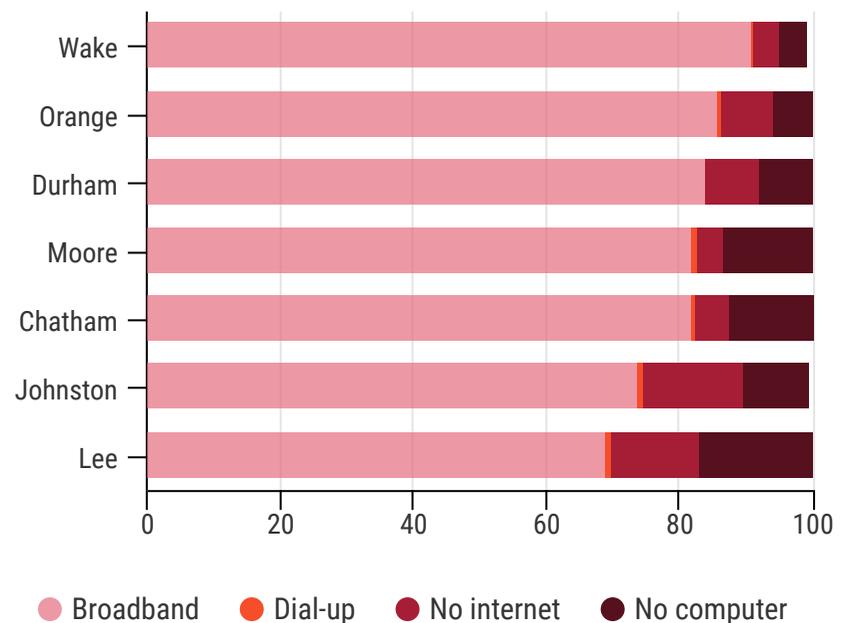
Conversations about the "digital divide" in North Carolina emphasize the importance of considering equity as the region continues to grow. Access to high speed internet can foster economic development, job growth, and educational quality for local schools.

In the seven-county Triangle J region, the percentage of households that have no internet access ranges from less than one in twenty households in Wake County to nearly one in six Johnston County households. This data accounts for all internet subscriptions, including broadband, dial-up, satellite service and cellular data plans. In Lee County, nearly one in five households do not own a computer (though members of this household may still access the internet through cellular data plans). Computer ownership is highest in Wake, Orange, and Durham Counties where over 90% of households have at least one computer.

Broadband, or high-speed, readily available internet access, plays an essential role in commerce, education, health and public safety. Lack of broadband, especially in rural communities, can the ability of communities to attract investment and development, limit remote educational opportunities, and inhibit telecommunications.

In urban counties, like Wake County, access to broadband is widespread, with over 90% of households having a broadband subscription. By contrast, in Johnston and Lee Counties, less than 75% of households access broadband subscriptions.

Rural communities across the country are forced to find creative solutions to expanding broadband access for its citizens. In North Carolina, broadband has been highlighted in state budget proposals, counties have conducted gap analyses to understand access and lack thereof, and cities and towns have advocated for expansion. The state Broadband Infrastructure Office is collecting data on underserved areas of the state and municipalities are applying for state grants aimed at expanding broadband access specifically in rural communities.

Stacked bar chart by county (Wake, Orange, Durham, Moore, Chatham, Johnston, Lee): Broadband, Dial-up, No internet, No computer