

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT KANSANS

PUBLIC PROPOSALS- SECOND ROUND



Application Title: Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas - Digital Skills for Refugees and Immigrants

Organization Name: Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas, Inc.

Project Executive Summary

Goals of the proposed project:

Goals: Most of the refugees and immigrants resettled and served by Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas (CCNEK) are new English learners and many are unable to read in their native languages. Mainstream digital literacy curricula often assume a Western educational background, creating gaps that hinder our clients' ability to understand. We aim to address these gaps as part of an orientation to digital inclusion that will:

1. Finish development of a gaps-informed curriculum that provides digital literacy orientation to bridge learning inequities faced by non-English speaking refugees and immigrants who do not have a Western orientation to education.
2. Curate a detailed database of local digital literacy course offerings for client referrals.
3. Create a "train-the-trainer" program for long-term sustainability and recruit a cohort of volunteer trainers to work with students who have completed the orientation but whose English skills leave them unready for referral elsewhere.
4. Begin providing digital literacy survival clinics in rural communities, starting with a pilot program in Emporia (Lyon County) due to documented need there.

Needs addressed by the proposed project:

When refugees arrive through CCNEK's resettlement department, they often face many barriers affecting their new life in the US. They must navigate an unfamiliar realm of employment, housing, school enrollment, and so much more. The agency endeavors to provide cultural orientations to assist these families with acclimatization to their new country; however, with the language barrier and little or no formal education, especially for many of the women who were excluded from formal educational systems in their native lands, this can be challenging. These barriers also prevent our clients from accessing digital literacy classes available in their new community, and, while there are a few, high-quality online learning options, none of them include translations in the languages our clients need, such as Dari, Pashto, or Kinyarwanda. Digital literacy is vital for access to services, employment, educational opportunities, participation in cultural and civic roles, paying bills, and more. To function and fully participate in our society requires strong digital literacy skills.

Service partners involved in the proposed project:

- The Kansas City, Kansas Public Library connects members of our community with information, tools, resources, and welcoming spaces to enrich their lives. KCKPL serves all residents of Wyandotte County, no matter age or economic conditions. This service area comprises a large and diverse population that is challenged by high levels of poverty and poor economic conditions. The goals of the library speak to broad community needs, including adequately located, maintained, accessible, and secure public spaces; to ensure that services being offered to patrons are current and meet the needs of a constantly evolving community; to ensure that KCKPL is a good steward of taxpayer dollars; and that all citizens of Wyandotte County have access to library services.

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT KANSANS

PUBLIC PROPOSALS- SECOND ROUND



- KC Digital Drive is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to make the Kansas City Metro area (including Wyandotte County) a digital leader and to improve the quality of life for all people in the region. They achieve this end by pursuing initiatives that grow the city's presence as a digital leader. They are "able to ameliorate equity barriers, increase opportunities for economic prosperity, and elevate the community as a key informant in the innovation process."
- APIXIS, L.L.C. has been providing high-quality refurbished computers for CCNEK classroom use for more than a year, in addition to providing reliable technical support and software installation.
- Donnelly College is committed to making education more accessible. Donnelly serves a diverse array of students who benefit from a small campus and intensive academic supports.

Community and/or stakeholders involved in the proposed project:

- KCK Public Library System
- KC Digital Drive
- APIXIS, L.L.C.
- Donnelly College
- Refugee and immigrant community members with a focus on newly arrived refugees who are within their first 5 years in the US

Intended impact of the proposed project:

Our digital orientation classes are a precursor for clients to access advanced digital literacy classes in the community such as the Northstar certification or higher educational opportunities. Through our client-informed curriculum, refugees and immigrants engage with a program that is culturally sensitive to their unique needs in providing the conceptual backgrounds necessary to ensure their success in Western educational systems and, particularly, in other digital literacy classes. Our program will build both skills and confidence for new arrivals as they explore employment opportunities, lifelong learning, and many other aspects of U.S. culture and society.

Total amount requested in DOCK 2.0 funding:

\$220,403.00 USD



DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT KANSANS

PUBLIC PROPOSALS- SECOND ROUND

