

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT KANSANS

PUBLIC PROPOSALS- SECOND ROUND



Application Title: Storytime Village- Digital Equity Program

Organization Name: Storytime Village, Inc.

Project Executive Summary

Goals of the proposed project:

Storytime Village is a non-profit organization focused on promoting early literacy in Kansas. The Storytime Village digital equity program will provide technology and training to underserved Kansas children and families with digital tools to access literacy and educational resources, ultimately addressing disparities in reading proficiency rates.

Through the Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans (DOCK) grant funding, Storytime Village will support and promote digital equity for 3rd to 5th-grade students and their families at three schools in underserved communities and one after-school program. Activities will include Digital Literacy Training, Device Donation and Distribution, Educational Content Creation, and Community Outreach and Partnerships.

Storytime Village will provide a series of program activities that will connect the community through digital learning. Those activities include providing underserved students with technology (tablets) and the resources to navigate the technology. We will host after-school programming to help educate students about the usage of their technology and engagement ways to use educational apps; we will host summer digital meet-ups to promote healthy digital habits to increase educational outcomes; we will host a Youth Digital Equity Summit in September 2025 (National Digital Equity Month) to train students to navigate their phones and other devices to find future job opportunities, educational apps and more. Lastly, we will provide teacher and parent camps to provide tools to help their students/children with their digital learning at home and at school.

Program goals include:

1. Bridge the digital divide
2. Empower underserved communities
3. Foster digital inclusion
4. Improve education and economic opportunities

Needs addressed by the proposed project:

Research shows that the expanding use of technology for schooling—for homework and remote learning—affects all students and staff both inside and outside the classroom. Storytime Village's project promotes digital learning, which the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) defines as "any instructional practice that effectively uses technology to strengthen a student's learning experience and encompasses a wide spectrum of tools and practices."

Storytime Village will support a group of underserved students who are disproportionately impacted by the lack of access to digital learning resources. Research shows that students who lack such access cannot fully participate in remote learning.

Since 2009, Storytime Village has been supporting underserved communities by providing advocacy and awareness about issues that impact early literacy and educational outcomes. This proposed digital equity

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project will invest in the 67214 zip code and surrounding communities. This zip code has the lowest-performing 3rd-grade readers in the state. According to federal demographic data, the 67214 zip code is one of the poorest in Kansas.

Our initiative is the first step toward ensuring that all students in this underserved community have the basic resources—broadband internet and computer access—to meaningfully participate in remote learning from home, regardless of situation or condition. We will also focus on having qualified, trained educators and instructional support in place so that students and their parents can successfully navigate learning wherever they are.

Service partners involved in the proposed project:

Storytime Village will partner with organizations to provide key services that assist in implementing project deliverables for the overall program include: including Heroes Academy, a mentoring nonprofit that serves underserved elementary and middle school students, to host a series of 11 digital equity workshops throughout the duration of the grant. This program has an established history of mentoring youth since 2006. Heroes Academy is a trusted resource for after-school programming, and through support from outreach coordinators and partners like Ringorang, participants in Storytime Village's Digital Equity program will receive digital learning experiences that help them build better educational habits, resulting in stronger educational outcomes at Mentoring Mondays with Heroes Academy.

Ringorang is under the Knowledge as a Service, Inc. (KaaS) umbrella. KaaS offers a software platform called Ringorang -- an app-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution that develops the workforce by transforming learning into behaviors. Their support of this project will result in digital workshops, a digital summit, professional development, and the development of an educational app that will create opportunities for students, parents, and educators to build habits that will help improve their educational outcomes.

Community and/or stakeholders involved in the proposed project:

Storytime Village will partner with 3 schools to provide programming to approximately 167 3rd to 5th-grade students, their teachers, and parents. The schools are located in the underserved neighborhood of 67214 or neighboring communities. The schools include Urban Preparatory Academy, a K-8 private school that serves underserved populations; Holy Savior Catholic Academy, a K-8 catholic school that serves underserved students; and Gordon Parks Academy, a Title 1 STEM Magnet in the Wichita Public Schools system.

These schools and their students, teachers, and parents will receive the tablets, professional development, after-school workshops, parent camps, and youth digital equity summit.

Intended impact of the proposed project:

Storytime Village's Digital Equity Program will initially impact approximately 410 people, including underserved students and their parents, teachers, volunteers, and partners. Through a collective approach, this program's benefits will result in enhanced digital skills, increased access to information, improved academic performance, and, ultimately, future economic mobility.

Total amount requested in DOCK 2.0 funding:
\$249,999.73 USD