



The Digital Equity Capacity Kickstarter (DECK) program represents an integral and strategic component of the State of Illinois's *Connect Illinois* vision and commitment to broadband access, adoption, and use—all through the lens of digital equity and inclusion. Applications covered one or more of the following categories focused on access, adoption, and use:

- *Outreach and Adoption*, including support for federal Affordable Connectivity Program awareness and enrollment
- *Digital Skill Building, Navigation and Use*, including digital literacy programming
- *Community Technology Center Access*, providing a physical space with internet access and computing devices
- *Access Expansion Feasibility*, preparing local governments to play a role in community-led broadband expansion

Project Summaries

Association House of Chicago | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP Outreach)

Location: Greater Humboldt Park

Association House of Chicago has an established history of supporting immigrant communities on Chicago's West Side, expanding its mission to provide comprehensive programming in English and Spanish, and promoting health and wellness and creating opportunities for education and economic advancement. Through the DECK program, Association House seeks to enhance its digital literacy and skills #TechReady program by hiring a digital navigator, promoting enrollment in the ACP Program, and expanding access to its community technology centers.

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP Outreach)

Location: Brighton Park

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC) is an intergenerational, community-based organization with a mission to improve the quality of life for the working-class and immigrant populations of Brighton Park and Southwest Chicago. Their DECK award will enable it to continue its relationship with its clients from the Chicago Connected initiative, ultimately building a foundation for the provision of digital equity and digital literacy services within BPNC's program offerings, including ACP awareness and enrollment as part of its Public Benefits Enrollment support.

Center for Changing Lives | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP Outreach)

Location: Northwest/Southeast Chicago

Center for Changing Lives (CCL) is committed to offering bilingual (English/Spanish) outreach and education for the ACP program through its Northwest and Southeast Chicago offices, focusing on increasing internet connectivity and digital skills to its target populations including low-income Black and Latinx households and the Spanish-speaking immigrant population. The DECK award will enable CCL to expand its Resource Development Coaching and enhance its function as a one stop service center on skills training and financial education for low-income and Spanish-speaking members of the community.

The Center: Resources for Teaching & Learning | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP Outreach)

Location: Hoffman Estates, Palatine, Rolling Meadows

The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning will act as the fiscal agent for the United Palatine Coalition (UPC) to enhance digital equity efforts in Palatine, Rolling Meadows, Hoffman Estates, Arlington Heights, and Inverness. The initiative will support UPC's bilingual community navigator and focus on expanding outreach and awareness to ACP-eligible households. The funding will help UPC build on the digital equity work that was developed by its participation in the *Illinois Connected Communities* program.

Chicago Urban League | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use + Community Tech Center**Location: South/Southwest Chicago**

Founded in 1916, the Chicago Urban League works to achieve equity for Black families and communities through social and economic empowerment. Its Youth Services Center will lead the initiative, serving young people ages 11 to 24 through a digital literacy program and community technology center access. The digital literacy program offers basic and advanced classes on software, web navigation, and online workforce development tools that together with the community tech center will enable families to use the Internet to find resources and employment opportunities for all members of a household.

Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP)**Location: Chinatown**

The Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC) works with Asian and Asian American residents on digital literacy issues in Chicago, with Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking staff members offering one-on-one help and community workshops. The DECK opportunity enables CBCAC to continue and expand its ACP outreach and enrollment programming, helping to reach many Chinatown Area Chicago residents—especially the elderly—and assist in navigating technology and language barriers.

Digital Leaders Now (LatinX DLN) | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP Outreach)**Location: Effingham, Fairmont, Mattoon, Summit**

A distinguished and effective former *Illinois Connected Communities* participant, Digital Leaders Now (LatinX DLN) is a leading organization uplifting Latinx voices in technology-related policies and growing Latino representation in STEM-related careers and entrepreneurship. LatinX DLN's main hub in Summit, in addition to its presence in West Lawn, Garfield Ridge, Pilsen, Little Village, Mattoon, Effingham, and Fairmont City/East St. Louis, enables LatinX DLN to reach several large Hispanic population centers across the state. LatinX DLN offers bilingual in-person and virtual digital literacy and tech workforce trainings and will continue its work co-hosting community events to provide outreach and training on ACP and other affordable broadband opportunities.

Erie Family Health Centers | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (Telehealth)**Location: Chicago and Greater Chicagoland Area**

With the increased recognition of digital literacy as a social driver of health (SDOH), Erie Family Health Centers expanded their healthcare focus to include screening for digital literacy and access and providing digital navigation support. Providing a 100% cash match for the project, Erie's participation in the DECK program will increase their patients' awareness of and hands-on engagement with the digital tools related directly to their healthcare, including telehealth, accessing online patient portals, promoting best practices around health data security, and connecting eligible patients to the Affordable Connectivity Program to increase home broadband access.

Growing Home | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use

Location: Greater Englewood

In addition to operating three USDA-certified organic farms, Growing Home opened a full-time computer and job resources center that houses a 10-week CompTIA IT-Technology employment program. Growing Home's programming works to achieve expansion of broadband access, adoption, and use among low-income and under-resourced communities in Chicago, and provides individuals the training and wraparound services needed to be equipped for quality jobs and personal success in the digital world. All programs take place in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, connecting primarily low-income communities of color to the technology job sector. Growing Home provides a free state-of-the-art Computer Resource Center, used by college students, job seekers, and seniors alike who gain basic computer and job training and instruction.

Gads Hill Center | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use**Location: Brighton Park, Chicago Lawn, Pilsen**

Gads Hill Center (GHC) primarily services Black and Latinx youth and their families of underprivileged socioeconomic backgrounds. It has a long history creating opportunities for children and their families to build a better life through education, access to resources, and community engagement, and serves over 5,000 children and families on Chicago's south and west sides annually. GHC offers the Digital Education for Learning Technology-focused Activities (DELTA) project, a four-week immersive digital skills curriculum for disinvested communities of color.

McLean County | Access Expansion Feasibility Study**Location: Countywide**

As a previous *Accelerate Illinois* program participant, McLean County has been building capacity and leadership toward the goal of universal broadband access throughout the county. Planning and engagement has continued through the countywide stakeholder group, Accelerate Access McLean County, and this grant will support a feasibility study to access options for achieving universal access, including but not limited to formal engagement with broadband service providers to assess the county's preferred path for leveraging federal, state, and local resources toward universal access in alignment with county needs and goals.

Metropolitan Family Services | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use + Community Tech Center**Location: Calumet**

Metropolitan Family Services (MFS) uses a community-centered service delivery model to strengthen families and communities across Chicago and its suburban communities. MFS Calumet is looking to hire digital navigators at its Financial Opportunity Center in Englewood and the Family Works Program at Altgeld-Gardens-Murray Homes in Riverdale. These navigators will be responsible for local outreach and engagement to increase awareness and enrollment in low-cost broadband programs like ACP, increasing digital skill building, navigation, and use for community members, and expanding access to each site's Community Technology Center resources.

North Lawndale Employment Network | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use + Community Tech Cntr**Location: North Lawndale**

North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN) is a place-based, non-profit workforce development organization whose mission is to increase the earnings potential of the North Lawndale community and surrounding neighborhoods on Chicago's West Side. Through a state-of-the-art workforce development facility in the heart of North Lawndale, NLEN offers job readiness and occupational skills training, coaching and career pathway development, and wraparound supports including free digital literacy training and community technology center access.

Northwest Side Housing Center | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use

Location: Belmont Cragin

Northwest Side Housing Center (Northwest Center) is looking to build upon its nationally recognized digital equity initiatives in Belmont Cragin, the fastest-growing Latinx neighborhood in Chicago. Their 1:1 computer basics course curriculum offers a digital literacy education and hands-on experience with side-by-side support. Northwest Center will use funding to support digital literacy coaches, monthly workshops, and ACP application support to community residents.

The QUILT Corporation (2) | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use + Community Tech Center

Location: North Lawndale and Woodlawn

Based in Naperville, the QUILT Corporation is dedicated to closing the digital divide in the Chicagoland area and helped launch the Chicago Area Broadband Initiative to increase broadband access in economically neglected communities. QUILT is being awarded two DECK grants and will work with various partners to address the stark digital equity challenges experienced by residents of Chicago's North Lawndale and Woodlawn neighborhoods: One grant will be support the North Lawndale Digital Equity Connect Project, focusing on increasing access to affordable broadband internet, standing up a community digital navigator program, and establishing a community technology center; the second grant will be used to implement the Technology Economic Mobility Initiative (TEMI) in the Woodlawn community, collaborating with the Woodlawn Resource Center (WRC), Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), and other partners to provide residents with equitable access to affordable broadband and devices, digital literacy training, and outreach for the Affordable Connectivity Program.

ScaleLit | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use

Location: Cook County

scaleLIT, a nonprofit literacy and workforce development organization headquartered in Chicago, deploys digital equity strategies through its Northstar Digital Literacy training platform and the Illinois Digital Learning Lab. With this grant, scaleLIT will leverage its current role as the One Stop Operator for the Local Workforce Innovation Area 7 in Cook County and support its Career Pathway Navigators to increase outreach and enrollment in the ACP program and integrating digital literacy training alongside career pathway support in 10 American Job Centers across Cook County.

Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use | ACP Outreach

Location: Southwest Chicago

The Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) brings together 41 member institutions (religious institutions, schools, health and social service providers, and community development corporations) to ensure old and new resident have a voice in decisions that impact their neighborhoods amid large and rapid demographic shifts in Chicago's Southwest communities. Leaders of SWOP have dedicated themselves to building relationships across racial, ethnic, generational, and faith differences, and the organization leads the Communities Partnering 4 Peace (CP4P) anti-violence program. SWOP's goals for their DECK initiative are to build off on their work with the Chicago Connected program, to increase ACP enrollment in Southwest Chicago, and to increase the digital literacy of community stakeholders, including CP4P participants.

TCA Health | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (Telehealth) + Community Tech Center

Location: Chatham, Riverdale

As a federally qualified health center, TCA Health (TCA) believes digital inequity is a social determinant of health, and more specifically, digital determinants of health are a subset of social determinants of health. TCA is looking to establish two Kickstarter Computer Technology Centers—in Chicago's southside neighborhoods of Riverdale and Chatham—where residents battle tremendous structural and social barriers, health disparities, and racial inequities.

These community technology centers will operate within TCA's Employment & Training Department, increasing patient telehealth opportunities.

Touch Gift Foundation | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use

Location: Archer Heights, Roseland

Touch Gift Foundation (TGF) is a young, BIPOC-led nonprofit service provider aiming to break the poverty cycle, offering programming in the Archer Heights, Near West, Roseland, and Woodlawn communities of Chicago. TGF is looking to build off of its digital literacy training and online adult education programs by providing a mini digital learning lab, digital skills certifications, and expanding its online adult education programs and ACP outreach initiatives.

The Trep School | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP Outreach) + Community Tech Center

Location: Danville, Vermilion County

Teague International Corporation (The Trep School) is looking to create the Trep Digital Incubator to train, develop, and coach entrepreneurs in the City of Danville and wider Vermilion County to compete in Illinois' digital economy. With goals to develop a dedicated community technology center inside of its Soar Space Business Center, the Trep School seeks to offer specialized technology trainings and recruit digital navigators to address the technology needs of business.

Women's Business Development Center | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use

Location: Chicago and Greater Chicagoland Area

Using its proven Hub and Spoke Model, the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) seeks to be a connector in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, disseminating digital knowledge and tools through its comprehensive offerings and expertise. Headquartered in Chicago, WBDC serves low-to-moderate income communities in the Greater Chicagoland Area with dedicated staff and programming toward advancing digital equity and helping to provide underrepresented small business owners with access to the digital tools, business assistance, and funding they need to thrive.

YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago | Digital Skill Building, Navigation, and Use (ACP Outreach)

Location: Irving Park, Logan Square, Lakeview, Little Village

YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is looking to extend the organization's long history of strengthening community by connecting all people to their purpose, potential, and each other. With this funding, YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago seeks to strengthen and expand its Digital Equity Initiative, which is dedicated to increasing access to high-speed Internet and promoting digital literacy and navigational skills among residents of low-investment Chicago communities. Specifically, funding will be used to sustain the Y's bilingual IT Helpdesk staff, who provide a direct point of contact to community members seeking internet access, computers, and tech support.

