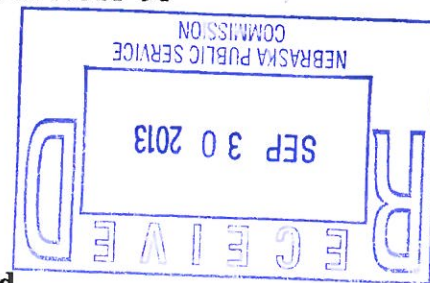


## BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission, on its own motion, to increase broadband adoption among low-income consumers through the development of a Nebraska broadband telephone assistance program.

) Application No. NUSF-91  
)  
)  
)  
)  
)  
)



### Comments of Center for People in Need

Center for People in Need (the “Center”) respectfully submits these Comments in response to the Commission’s Order Opening Docket and Seeking Comments (the “Order”) entered on August 13, 2013. The Center is grateful for the opportunity to articulate its position regarding the Commission’s investigation on ways to increase broadband adoption among low-income consumers in Nebraska.

### Background on the Center

The Center for People in Need is a non-profit 501(c)(3) human services organization founded in 2003. The Center is located at 3901 North 27th Street in Lincoln. Its mission is to provide comprehensive services and opportunities to support low-income, high needs families and individuals as they strive to lift themselves out of poverty and achieve economic self-sufficiency. The Center works with, and on behalf of, individuals and groups who are underserved and under-represented in the community. This population is disproportionately comprised of low-income and ethnic minorities. Beneficiaries of agency services generally have incomes which fall below 150% of federal poverty guidelines and almost all are below 100% of federal poverty guidelines.

The Center aids those in the community through its programs and services, including:

- Neighborhood FOOD, which distributed over 2.2 million pounds of free food last year at four neighborhood food sites;
- Truckloads of Help, a program that distributed over \$38 million of free, new donated merchandise to 244 Nebraska human services agencies in the last two years;
- Job Skills Training (janitorial, warehousing, forklift, clerical, retail, food prep, child care);
- Education Programs with Southeast Community College (English as a Second Language (ESL), General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and Adult Basic Education (ABE));
- A Conference and Job Training Center with a 24-seat computer lab and classrooms;
- Special Events (Giving ThanksGiving, Toyland for Kids, Tools for Education); and
- Resource Handbook (information on free and low-cost goods, services, and assistance).

In sum, the Center provides a variety of services to meet the basic, emergency needs of families and individuals through delivery of direct services. The Center also assists other human service agencies in the community that are providing for the social and economic needs of low-income, high needs families and individuals. For example, the Nebraska Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (“Nebraska VR”) leases 20,000 square feet of the Center’s building to accommodate their staffing and program needs. This partnership provides unique benefits for clients from both agencies. The Center supports job skill development and education for low-income and Nebraska VR has employment counselors onsite to work with Center clients to provide additional support as participants in job skills training seek employment and enter the workforce. Part of the Center’s job skill development is to improve computer skills for low-income workers.

The Center also partners with ResCare Workforce Services, a contractor with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for welfare-to-work (“ADC”) programs. ADC recipients have an opportunity to go back to school full-time while they are receiving benefits for a maximum of five years. This offers a unique period during which they can resume their education and better prepare themselves for employment at a living wage. However, economic resources are a constant barrier for those who are trying to seek higher education and, as a result, ADC recipients seeking higher education typically cannot afford the proper technology, such as a computer or internet services, at home.

Every year the Center conducts a client survey of over 2000 households and publishes an annual report called *The Face of Poverty Today in Lincoln, Nebraska*. In 2011, when compared with the total low income population surveyed, ADC recipients make less, have less of an education, and are in single-parent homes: 46% of ADC clients have \$0-500/month income versus 27% of the entire survey. There were 167 of 261 two-adult households in which neither adult had more than an eleventh grade education. Fifty one percent of ADC clients are single; compare this with the 36% of the total population surveyed that are single. Such profound numbers demonstrates how economically disadvantaged Nebraskans will remain in poverty if they don’t have access to education, and to actually succeed, students need computers and the internet.

The Center recently received an \$1 million Accessing College through Technology Grant (“ACT Grant”) to address on-going concerns that low-income students attending Southeast Community College (“SCC”) lack the proper technology to succeed in their education. The funding for the ACT Grant will provide 945 students that attend SCC with high speed broadband internet access at home, a laptop, a modem to connect to the internet if needed, and a USB flash

drive. Those at SCC believe that the ACT Grant will be very effective in bringing people out of poverty by improving their education through better access to computers and internet services. While SCC provides on-campus access to computers and internet, many students, especially those with families, need the ability to get their homework done after they get home from work or get the kids to bed. This makes internet-based research assignments or required reading difficult, if not impossible, to complete. Many classes also require access to online programs to complete homework assignments or to access practice questions for future tests. There are also online discussion rooms where students can ask questions of their fellow students or professors. Having internet access at home is vital for these individuals to excel in their education which can lead them to better their lives and those of their dependent family members.

#### **Low Income Internet Usage in Lincoln, Nebraska**

On September 24, 2013, the Center administered a survey ("Survey") measuring certain areas of low income internet usage among 157 clients of the Center who received food distributions from the Center on September 24<sup>th</sup>. A copy of the Survey is attached hereto as Exhibit "1" and the results from the Survey are attached hereto as Exhibit "2". The Survey asked the 157 respondents questions about their internet usage, the availability of internet, and costs associated internet usage.

The Survey shows that 37% of respondents do not have internet in their home while 32% of respondents do not have a computer at home. The 5% of respondents who access the internet but do not have a computer at home accessed the internet through a mobile phone or tablet. Ten percent of respondents stated that they did not own an internet device. When asked about the cost of internet services, 50% of those surveyed stated that they could afford \$0-\$10/month for

internet services. Finally, of those 54% of respondents with school age children, 72% of them indicated that their kids used the internet for school.

### **Conclusion**

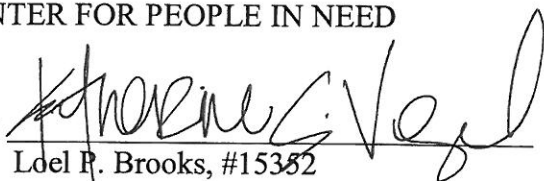
The Center believes the Commissions expansion of the NTAP Program to increase broadband access among low-income consumers in Nebraska is of vital importance to Lincoln's low-income population as it is essential to furthering education, obtaining employment, and providing additional economic opportunities. The Center welcomes the opportunity to work with the Commission and to continue providing data to the Commission regarding the need in the community for broadband subsidies for low-income Nebraska consumers.

Viaero looks forward to providing further comment and analysis as this Docket progresses.

DATED this 30<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2013.

CENTER FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

By:



Loel P. Brooks, #15352

Katherine S. Vogel #23982

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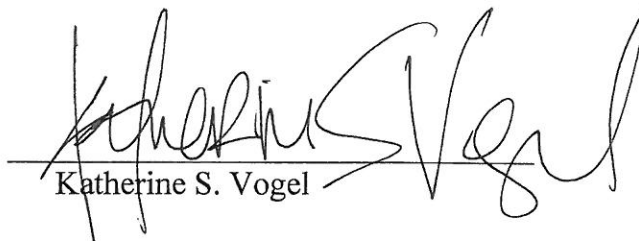
and

Beatty Brasch, Executive Director  
Center for People in Need  
3901 N. 27th Street, Unit 1  
Lincoln, NE 68521

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this 30<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2013, five paper copies and one electronic copy of Center for People in Need's Comments in Docket No. NUSF 91 were delivered to:

Sue Vanicek Nebraska Public Service Commission 1200 N Street, Suite 300 Lincoln, NE 68508 sue.vanicek@nebraska.gov	Shana Knutson Nebraska Public Service Commission 1200 N Street, Suite 300 Lincoln, NE 68508 <u>shana.knutson@nebraska.gov</u>
Brandy Zierott Nebraska Public Service Commission 1200 N Street, Suite 300 Lincoln, NE 68508 brandy.zierott@nebraska.gov	

  
Katherine S. Vogel

**EXHIBIT A**

**Center for People in Need  
Low Income Internet Usage Survey**

# Internet Usage Survey

Individual responses are kept confidential by the Center for People in Need and used only for research purposes

Please fill in the bubbles like this: ●

**1. What is your gender?**

Male ☐ Female ☐

**2. What age are you?**

Younger than 19 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 50-59 ☐  
20-29 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 60+ ☐

**3. What is your ethnicity?**

African-American ☐ Multi-Racial ☐ Other ☐  
Asian ☐ Native American ☐ White ☐  
Hispanic ☐ Pacific Islander ☐ Prefer not to answer ☐  
Karen ☐

**4. How many children do you have in your household?**

0 children ☐ 3 children ☐ 6 Children ☐  
1 child ☐ 4 children ☐ 7+ Children ☐  
2 children ☐ 5 children ☐

**5. What is your household income per month?**

\$0 - 500 ☐ \$1501 - 2000 ☐ Prefer not to answer ☐  
\$501 - 1000 ☐ \$2001 - 2500 ☐  
\$1001 - 1500 ☐ \$2501 + ☐

**6. What is the highest level of education you have received?**

Less than high school degree ☐ Associates degree ☐  
High School degree ☐ Bachelor's degree ☐  
Some college, no degree ☐ Post-undergraduate degree ☐  
YES NO

**7. Do you know what the internet is?**

☐ ☐

**8. Do you know how to use a computer?**

☐ ☐

**9. Do you have internet at your home?**

☐ ☐

**10. If yes on question 9, who is your provider?**

Cox ☐ Windstream ☐ Mobile service provider ☐  
Time Warner ☐ Other ☐

**11. Please mark any devices that you use to access the internet**

Personal computer ☐ Tablet ☐  
Mobile phone ☐ I do own any devices that can access the internet ☐

YES NO

**12. Do you have a computer in your home?**

☐ ☐

**13. If yes, does it work? (Leave blank if no on 12)**

☐ ☐

Additional questions on back page



**14. How much do you pay for your internet service each month?**

I do not have internet	<input type="radio"/>	\$21-30 per month	<input type="radio"/>	\$51-60 per month	<input type="radio"/>
\$0-10 per month	<input type="radio"/>	\$31-40 per month	<input type="radio"/>	\$60+ per month	<input type="radio"/>
\$11-20 per month	<input type="radio"/>	\$41-50 per month	<input type="radio"/>	Do not know	<input type="radio"/>

**15. Does the price you listed include your phone bill?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

**16. If yes on question 15, how much per month is your phone bill per month?**

\$0-10	<input type="radio"/>	\$21-30	<input type="radio"/>	\$50+	<input type="radio"/>
\$11-20	<input type="radio"/>	\$31-40	<input type="radio"/>	Do not know	<input type="radio"/>

**17. Is the internet speed you currently receive sufficient for your needs? (Is your internet fast enough?)**

Yes ☐ No ☐

**18. How many people in your household use a computer and the internet?**

1 person	<input type="radio"/>	3 people	<input type="radio"/>	5 people	<input type="radio"/>	7+ people	<input type="radio"/>
2 people	<input type="radio"/>	4 people	<input type="radio"/>	6 people	<input type="radio"/>		

**19. Do you currently receive financial assistance for telephone service from the Nebraska Lifeline program? (Assistance or discounted rate on your telephone bill?)**

Yes ☐ No ☐

**20. If you do not currently receive internet, how much could you afford to pay for internet on a monthly basis? (If you do receive internet, leave blank)**

\$0-10 per month	<input type="radio"/>	\$21-30 per month	<input type="radio"/>	\$50+ per month	<input type="radio"/>
\$11-20 per month	<input type="radio"/>	\$31-40 per month	<input type="radio"/>		

**21. Do you have any children in school?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

**22. If yes on question 21, what level of education are your children enrolled in?**

Elementary School	<input type="radio"/>	High School	<input type="radio"/>	Other	<input type="radio"/>
Middle School	<input type="radio"/>	College	<input type="radio"/>		

**23. If yes on question 21, do your children need the internet for school work?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

**24. Do you find internet access to be important to the daily needs of your household?**

Yes ☐ No ☐

**EXHIBIT B**

**Center for People in Need  
Low Income Internet Usage Survey Results**



# **Low Income Internet Usage in Lincoln, Nebraska**

Administered by the Center for People in Need on September 24, 2013  
157 Respondents



# Detailed Item Analysis Report

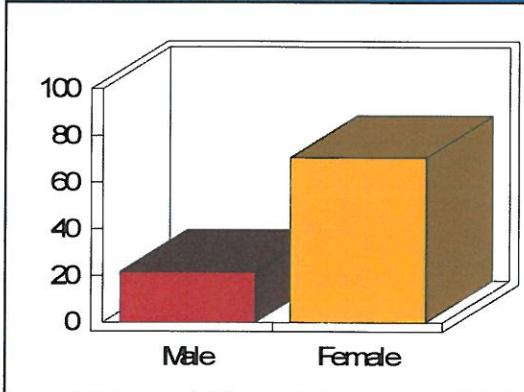
2013

Low Income Internet Usage in Lincoln, Nebraska

The Center for People in Need

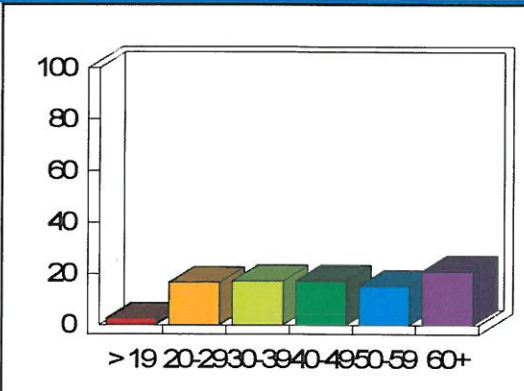
What is your gender?

Mean: 1.77

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
Male	34	21.66	23.45	
Female	111	70.70	76.55	
<b>Total Valid</b>	145	92.36	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	12	7.64		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

What is your age?

Mean: 3.99

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
> 19	4	2.55	2.84	
20-29	26	16.56	18.44	
30-39	27	17.20	19.15	
40-49	27	17.20	19.15	
50-59	24	15.29	17.02	
60+	33	21.02	23.40	
<b>Total Valid</b>	141	89.81	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	16	10.19		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

What is your ethnicity

Mean: 6.61

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
African American	13	8.28	9.70	
Asian	6	3.82	4.48	
Hispanic	23	14.65	17.16	
Karen	1	0.64	0.75	
Multi-Racial	3	1.91	2.24	
Native American	6	3.82	4.48	
Pacific Islander	2	1.27	1.49	
Other	1	0.64	0.75	
White	75	47.77	55.97	
Prefer not to answer	4	2.55	2.99	
<b>Total Valid</b>	134	85.35	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	23	14.65		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

How many children in your household?

Mean: 2.72

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
0 Children	47	29.94	35.61	
1 Child	21	13.38	15.91	
2 Children	25	15.92	18.94	
3 Children	17	10.83	12.88	
4 Children	12	7.64	9.09	
5 Children	5	3.18	3.79	
6 children	3	1.91	2.27	
7+ children	2	1.27	1.52	
<b>Total Valid</b>	132	84.08	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	25	15.92		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

What is your household income?

Mean: 2.97

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
\$ 0-500	28	17.83	20.29	
\$ 501-1000	39	24.84	28.26	
\$ 1001-1500	26	16.56	18.84	
\$ 1501-2000	27	17.20	19.57	
\$ 2001-2500	3	1.91	2.17	
\$ 2501+	2	1.27	1.45	
Prefer not to answer	13	8.28	9.42	
<b>Total Valid</b>	138	87.90	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	19	12.10		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

What is your highest level of education?

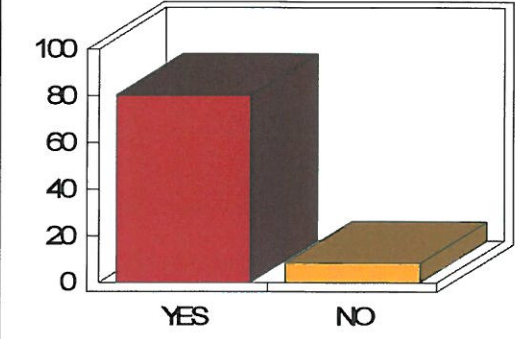
Mean: 2.50

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
Less than HS Degree	27	17.20	19.71	
High School Degree	56	35.67	40.88	
Some college no degree	26	16.56	18.98	
Associates Degree	16	10.19	11.68	
Bachelor's Degree	10	6.37	7.30	
Post-undergraduate degree	2	1.27	1.46	
<b>Total Valid</b>	137	87.26	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	20	12.74		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		



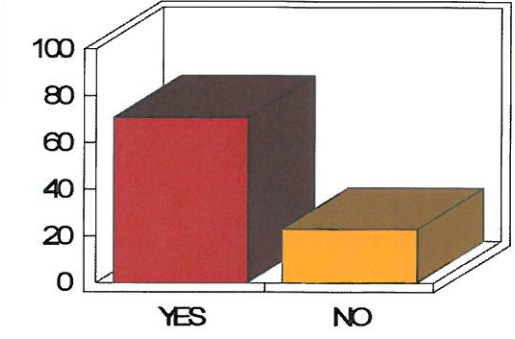
Do you know what the internet is?

Mean: 1.09

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	126	80.25	90.65	
NO	13	8.28	9.35	
<b>Total Valid</b>	139	88.54	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	18	11.46		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

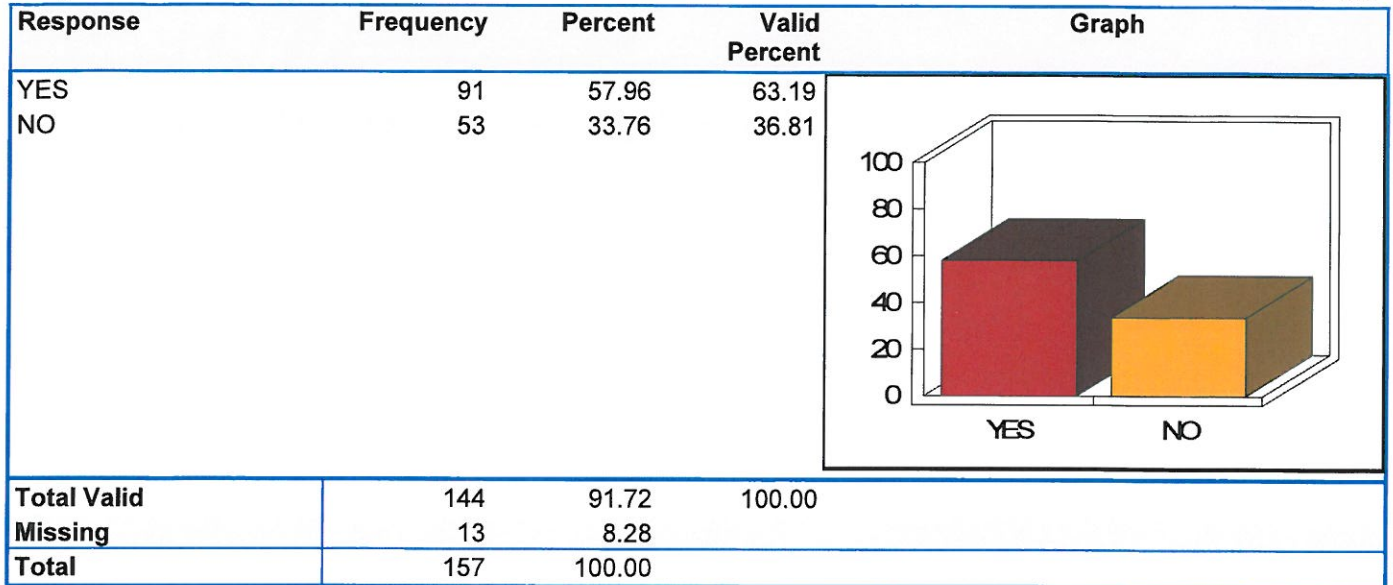
Do you know how to use a computer?

Mean: 1.24

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	111	70.70	75.51	
NO	36	22.93	24.49	
<b>Total Valid</b>	147	93.63	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	10	6.37		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

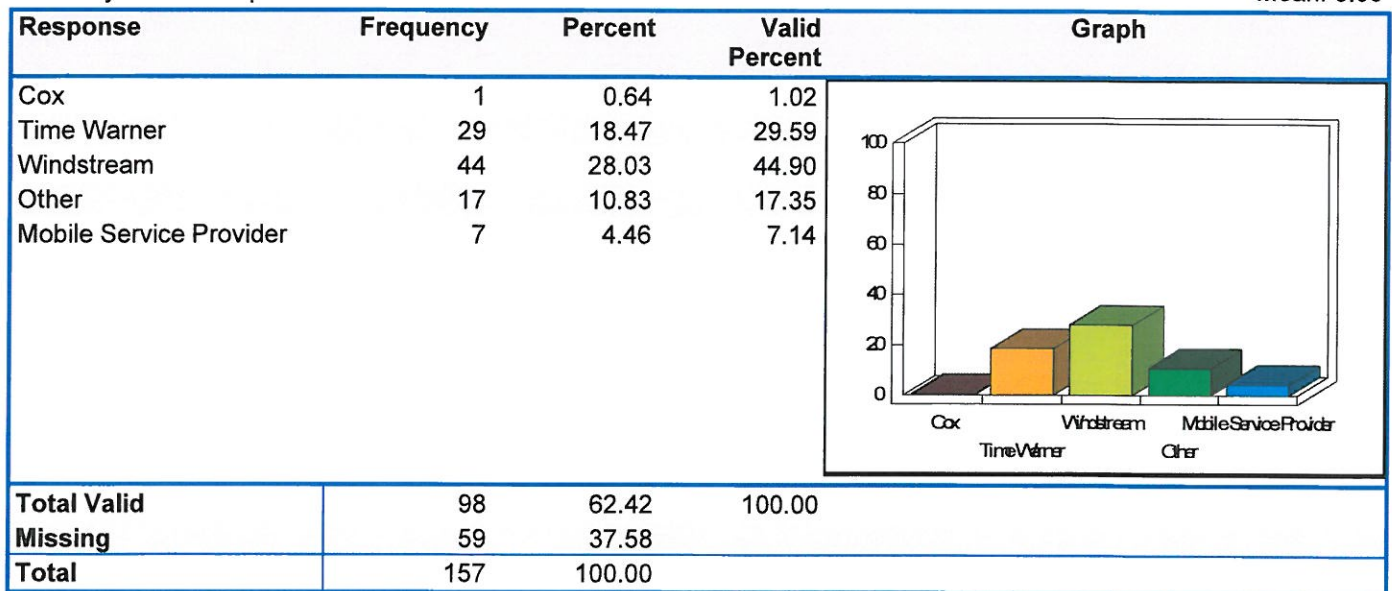
Do you have internet at your home?

Mean: 1.37



Who is your service provider?

Mean: 3.00





Mark devices that you use to access the internet

Mean: 1.88

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
PC	46	29.30	51.11	
Mobile Phone	26	16.56	28.89	
Tablet	1	0.64	1.11	
Do not own internet devices	17	10.83	18.89	
<b>Total Valid</b>	90	57.32	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	67	42.68		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

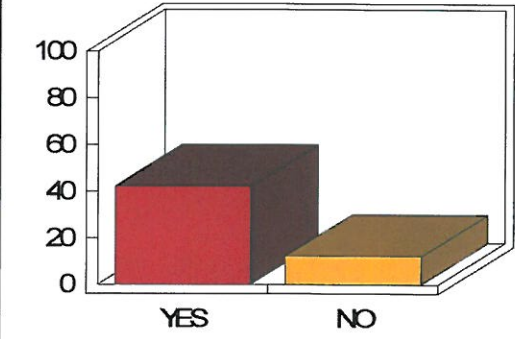
Do you have a computer in your home?

Mean: 1.31

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	96	61.15	68.57	
NO	44	28.03	31.43	
<b>Total Valid</b>	140	89.17	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	17	10.83		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		


Does your household computer work?

Mean: 1.22

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	66	42.04	77.65	
NO	19	12.10	22.35	
<b>Total Valid</b>	85	54.14	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	72	45.86		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

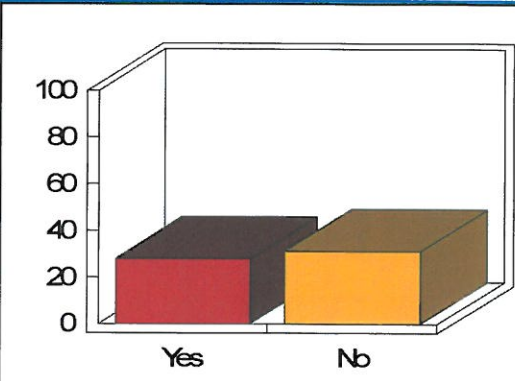
How much do you pay for your internet each month

Mean: 4.69

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
No Internet	24	15.29	23.30	
\$ 0-10	8	5.10	7.77	
\$11-20	2	1.27	1.94	
\$21-30 per month	16	10.19	15.53	
\$31-40 per month	10	6.37	9.71	
\$41-50 per month	14	8.92	13.59	
\$51-60 per month	8	5.10	7.77	
\$61+ per month	6	3.82	5.83	
Do not know	15	9.55	14.56	
<b>Total Valid</b>	103	65.61	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	54	34.39		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

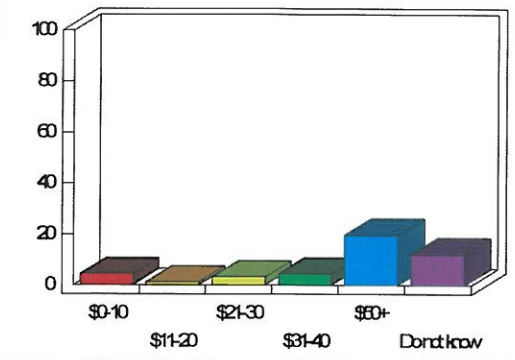
Does the price you listed include your phone bill?

Mean: 1.53

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
Yes	44	28.03	47.31	
No	49	31.21	52.69	
<b>Total Valid</b>	93	59.24	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	64	40.76		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

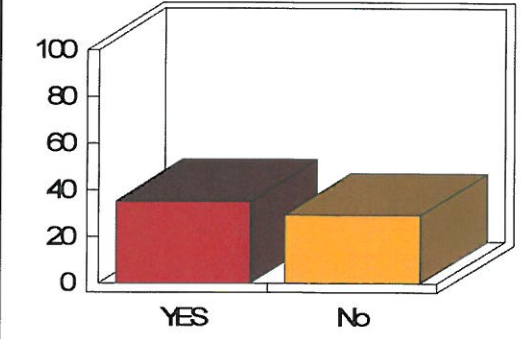
How much per month is your phone bill?

Mean: 4.55

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
\$0-10	7	4.46	9.86	
\$11-20	2	1.27	2.82	
\$21-30	5	3.18	7.04	
\$31-40	7	4.46	9.86	
\$50+	31	19.75	43.66	
Do not know	19	12.10	26.76	
<b>Total Valid</b>	71	45.22	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	86	54.78		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		


If your current internet speed sufficient for your needs?

Mean: 1.46

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	55	35.03	54.46	
No	46	29.30	45.54	
<b>Total Valid</b>	101	64.33	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	56	35.67		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

How many people in your household use a computer and the internet

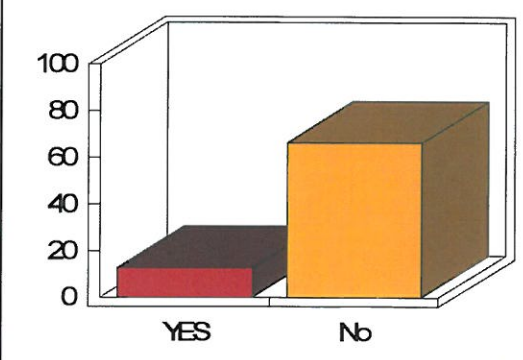
Mean: 3.03

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
1 person	18	11.46	16.98	
2 people	32	20.38	30.19	
3 People	21	13.38	19.81	
4 People	16	10.19	15.09	
5 People	8	5.10	7.55	
6 People	5	3.18	4.72	
7+ People	6	3.82	5.66	
<b>Total Valid</b>	106	67.52	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	51	32.48		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		



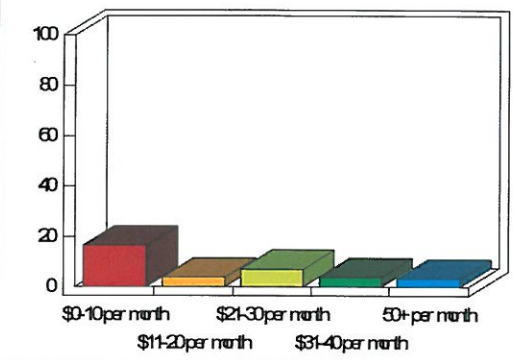
Do you currently receive financial assistance for your telephone service from the Nebraska Lifeline program?

Mean: 1.84

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	20	12.74	16.13	
No	104	66.24	83.87	
<b>Total Valid</b>	124	78.98	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	33	21.02		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

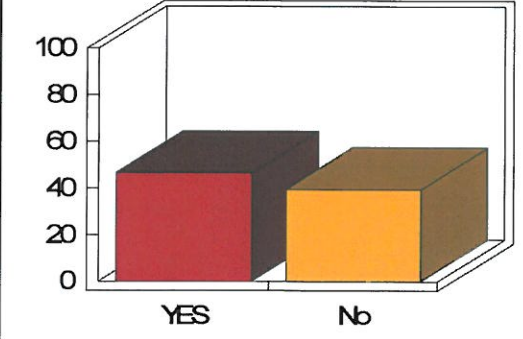
If you do not currently receive the internet, how much could you afford to pay for the internet on a monthly basis?

Mean: 2.22

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
\$0-10 per month	26	16.56	48.15	
\$11-20 per month	6	3.82	11.11	
\$21-30 per month	11	7.01	20.37	
\$31-40 per month	6	3.82	11.11	
50+ per month	5	3.18	9.26	
<b>Total Valid</b>	54	34.39	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	103	65.61		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

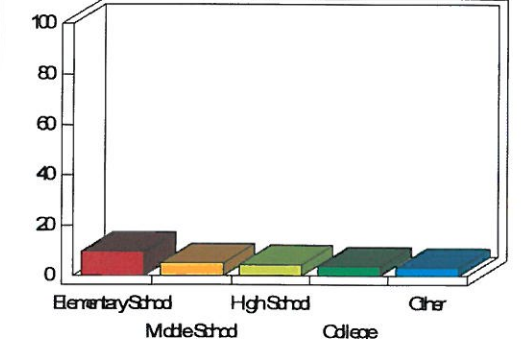
Do you have any kids in school?

Mean: 1.46

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	73	46.50	54.07	
No	62	39.49	45.93	
<b>Total Valid</b>	135	85.99	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	22	14.01		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

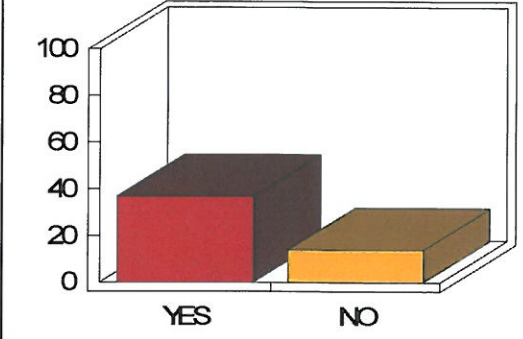
What level of school are your kids enrolled in?

Mean: 2.46

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
Elementary School	15	9.55	36.59	
Middle School	8	5.10	19.51	
High School	7	4.46	17.07	
College	6	3.82	14.63	
Other	5	3.18	12.20	
<b>Total Valid</b>	41	26.11	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	116	73.89		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

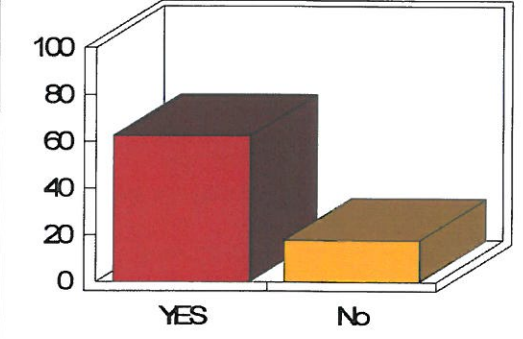
If yes, do your kids use the internet for school?

Mean: 1.28

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	58	36.94	72.50	
NO	22	14.01	27.50	
<b>Total Valid</b>	80	50.96	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	77	49.04		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		

Do you find internet access to be important to the daily needs of your household?

Mean: 1.22

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Graph
YES	98	62.42	77.78	
No	28	17.83	22.22	
<b>Total Valid</b>	126	80.25	100.00	
<b>Missing</b>	31	19.75		
<b>Total</b>	157	100.00		