Executive Summary

Kansas City Kansas Community College will provide laptops for college students receiving Pell grant funding. Federal Pell Grants are typically only awarded to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need in their educational career. In the last academic year (fall 2022, spring 2023, summer 2023), 1,811 students received Pell funding (28% of the total population of students).

This program will target students who are receiving Pell funding and who lack access to the devices they need to succeed. According to the U.S. Census Buruea, statewide, over 153,000 Kansans lack subscriptions to high-speed internet due to infrastructure availability, affordability, or access to devices, digital literacy skills knowledge, and support. Individuals without a computer or internet services are isolated without a reliable digital connection.

The need is evident in KCKCC's service area as the college currently distributes its current inventory each semester and has a waitlist of an average of 40-50 individuals still in need. Access to reliable technology is essential to relieve any form of isolation and to increase equal access for employment, essential services, and advanced education.

KCKCC is requesting 350 laptops to loan out to students receiving Pell funding. Information Services (IS) will manage this project in collaboration with the Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Division.

Information Services will work with Student Affairs to generate a list of students receiving Pell funding for each semester. The IS team will handle the check out and check in processes for each student. A pre- and post- survey will be distributed to all students who received a laptop. The survey will measure students' access to technology and knowledge before receiving the laptop and their access to technology and knowledge at the end of the semester.

If awarded, the purchase of 350 laptops would eliminate the waitlist every semester and ensure that students have equal access to devices and level the playing field for higher education. To ensure that each student has the technology support they need, The Information Services helpdesk is available for all members of the college Monday through Friday and Saturdays. During these times, all forms of technical hardware or software support and assistance with any other questions are available.

Information Services will track the success of the program to report to the state.

Proposed Service Area

Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC) is a centrally located public two-year institution in northeast Kansas. KCKCC is in Wyandotte County, Kansas, the fourth most populous county in the state with 167,000 residents. Wyandotte County is 22.1% African American and 30.8% Hispanic, with 16.9% persons below the poverty line (US Census 2020). Nearly 95% of the degrees conferred in the County are conferred by KCKCC. Students attending

KCKCC who receive Pell funding, are eligible for a laptop. Demographic information will be collected to share where the students are located.

Goals of the Project

KCKCC will measure the success of this program by the number of laptops distributed to students who receive Pell funding and the increased access to technology and support as collected through survey responses. The major outcomes of the project are:

Distribute up to 350 laptops to students who receive Pell funding each semester.

70% of students who received a laptop report increased access to technology at the end of the semester.

70% of students who received a laptop report increased access to technical assistance and maintenance of their devices at the end of the semester.

Short and Long- Term Investment

The short-term benefit to the community is more individuals having access to reliable technology to continue with their education, but also access community resources. According to the Harvard Business Review, the digital divide sits at the center of numerous societal problems, including racial inequities to access of essential needs including health care and education. By providing the technology students need to succeed, this is eliminating the divide and setting them up for long term success.

Kansas City Kansas Community College's leadership team understands the importance of this program and will continue to distribute laptops to decrease the digital divide in Wyandotte County.