

Invitation to Request Funds - Digital Equity Funding Opportunity
Kansas City Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund
Metropolitan Kansas City

Opportunity

The Advisory Board for the Kansas City Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund is inviting community organizations and libraries throughout the 9-county bistate metropolitan area (Cass, Clay, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri and Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties in Kansas) to apply for grants to assist underserved households access reliable, quality internet, digital devices and training. The expanded use of the internet will enable more adult residents to use the internet for meaningful use purposes – education, employment, health, civic engagement and personal connections. Requests must be submitted by February 28, 2023, 5 pm CST.

Amount Available and Eligible Organizations

Funds available total \$600,000. No one organization may apply for more than \$50,000. Nonprofit organizations and libraries that serve residents of the 9-county Kansas City region are eligible to apply.

Grant Recommendations and Process

The COVID-19 Fund Advisory Board wants to invest funds to support the expansion of digital services to residents that may be traditionally underserved or in geographic parts of the region without the benefit of community organizations offering services. Underserved populations could include (but are not limited to) households with low wages or limited resources, veterans, disabled, older adults, ex-offenders, unemployed adults or those with limited English proficiency.

The Advisory Board hopes to help local organizations gain experience and expand their services in anticipation of additional funding opportunities in late 2023 through the Missouri and Kansas state broadband offices. The Advisory Board encourages organizations to collaborate with others to promote assistance available through the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to households with limited financial resources. The Advisory Board also wants to support assistance to households in securing computer devices and participate in computer training.

Organizations should explain their needs and abilities to utilize funds to address one or more of the following categories of projects: (1) providing digital navigators to assist qualifying households enroll in the ACP; (2) providing new or refurbished computer devices for households capable of connecting with the internet, such as Chromebooks, laptops and desktops, or providing increased access to public access computers; and (3) providing training

and technical support to help adult residents make full use of the internet connection and computer devices available.

Interested organizations must submit the completed request form online by 5 pm on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023. For questions, contact Marlene Nagel at MARC at mnagel@marc.org

A group of COVID-19 Fund Advisory Board members will review the requests in early March and select recipients. Awards are expected to be announced by mid-March. The Advisory Board expects that organizations receiving funds will be able to carry out the proposed work by the end of 2023.

Eligible Use of Funds

Digital Navigators for Affordable Connectivity Program Enrollment

The COVID-19 Fund will provide grants to community organizations to help underserved households gain awareness of the importance of internet subscriptions and enroll in the ACP program or other low-cost programs offered by internet service providers. Agencies applying for this category of funding are asked **to help at least 25 households** enroll in the ACP program. The organization could work independently or with others.

Devices

Community-based organizations may apply for funding to offer new and/or refurbished devices – Chromebooks, laptops and desktops – to households that need the technology to enable use for education, employment, telehealth and personal connections and have limited incomes to purchase devices on their own. The provision of the device could be combined with assistance to enroll in the ACP program or to take advantage of training.

Libraries are eligible to apply to purchase and place additional public access computers at branch locations in neighborhoods where larger numbers of residents lack internet access or adequate devices in their homes and where demand for the public access computers exceeds availability during library hours.

Training and Technical Support

Organizations could apply for grant funds to offer training and technical support to residents in 2023. Training services should be focused on adults or older youth ready to seek employment.

Application Form Link: Use this link to access the application form and submit your request. The system should allow you to close the application once you've started, but not completed your work, and return later. Let us know if you have any questions or problems using the online form. <https://form.jotform.com/230306255337046>