

DIGITAL CHAMPION GRANT AWARDS

We have awarded more than \$30 million to support the following entities in addressing at least one of the following elements of digital inclusion: affordability of reliable high-speed internet; provision of internet-enabled devices (computer, laptops, etc.) that meet users' needs; access to digital literacy and skills training; quality technical support; or applications and online content designed to increase accessibility and inclusivity.

Appalachian Regional Library

\$402,655.75 awarded to purchase hotspots, laptops, and e-readers for offsite populations and staff use to address access to technology and digital literacy education for seniors and rural communities. Through regular classes and one-on-one instruction at various locations, the library aims to empower individuals with the skills needed to utilize internet and library resources, ultimately increasing access and fostering technological inclusion in the community.

Asheville Medical Research and Education Corporation

\$500,000 awarded to provide veterans access, training, and support for telehealth services and digital literacy, ensuring sustainability beyond grant funding through partnerships, community resources, and a comprehensive outreach plan.

Beaufort County Community College

\$800,000 awarded to address challenges in its rural service area through two key initiatives: the BCCC Mobile and the Beaufort Digital Bridge program. BCCC Mobile will deploy a highly visible van staffed by a full-time digital navigator to provide on-the-ground support, digital literacy instruction, and access to digital devices and internet connectivity.

Caldwell County Schools

\$402,972 awarded to help students, guardians, and stakeholders engage in activities such as digital citizenship workshops, Neptune Navigate Integration, and a digital citizenship showcase, fostering responsible online behavior and understanding of digital rights. Educators will also participate in similar workshops and activities to integrate digital literacy into the curriculum and guide students in creating artifacts that demonstrate their understanding of online safety and ethics.

Camino Community Development Corporation

\$600,000 awarded to help people reach upward mobility through programs promoting employment, education, and entrepreneurial support, while overcoming barriers of access, language, and culture.

Catawba County Library System

\$300,000 awarded to introduce a digital navigator program by hiring two navigators. Equipped with a mobile computer lab, including laptops and software, the navigators will conduct digital literacy workshops at various community sites.

Caterpillar Ministries

\$100,000 awarded to ensure homes in the Huntington Green community have internet access individuals ages five and older have a working computer and accessories.

Center for Digital Equity

\$1,000,000 awarded to increase equitable access to and adoption of digital tools, skills and support services by training and deploying digital navigators, distribute no or low-cost devices for residents and conduct needs assessments to track participant growth.

Central Pines Regional Council

\$800,000 awarded to expand digital literacy training, recruit community technology instructors, and to provide refurbished laptops to residents. Additionally, hire a regional coordinator to manage the project and facilitate a peer network of digital literacy programs, aligning with state initiatives and promoting regional collaboration.

City of Raleigh Municipal Government

\$300,000 awarded to provide access to devices, digital literacy training, and technical support for all residents. This grant will support initiatives such as training youth ambassadors, implementing tiered participation levels, expanding digital skills trainings, updating mobile distribution events, launching a new digital literacy course, offering community tech check sessions, and strengthening partnerships.

City Startup Labs Inc.

\$400,000 awarded to support the planning and launch of the ReConnex (ReentryConnections) pilot, a retail digital device repair operation within Charlotte, providing reliable, dependable, affordable, hyper-local tech support to communities lacking such services.

College of the Albemarle

\$700,000 awarded to replenish and replace inoperable devices with more technologically suitable options for education and skills training, expand the device loaner program across various locations, and offer multiple digital literacy and skills classes per year, particularly targeting counties with limited computer and internet access. Furthermore, they seek to provide digital literacy training at the Pasquotank Correctional Institution to help inmates adjust to technological advancements and reduce recidivism rates.

Durham Technical Community College

\$400,000 awarded to provide technology resources for college students. Through initiatives like the loaner laptop program and the "keeper" program, which provides students with their own Chromebooks after meeting attendance and progression goals, the project aims to bridge the digital divide and ensure equal opportunities for all students to access essential technology for academic success.

E2D Inc.

\$1,500,000 awarded to expand and fortify the digital device infrastructure across the state, with a specific emphasis on western North Carolina, by procuring, refurbishing, and redistributing 20,000 devices annually.

El Centro Hispano Inc.

\$600,000 awarded to enhance digital literacy among Latinx communities by increasing access, knowledge and skills in digital device usage, internet navigation and cybersecurity.

ESG Foundation

\$200,000 awarded to establish tech hubs within rural minority churches to serve the aging population. These hubs aim to become beacons of digital access and enlightenment, specifically tailored to address the unique needs of the elderly in rural communities.

Fontana Regional Library

\$300,000 awarded to hire four digital navigators that will conduct six-week workshop sessions held in various locations with translators available for Spanish speakers and sign language, if needed. Attendees will learn to use Chromebooks or tablets safely, manage digital organization, navigate online education, evaluate online information, and practice internet safety. After completing a minimum of five classes, attendees will receive their own Chromebook, and accessories.

Franklin County Library System

\$387,006.72 awarded to hire a full-time digital navigator librarian and to make improvements to technology access spaces at the library to directly address digital equity by providing tailored digital literacy education, personalized assistance, and inclusive technology infrastructure, ensuring all community members have equal access to essential digital resources and services.

Goodwill Industries of Central North Carolina Inc.

\$500,000 awarded to expand digital literacy efforts by launching a mobile learning lab to serve rural communities.

Granville County Schools

\$400,000 awarded to expand device lending programs, offer digital literacy training led by student interns, and establish community Wi-Fi locations.

Haywood Community College

\$399,371.76 awarded to provide comprehensive digital literacy training, access to affordable internet, and updated devices to underserved community members. The project will expand technology lending programs, offer free digital literacy classes, and update outdated equipment to provide access to digital resources and opportunities.

High Country Council of Governments

\$800,000 awarded to appoint a full-time digital inclusion and equity coordinator & GIS tech, alongside the establishment of a regional funding pool, which will significantly enhance digital equity efforts by enabling focused attention, collaboration with community institutions, and the implementation of targeted projects outlined in the High Country Digital Inclusion Plan, including device distribution events, connectivity support, and digital literacy initiatives tailored to diverse community needs.

Hispanic Federation Inc.

\$600,000 awarded to address the digital divide among low-income, rural, immigrant Latinos across North Carolina by constructing a computer lab with a digital literacy instructor, providing subgrants to Latino-led and serving community-based organizations, device distribution, and telehealth services in a private setting.

Hola Carolina

\$600,000 awarded to reach rural counties in western North Carolina with a comprehensive curriculum designed to cater to individuals with limited computer and technology knowledge.

HUBZone Technology Initiative - HTI

\$600,000 awarded to provide 5,000 Chromebooks – a “Drive for 5,000” – as well as digital literacy training to underserved residents.

Kinston Teens Inc.

\$396,129.61 awarded to empower youth and marginalized communities by cultivating digital literacy, providing access to essential digital resources, and bridging the digital divide in the community.

Kramden Institute Inc.

\$1,500,000 awarded to expand device distribution in North Carolina, as well as growing pre-existing programs so that the organization can partner with other groups in the state to pilot best practices for meeting the digital equity needs of more communities.

Land of Sky Regional Council

\$689,960.61 awarded to hire two new staff members including a digital coordinator that will focus on expanding digital literacy training, particularly targeting senior populations and Spanish-speaking communities, and a device coordinator that will manage the device refurbishment project, aiming to supply partner organizations with refurbished devices and address the access gap for individuals in the region.

Lions Services Inc.

\$367,373.05 awarded to provide digital proficiency training.

Lumbee Land Development Inc.

\$400,000 awarded to provide educational opportunities, enhance online accessibility, supply digital devices, create virtual meeting spaces, and distribute laptops to veterans and those in need of supportive services underscores the tribe's commitment to fostering opportunities for employment and advancement.

Lumber River Council of Governments

\$800,000 awarded to address disparities in access to internet-enabled devices by providing laptops and hotspots to community-based service organizations across the region. With a focus on senior centers, nutrition sites, public libraries, and other centralized locations lacking sufficient device access, the project will distribute hotspots and laptops equipped with essential software.

Madison-Mayodan Recreation Commission

\$300,000 awarded to increase community awareness and create space for community input in decision-making, connecting digital literacy training with relevant content and services through direct outreach where people currently convene, increasing device access and ownership, and expanding no cost or low-cost wireless access.

MANNA Foodbank

\$440,364.85 awarded to enhance digital literacy and increase access to technology hardware and internet to clients across the western North Carolina region.

Moore County Schools

\$300,000 awarded to provide low-income, non-native speakers, and rural residents with devices and affordable internet access, and to train parents/guardians to effectively use digital platforms for monitoring student progress and supporting their learning.

Nash County

\$58,665 awarded to provide participants with essential digital literacy skills and knowledge to help individuals learn how to safely navigate the internet, understand computer terminology, and utilize professional platforms for career advancement. Access to laptops and digital devices will further empower participants to enhance their skills and access educational and career opportunities.

N.C. Agricultural and Technical State University

\$300,000 awarded to enhance its digital navigator pilot program that provides access to digital devices, internet, and digital literacy training. The initiative will develop a Digital Guilford advocacy group, conduct needs assessments, and expand the digital navigator pilot program.

N.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence

\$300,000 awarded to help domestic violence survivors and victims and the agencies that serve them access affordable, reliable high-speed internet and provide internet-enabled devices so they can access eFiling, telehealth and online mental health services.

N.C. Telehealth Network Association

\$400,000 awarded to expand telehealth access points utilizing selected libraries and healthcare providers by establishing private, securely connected spaces at the libraries for telehealth consultations, diagnoses, and treatment activities. The project will also include device lending, distribution, and technical assistance to promote telehealth adoption.

New Arrivals Institute Inc.

\$1,000,000 awarded to provide access to digital technology and disseminate tailored digital literacy/skills training to new arrivals and established communities of foreign-born populations who receive critical services to facilitate their transition to life in the United States.

Operation Gateway

\$463,325 awarded to unlock opportunities to success for reentering residents in western North Carolina by providing mobile phones, access to public computers, personal devices, and digital skills training.

Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc.

\$500,000 awarded to enhance telehealth services by implementing telehealth assessment and training, mobile health vans, staff expansion, and tech upgrades to business development centers.

Orange County Library

\$83,821 awarded to provide access to underserved communities to digital skills training and resources, including a mobile learning lab and expanded device lending.

Orange County Literacy Council Inc.

\$86,756.50 awarded to provide accessible digital literacy and skills designed to reach residents at multiple levels of technical, literacy and language capabilities. It includes digital navigator training for volunteers utilizing a "Train the Trainer" model and device distribution.

Our Journey

\$400,000 awarded to provide "first aid reentry kits" and cell phone/technology training to men returning from incarceration from five N.C. Department of Adult Corrections facilities.

Peletah Ministries

\$459,127.76 awarded to provide digital literacy programs, digital navigators, tele-support spaces, and a device loan distribution program to ensure all community members have the skills and tools necessary to thrive in the digital age.

Piedmont Triad Regional Council

\$800,000 awarded to improve connectivity and access, promote digital literacy and education, and foster economic engagement and entrepreneurship. The council will collaborate with stakeholders and implement strategies such as providing affordable devices, offering digital literacy programs, and enhancing broadband coverage.

Pitt County Health Department

\$398,608.90 awarded to provide continuous access to vital healthcare, employment, education, and social services through innovative digital pathways by establishing satellite clinics equipped with high-speed internet, telehealth services, and educational resources.

Randolph County Cooperative Extension

\$47,790 awarded to address critical needs for computing devices and digital literacy training in underserved populations by providing Chromebooks and computer basics training sessions to various demographic groups.

Richmond County Schools

\$400,000 awarded to provide Richmond Senior High School students with 1:1 internet-enabled devices that travel from school to home, along with access to digital literacy and skills training.

Sandhill Regional Library System

\$500,000 awarded to upfit public technology infrastructure, establish a portable computer lab, enhance digital literacy by providing access to STEAM computers and software for public use, and create and implement an expansive digital literacy education program.

Shackle Free Community Outreach Agency Inc.

\$600,000 awarded to create public access to digital technology through barber shops and beauty salons, faith communities, service agencies and federally qualified health centers.

Southern Conference United Church of Christ

\$200,000 awarded to deliver dedicated hotspots, internet-enabled iPads, and advanced video conferencing systems to enhance connectivity and resource availability in underserved communities.

South Piedmont Community College Foundation

\$500,000 awarded to expand internet access, provide digital devices, and offer comprehensive digital literacy education to students with the skills needed for success in today's digital world.

Southern Vision Alliance

\$200,000 awarded to continue to expand digital skills training and a community campus connecting residents to affordable high-speed internet services and technical support.

Southwestern North Carolina Planning and Economic Development Commission

\$568,606.56 awarded to secure funding to purchase 1,000 refurbished laptops with plans to distribute them over a two-year period, to hire a digital navigator to oversee the project, a consultant to develop tailored training materials and curriculum, and allocating resources for regional travel to facilitate community engagement and identify individuals in need of devices.

Stanly County

\$200,000 awarded to provide personalized guidance through trained digital navigators, establish reliable hotspot connectivity for those lacking internet access, offer updated devices for circulation, and develop tailored programs for English language learners, ultimately ensuring equitable access to digital resources and services for all members of the community.

TechWorks Gaston

\$300,000 awarded to expand digital literacy services and reach into rural and isolated communities with high concentrations of individuals lacking reliable broadband and resources to attain digital literacy and tech skills.

The Caraway Foundation

\$200,000 awarded to address the critical gaps in access to technology, internet connectivity, and computer literacy skills by empowering seniors, individuals from low-income and/or rural communities, and other marginalized segments utilizing essential resources and comprehensive training.

Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments

\$1,000,000 awarded to establish a regional digital literacy coalition led by a full-time regional planner to coordinate digital literacy initiatives, provide standardized digital skills training through partnerships with community colleges and libraries, increase access to training resources and equipment, distribute refurbished laptops to graduates, and develop a recognized digital work-ready certification in collaboration with the regional workforce development network.

Wake County Library System

\$398,700 awarded to establish a mobile access kit and device lending service and assistive technology enhancements for public computers by providing Chromebooks and hotspots for lending, as well as enhancing accessibility features on public computers.

Washington County

\$44,639.33 awarded to revive its technology center with two desktop computers equipped with safety features and ergonomic accessories, providing accessible internet-enabled devices and on-site support. Additionally, the center seeks to improve technology education by acquiring a smart board that is compatible with both Android and Windows systems, facilitating interactive and visible demonstrations for digital literacy and skills training for older adults.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments

\$473,000 awarded to hire a digital navigator, who will provide digital literacy training and support, addressing the region's growing need for internet skills and online safety education. Additionally, they will purchase computers and equipment, establish a virtual learning platform, and convert a popular resource guide into a senior-friendly web tool, ensuring seniors have access to vital information and services online.

WinstonNet Inc.

\$399,713.39 awarded to collaborate with several community partners to bridge the digital divide through technology infrastructure upgrades, digital literacy, device distribution, internet bill relief programs and re-entry digital training.