

2023 | KC Digital Drive - Pilot Impact Report

# KC GOES TECH IMPACT REPORT



## Making Kansas City a Digital Leader

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for Kansas City area residents through digital leadership with a focus on maximizing technology use by diverse communities, and spurring the development of technology solutions for vexing public problems.

# ABOUT US



KC Digital Drive is the regional civic organization that supports the ecosystems for broadband, connectivity and digital equity, and emerging tech innovation, and helps to steward the region's digital transformation in helping communities prepare for the future.

The organization was founded by the cities of Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas based on recommendations from the 2012 bi-state Mayor's Innovation Team commissioned to consider how best to mobilize diverse community partners around collective action in digital inclusion and digital innovation.

Our community and network partners are foundational to how we build programs, launch projects, spread impact, and scale resources.

We organize our work into (3) lines:

- Community Building - engaging directly in the community as a convener and thought leader
- Project Delivery - deploying and managing a project through its launch and operations
- Solutions Lab - our methodology to connect ideas to issues, co-designing solutions to tricky problems facing our communities

Learn more > [kcdigitaldrive.org](https://kcdigitaldrive.org)

## Summary

KC Digital Drive launched the *KC Goes Tech* microgrant program in July 2022 to help expand the ability of community organizations to include digital training in their offerings and to network more effectively with existing digital literacy providers.



In 2012 the cities of Kansas City, KS and Kansas City, MO, along with MARC, established KC Digital Drive as a digital leadership network to support planning around “essential components of the region’s broadband infrastructure.” Since then, the KC metro has become a national leader in its digital inclusion work, established a first-of-its-kind coalition, supported an unparalleled private competitive fiber market, and helped lead national initiatives for expanded broadband access and digital literacy.

The pandemic has heightened urgency around the digital divide and unlocked new funding resources that demand greater public sector engagement and more explicit alignment around a broadband, connectivity, and digital equity agenda for the region. These issues have been at the center of KC Digital Drive’s work and community engagement for the past 10 years.

The broad community problem is that the “digital divide” is a persistent barrier to participation in digital society in all its forms—workforce and the economy, social and cultural life, democracy and political decision-making. A compounding problem is that the digital divide is not an isolated problem. It is bound with many other barriers to participation in society—and technology and technology access will not resolve these problems.

Inspired by the proven and cost-effective “[Tech Goes Home](#)” program founded in Boston in 1999 and expanded into [Chattanooga](#) by one of KC Digital Drive’s peer organizations in 2015, we launched *KC Goes Tech* to test a more system-focused model that included a network of partners to deliver digital literacy training and a device to clients, as well as options for affordable home internet.

## What we set out to do

*KC Goes Tech* aims to be a community-benefit co-designed with a network of established organizations to act as an organizing catalyst to codify a more intentional process reflecting a community system that:

- Builds on the nationally recognized work of the local practitioner community in the Kansas City region and amplify their success across a national network of thought leaders and partners
- Welcomes new practitioners and expands the work geographically

- Creates greater transparency to and alignment around the region's priorities and strategy within the regional digital equity ecosystem
- Enables newly engaged government and civic stakeholders/orgs to participate in meaningful and impactful ways
- Clarifies continuing engagement mechanisms for diverse members of the community at large
- Helps to drive federal and state dollars to the region and ensure those dollars are used effectively

The purpose of the pilot was to:

- Monitor and discover the demand and interest in the program as a whole.
- Encourage new organizations who do not currently offer digital training to apply.
- Level up existing practitioner partners and share their experience with others.

## What we did

In September 2022, KC Digital Drive awarded *KC Goes Tech* microgrants of \$2,000 to ten (10) partner organizations based on a \$1,000 stipend or honorarium to a staff or community member who will join a trainer cohort and deliver digital training to the organization's client(s) plus \$1,000 in unrestricted funds to be used at the organization's discretion.

The purpose of the microgrants was to:

- Support grantees' ability and capacity to deliver digital skills training services
- Connect diverse service populations
- Build upon the ecosystem support model of Tech Goes Home and adapt it for Kansas City with key core partners
- Provide technical assistance to a larger network of training partners
- Identify additional partners to connect program participants with more advanced training opportunities to help them fulfill their digital aspirations.

The pilot cohort included a diverse mix of organizations from both sides of the state line, with some currently offering some level of digital training and some that are embarking on it for the first time.

- Black Family Technology Awareness Association
- Central Avenue Betterment Association
- Healing House
- Jewish Family Services
- ArtsTech
- reStart
- Hispanic Economic Development Corporation (HEDC)
- The Toolbox Small Business Resource Center
- Sala de Arte
- DAVE's Place Community Impact Center

## Project Timeline

### JUL 2022

- RFP opens 7/8/22
- Recruitment of community organizations
- Office hours for app help and support through 8/12/22
- Recruitment of independent review panel

### AUG 2022

- Office hours for app help and support
- Application window closes 8/12
- KCDD reviews submitted apps and verifies eligibility
- Review panel convenes and selects grantees

### SEP 2022

- Awardee announcement and blog post
- Train the Trainer event 9/19/22
- Office hours and tech assistance
- Client (trainee) recruitment
- Secure the Mobile lab

### OCT 2022

- Digital skills classes and training sessions begin
- Office hours and tech assistance
- Device distribution partner development
- Scheduling and logistics of mobile lab check-out and use

### NOV 2022

- Digital skills classes and training sessions continue
- Device distribution planning and logistics
- Office hours and tech assistance

### DEC 2022

- Digital skills classes and training sessions conclude
- Office hours and tech assistance
- Device distribution portal opens
- Celebration event 12/9/22 and disbursement of grant funds

## Results and impact

We identified key learnings at every phase of *KC Goes Tech*, from the application to the reporting and evaluation. Some of these learnings were related to our internal processes while others were relevant to the class experience itself or the reliance on our device partner to set up our purchase portal.

- **Dedicated program coordinator** - The program is time and resource intensive and would be best served under the purview of a dedicated program coordinator in order to be able to effectively scale up. This new position is a capacity building post that would be integral in recruiting additional training organizations, overseeing day-to-day operations, providing tech support and resources to partner organizations, helping them comply with all reporting requirements, and to manage participants' ability to take full advantage of the class and device distribution.

- **Re-qualifying training partners** - Capacity and capability questions are included in the microgrant application, but we did experience attrition from specific circumstances at the org level. Before making final awards, we ought to touch base with each organization that scored high enough to be selected to ensure they are fully able to participate.
- **Wide scope of digital skills** - We discovered a wider scope of digital skills the cohort members opted to cover in their classes. While basic digital literacy, such as creating and using an email address, how to stay safe online and other fundamental topics, was appropriate for many participants who were new to computers, others were leveling up on what they already were familiar with and diving into more advanced topics, such as how to use spreadsheets and other digital tools to manage their business and even creating their own website to promote their work. To meet this demand, we pivoted our program focus from “digital literacy” to “digital skills.”
- **Class size is crucial** - For organizations that focused on older adults, a class size of 10 participants is difficult for one trainer to effectively handle as participants need one-on-one help throughout the class, which means the trainer must stop to assist those who need that help, slowing down the class and making it so that the trainer cannot get through the planned curriculum for the session. For these organizations, a training assistant, either a volunteer or other staff member, is necessary to ensure both a good training experience for the participants and the ability to cover the material as planned.
- **Resource logistics were more than expected** - Several organizations needed to access our mobile computer lab, and we underestimated the demand for the lab and the time needed to set it up, move it, transport it, and maintain it, and it may prove useful to expand its inventory or deploy a second mobile lab.
- **A trusted device distribution partnership is a must** - There are a number of logistics that make participant device acquisition and distribution a uniquely complex part of the program, one that ought to be simple and effective, but can easily become opaque and cumbersome. We will assess our device partner expectations and options going forward to determine the best solution for future *KC Goes Tech* cohorts, because this area of the program encountered several obstacles.
- **Integrating some ‘navigator’ elements into training** - We wanted to embed Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) sign-up assistance into *KC Goes Tech* as a natural resource that most participants would benefit from, but because some participants needed to learn some basic skills prior to being able to sign up for the ACP on their own, it was difficult to determine just when to visit the classes to help with ACP sign-up. Going forward, the program team will work more closely with future KCGT organizations to provide integration techniques in their coach training, and/or schedule our staff to host sign-up sessions at the appropriate time for each class.
- **Pre- and post-reporting integrity** - To ensure optimal partner compliance for reporting purposes, more emphasis ought to be placed on the importance of each class completing the pre- and post-training evaluation surveys and ensuring that the Spanish-language surveys are easily

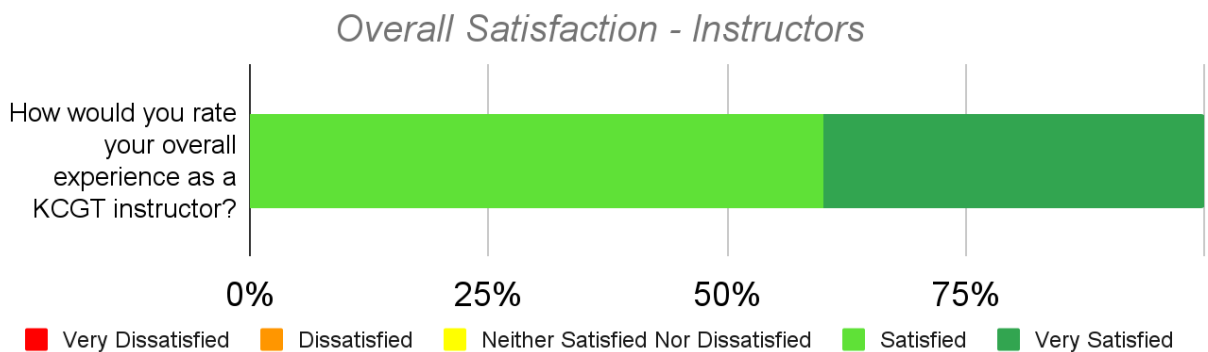
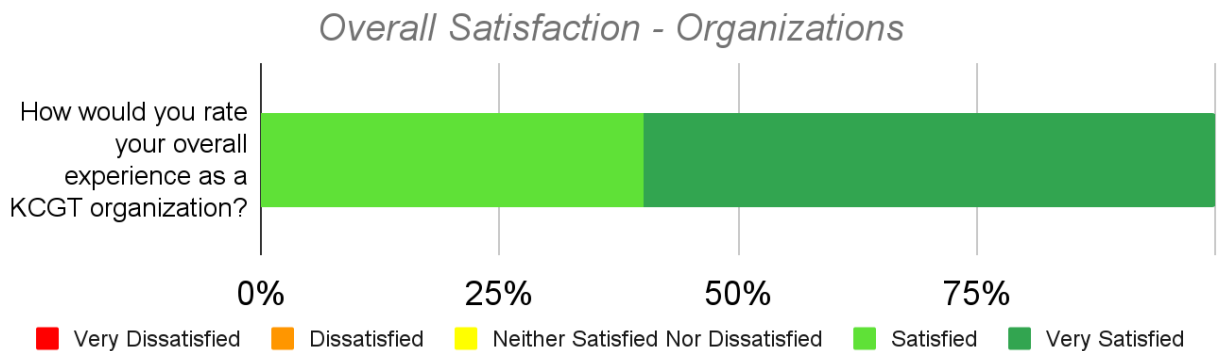
accessible to the organizations that are conducting their classes in Spanish. And we will provide paper surveys to be more inclusive and support those who were new to computers.

### Impact stories

- The Toolbox - [Norma's story](#)
- The Toolbox - [Gabe's story](#)
- Jewish Family Services - [Rachel's spotlight](#) (*scroll to the end, Spotlight on Jewish Family Services*)

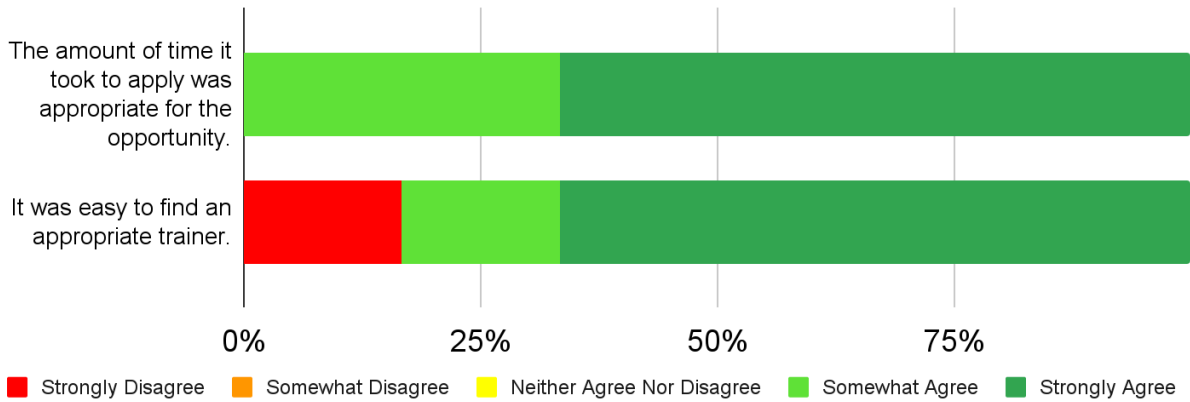
### Survey analysis

**Overall satisfaction in the program was very high.** All KCGT organizations and trainers who responded to the survey indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall KCGT experience.



**Regarding the application process,** all organization respondents agreed that the application process took an appropriate amount of time, and most agreed that it was easy to find a trainer. Only one respondent encountered difficulties in recruiting an instructor to participate in the program.

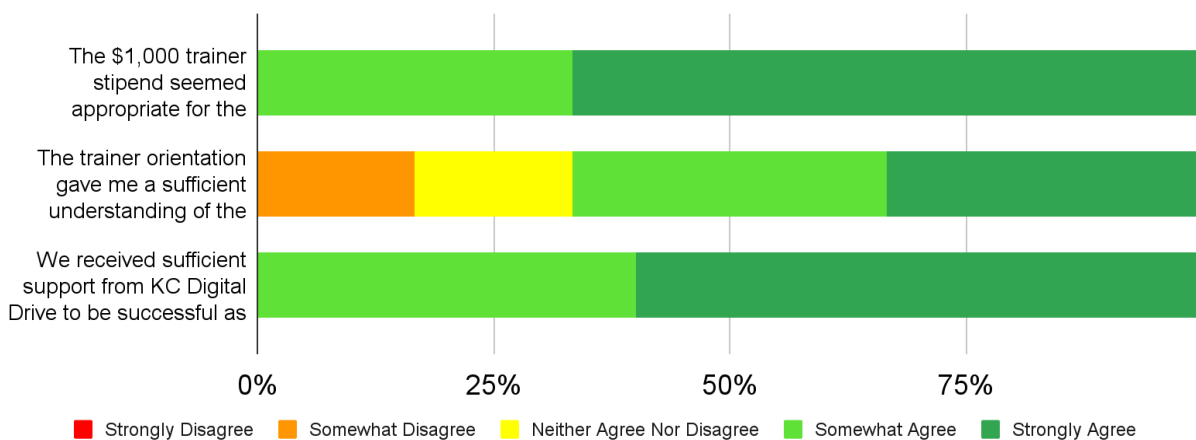
### Application Process - Organizations



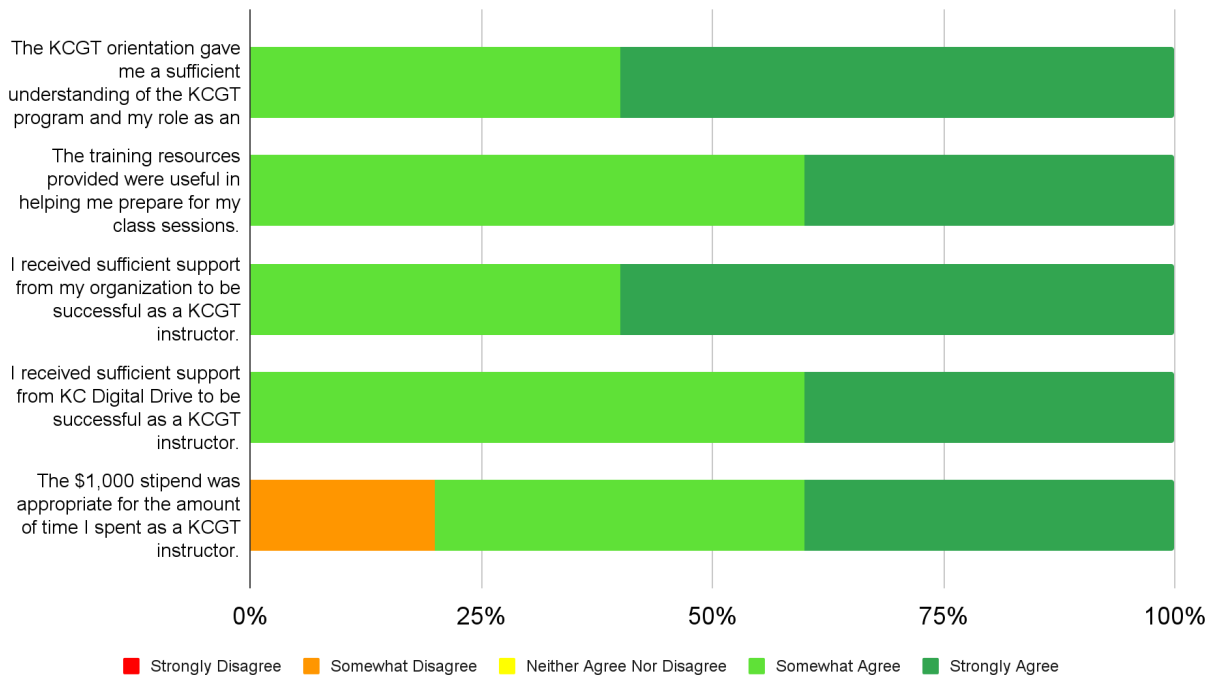
**Regarding instructor training and support**, all organization respondents and most instructor respondents agreed that \$1,000 was a sufficient stipend for the amount of time required of trainers. However, one trainer did not believe that \$1,000 was sufficient compensation for their time.

All trainers reported that they received sufficient support from their organization and from KC Digital Drive throughout the process, and expressed satisfaction with their program orientation and training materials. Organization respondents also agreed that they had received sufficient support from KC Digital Drive, though a third reported that they would have preferred to receive additional training about the program.

### Training and Support - Organizations



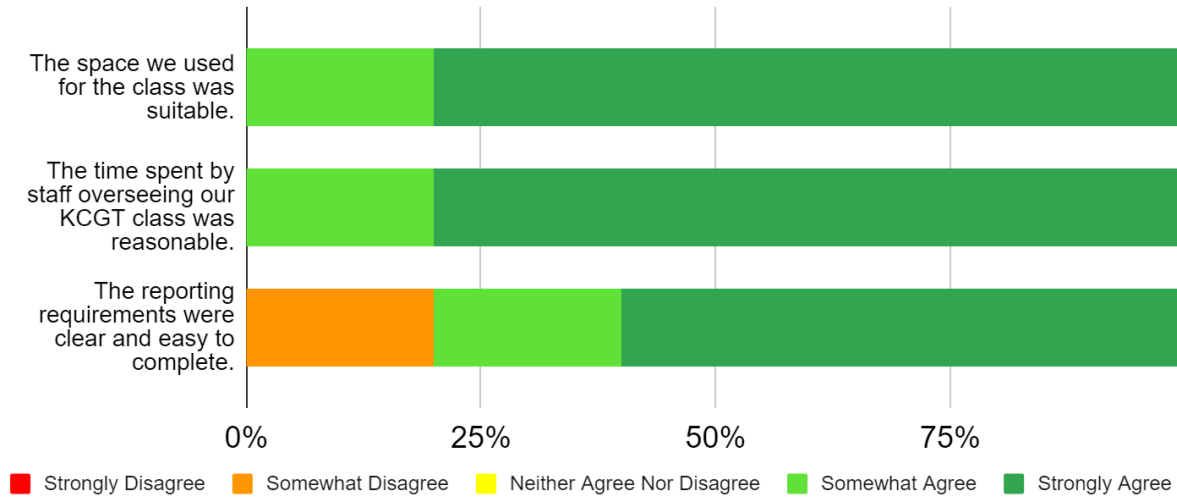
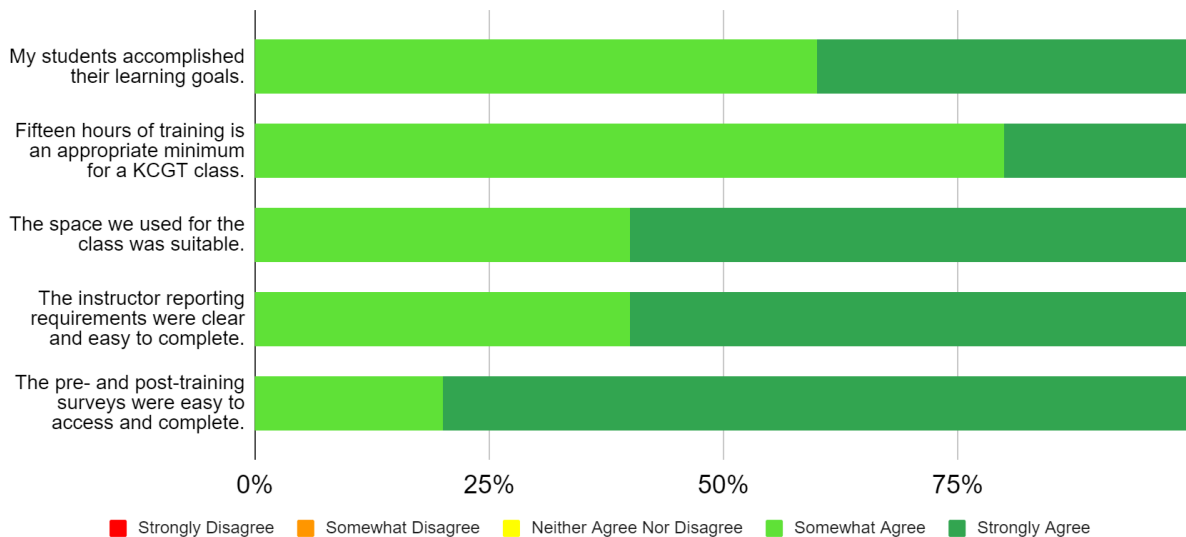


*Training and Support - Instructors*


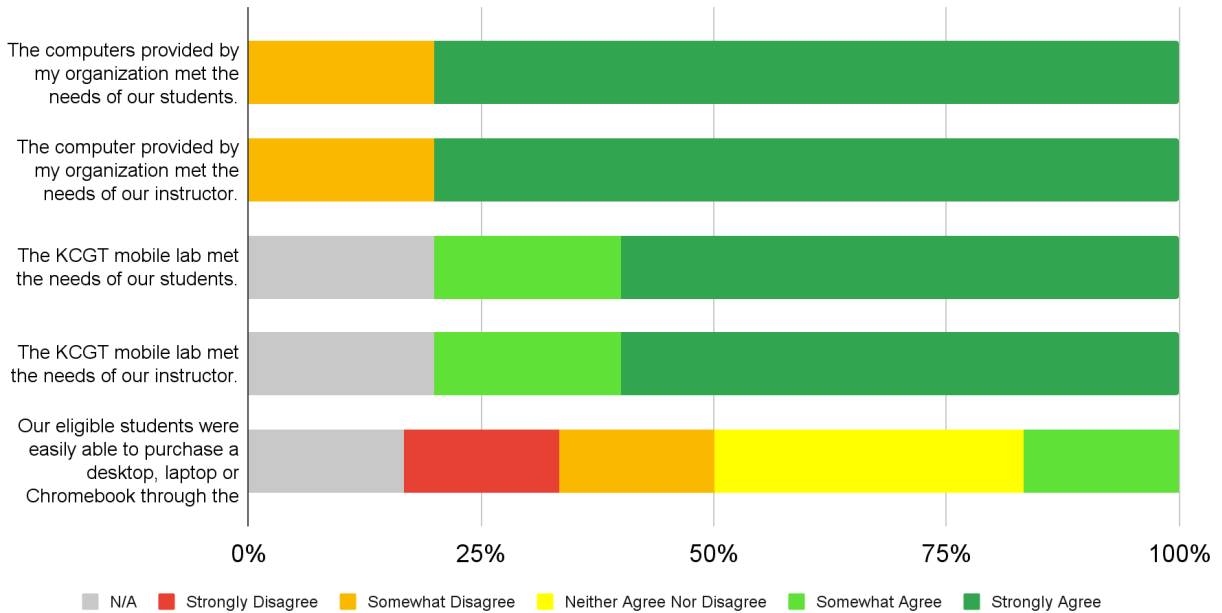
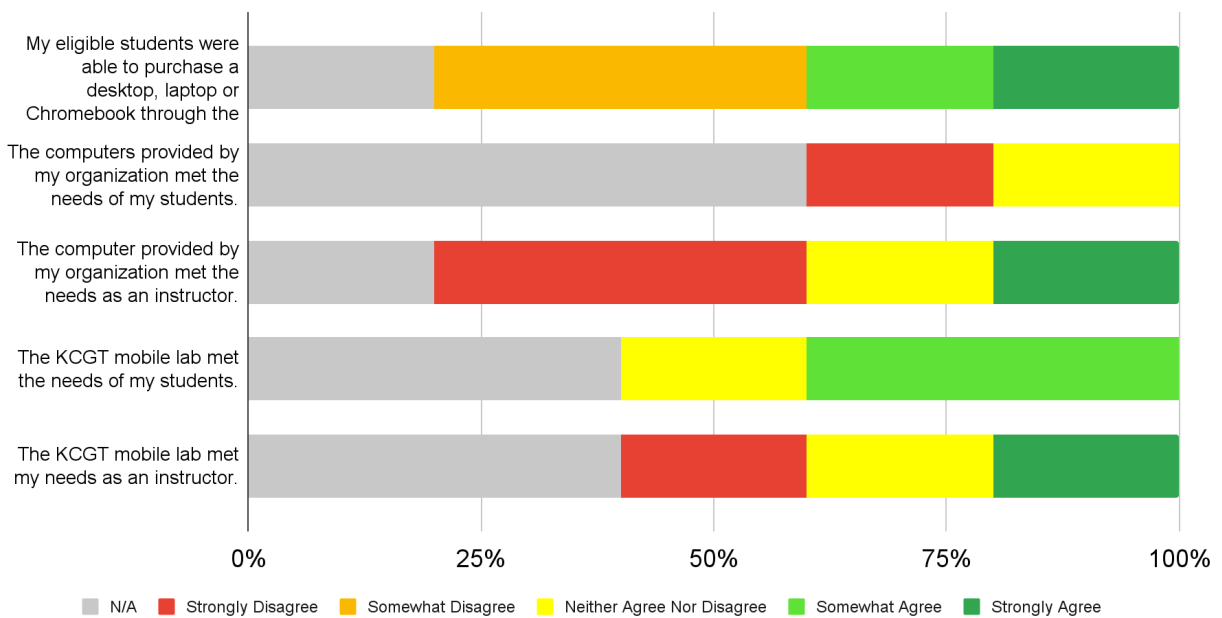
**Regarding the instruction experience**, all trainer respondents reported that their students were generally able to accomplish their learning goals, and that 15 hours of training was sufficient for most students. Comments provided by trainers did indicate, however, that seniors may require additional support beyond the base of 15 hours.

Regarding the content of the classes, four out of five instructors reported covering digital literacy basics for their students, including topics like how to use a device, how to use email, basic online safety, and more. Three of five instructors reported covering the basics of how to use video teleconferencing software like Zoom, and three reported covering basic workplace software like spreadsheets and word processors. In addition to these topics, two instructors covered basic web development for their class, and one helped their students learn how to access online library resources and use mobile apps on their phone.

All trainers and organizations also reported that they were satisfied with the space they used for classes, and organizations responded that they thought the time spent by staff was reasonable for the program. Most trainers and organizations agreed that the reporting and survey requirements were clear and easy to complete, though one organization requested that reporting requirements be more clearly covered in the initial training.

*Instruction Experience - Organizations*

*Instruction Experience - Instructors*


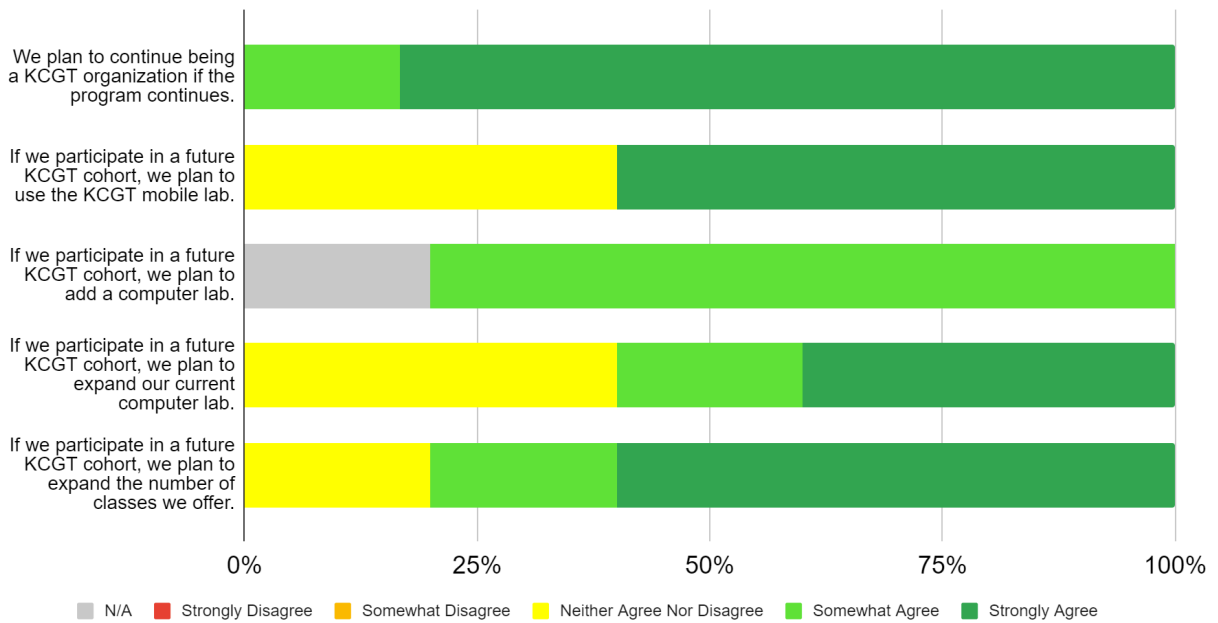
**Devices** were the area where organizations and trainers faced the most difficulties. In particular, many organizations reported that their students were unable to purchase a device from KCGT partner PCs for People. Several instructors also reported that the computers provided by their organizations did not meet their or their students’ needs. Notably, instructors had a lower assessment of the value of the devices they had access to than their host organizations. Satisfaction with the KCGT mobile lab was generally higher among those who utilized it than satisfaction with organization-provided computers, though some instructors still reported that their needs were not fully met through the mobile lab.

*Devices - Organizations*

*Devices - Instructors*


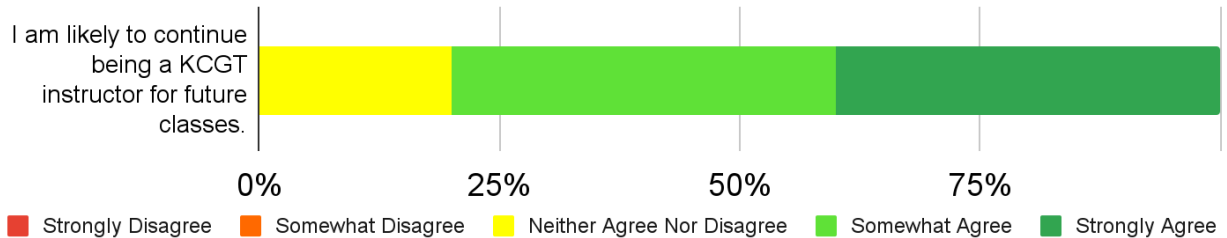
**Regarding future involvement in the program**, all organization respondents who completed the program strongly agreed that they would like to continue being a KCGT organization if the program were to

continue. Most organizations reported that they would like to expand the number of KCGT classes they offered if they were to continue the program. Even one organization that was not able to fully complete the program due to an inability to support full group training sessions nonetheless reported that they would like to find some other way to adapt the program to serve their clients in the future. Similarly, all instructors except one, who cited a lack of capacity, agreed that they would like to continue being a KCGT instructor in the future.

*Future Involvement - Organizations*

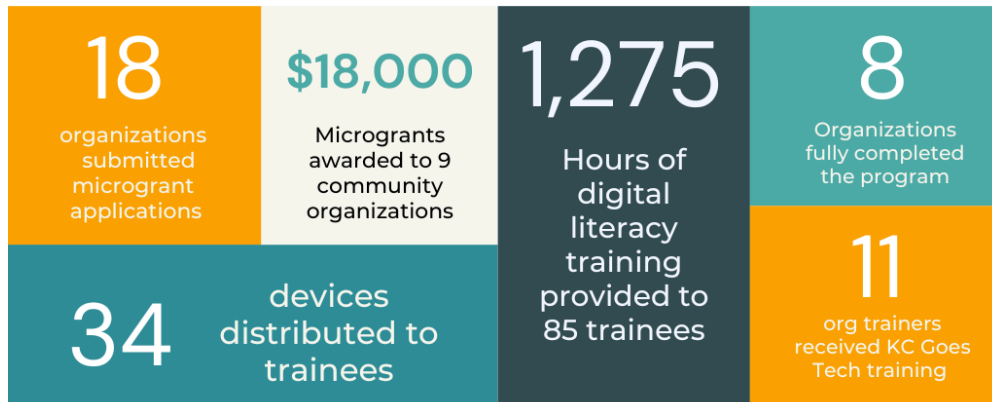


*Future Involvement - Instructors*



## By the numbers

# KCGOESTECH - The Pilot



## Grantee Summary

**ArtsTech** - offering young people and the community an opportunity to advance their artistic and technological skills in an entrepreneurial business environment.

Literacy focus/interest      Youth and older adults

Key Takeaway from Pilot      Not everyone learns at the same pace so it's important to stay age aware and conscious of how people intake information.

**Black Family Technology Awareness Association** - to empower and fully equip the urban community with the resources needed to become actively involved with the digital revolution.

Literacy focus/interest      Children and older adults

Key Takeaway from Pilot      The program increased seniors' confidence in engaging in social and economic opportunities by providing digital skills.

**CABA** - To provide community members with opportunities to grow and learn new skills

Literacy focus/interest      Adults and Older Children

Key Takeaway from Pilot      Did not complete / combined with The Toolbox

**Dave's Place** - Offering everlasting support in the southern Kansas City area.

Literacy focus/interest      Children and adults of all ages

Key Takeaway from Pilot      Learning the importance of keeping seniors independent and safe from spam, viruses, and scams.

**Healing House** - providing treatment and recovery support to men and women who've been recently released from prison.

Literacy focus/interest      Adults all ages

Key Takeaway from Pilot      Unable to complete

**Hispanic Economic Development Corporation** - building wealth through Latino entrepreneurship

Literacy focus/interest      Hispanic communities

Key Takeaway from Pilot      Programs like these are important as they open the doors to growth in our economy and help push for digital literacy in communities of color.

**Jewish Family Services** - Helping older adults feel more confident browsing the internet

Literacy focus/interest      People of all ages

Key Takeaway from Pilot      A "one-size" program does not fit all

**reStart** - leading the way to prevent and end homelessness in Kansas City

Literacy focus/interest      People with housing insecurity

Key Takeaway from Pilot      Learning the importance of technology competency and how not being digitally literate can affect lives in our tech dependant society

**Sala de Arte** - inclusive art community in the Kansas City's Historic Northeast

Literacy focus/interest      Children and Adults

Key Takeaway from Pilot      As an artist it's important to stay current in the ever changing digital world we live in and be able to showcase your art in a different format.

**The Toolbox** - go-to resource for everything small business in Wyandotte County, Kansas

Literacy focus/interest      Adults (18-65)

Key Takeaway from Pilot      The digital divide affects low-moderate income households and communities of color but thanks to programs like these we can bridge the gap and push these communities in the direction of full literacy.

## Future plans and sustainability

With feedback from the pilot cohort, our goal is to secure funding to be able to deploy new cohorts twice per year, with rolling options to expand the network of training partners with priority recruiting that aligns with:

- Community health workers
- Churches and faith-based communities
- School-based communities (a two-generation approach)

With the recent re-establishment of the KC Digital Inclusion Fund administered by KC Digital Drive, our goal is to utilize the Greater KC Community Foundation’s grant platform to manage RFPs and applicants, and for the distribution of microgrants to eligible community organizations; and to leverage program administration and hard device costs from the other funding sources.

We plan to seek input from a variety of partners and stakeholders to further inform our expansion of KC Goes Tech relative to our regional and state-based digital equity work.

## Financial summary

Expense	Cost	Description
Grants to nonprofits	\$18,000	9 grantees
Devices	\$6,800	34 distributed to date
Mobile Lab	\$2,200	11 devices: 10 laptops for trainees + 1 laptop for a trainer
Training	\$2,000	Provided by Ina Montgomery
Staff	\$12,096	\$8,736 - Program Manager (30% for 6 mos) \$3,360 - Program Coordinator (50% for 6 mos)
Supplies	\$600	Event rental, food & bev, stickers
Administration	\$4,169	Overhead (10%)
<b>Total Pilot</b>	<b>\$45,865</b>	



**Digital Equity Office**

LAMP Campus  
1801 E Linwood Blvd  
Kansas City, MO 64109

**Innovation Office**

Library District  
111 W 10th St  
Kansas City, MO 64105



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