

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT KANSANS

PUBLIC PROPOSALS- SECOND ROUND



Application Title: Urban League of Kansas - Equitable Opportunities for Digital Literacy

Organization Name: Urban League of Kansas Inc

Project Executive Summary

Goals of the proposed project:

The primary goal of Equitable Opportunities for Digital Literacy is to ensure that disadvantaged individuals, including those that live in poverty, minority populations, those with language barriers, individuals that are aging, veterans and those who are justice-involved, have access to technology and training that allows them to fully participate and thrive in the digital world. This will be achieved by providing digital technology access and training to residents of Sedgwick County but will focus on serving the residents of the 67214 zip code. The Urban League of Kansas is located in the heart of 67214, which is one of the most impoverished zip codes in the state and city. The Urban League's goal is to serve approximately 1,000 individuals that are included in at least two or more of the following categories: members of a racial or ethnic minority group, income level is no more than 150 percent of the poverty level, single parent households, age 55+, have language barriers, or are currently or previously justice involved. Ninety-five percent of the population served by Urban League of Kansas are low-income individuals. In the 67214 zip code 32.1% of individuals live below the poverty line compared to the 12.8% that live below the poverty line in the city of Wichita. Lack of financial resources has contributed to lack of access to internet service and digital technology. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority frequently face issues related to affordability or language. Justice-involved individuals, face the same challenges.

Needs addressed by the proposed project:

This project will provide an opportunity to learn and participate in the digital world for the purpose of maximizing connectivity to resources, education, services and to other individuals. This project will address the specific barriers to digital equity including availability and affordability of access to digital technology by providing a public computer lab with internet access and provide in-class and one-on-one digital technology training for individuals. Specialized training in form of a Digital Elder Series, will also be customized for groups of older adults age 55+ that may struggle with being intimidated by digital technology. These classes will be offered at a slower pace for those adults. The project will also include a specific series for justice involved individuals. The project will also provide access to the use of laptops or chromebooks for individuals that complete a minimum of 30 hours of classroom training and/or one-on-one training in the computer lab to give the participants ongoing access to a device that they can continue to learn on and use to connect with resources and other individuals. Loaning devices to completers will provide an incentive for continuing to work on learning and using digital technology. Individuals can continue to receive support and training from trainers. The programs provided by this project will ultimately provide a continuum of wrap around services to meet the needs of the different populations expected to be served.

Service partners involved in the proposed project:

Urban League of Kansas will partner with Kansas School for Effective Learning, Viaduct Academy, GoRemote, AARP, and AT&T. These service partners will allow Urban League of Kansas to offer multiple entry points into the project programs and the opportunity to choose a pathway into other programs based on the goals of each individual. One entry point is the GED which can lead to additional training in basic digital literacy skills then into advanced digital literacy skills and technology training that opens doors to employment. Another entry point is through participation in the Digital Elder Series for seniors who will

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also have the opportunity to build additional technology skills for the workplace if needed. Individuals that are justice involved and/or coming out of prison can enter through the mentoring program facilitated by GoRemote, move into the basic digital technology program and then into advanced technology training to help develop workplace skills. These individuals may also participate in the GED program which will assist with moving into the workforce.

Community and/or stakeholders involved in the proposed project:

Urban League of Kansas will involve individuals from the community that don't have the digital technology skills that they would like to have or need to have to achieve the goals that they want to achieve. Businesses will be involved as stakeholders that want to employ individuals with digital technology skills or help their current employees build digital technology skills. Seniors in the community will be involved with the project by participating in training that will help them build digital technology skills that will allow them to access resources, health care, connect with family members and others as well as potentially provide skills for the workplace. Justice involved individuals in the community as well as those that were previously incarcerated will be involved by receiving training in digital literacy skills that will help them connect with resources, jobs, health care and other services as well as build valuable skills for the workplace. Veterans in the community can participate in digital literacy training and advanced technology training to open doors for job opportunities. Individuals who are unemployed or underemployed can participate in the digital technology programs to build skills to open opportunities for employment or improving current employment opportunities. Social Service agencies will be involved by using the programs of the project as a resource for the clients they service to get digital technology training and improve skills for the workforce.

Intended impact of the proposed project:

The Equitable Opportunities for Digital Literacy aims to address digital inequities caused by factors such as income, region, residence, employment status, age, education, race-ethnicity, and language barriers.

Income and Region: Low-income individuals, especially in the 67214 zip code, face affordability barriers. The project will provide access, tools, and education to increase internet use in this high-poverty area.

Employment Status: Employed individuals often have better access to digital resources. The project will offer digital literacy training to unemployed or underemployed individuals, helping them access better jobs and valuable resources.

Age: Older individuals may struggle with digital literacy. The project, in partnership with AARP Kansas, will provide training to those aged 55 and older, helping them access healthcare and stay connected.

Education: Higher education levels correlate with better digital skills. The project will support individuals in gaining internet and workplace skills, contributing to economic inclusion.

Race-Ethnicity: Disparities in internet access persist among racial and ethnic groups. The project will focus on providing access and training to these groups, continuing the Urban League of Kansas's mission.

Language Barriers: Non-native speakers often face challenges in accessing digital resources. The project will include bilingual instructors to improve digital literacy for those with language barriers. By addressing these factors, the Digital Equity Project aims to empower individuals and communities to fully engage with the digital world, improving their quality of life, access to resources and job opportunities.

Total amount requested in DOCK 2.0 funding:
\$249,976.00 USD