

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT KANSANS

PUBLIC PROPOSALS- SECOND ROUND



Application Title: Technology Program

Organization Name: Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City

Project Executive Summary

Goals of the proposed project:

The Technology Program at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City serves youth in Olathe and Wyandotte Counties by providing access to digital tools and resources that promote academic success and career readiness. Targeting children and teens, ages 5-18, from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the program equips participants with digital literacy including web design, graphic design, digital photography, music production and digital movie making. Offered at the Olathe and Breidenthal Units, the program addresses the digital divide by introducing youth to hands-on lessons in computer basics, online safety through Netsmartz, the My.Future curriculum, and the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) robotics program.

Community partners like Comcast and T-Mobile help eliminate barriers to technology access, providing mentorship and resources to ensure youth are prepared for a technology-driven world. These partnerships support the development of a skilled, competitive workforce, fostering a more inclusive community.

Needs addressed by the proposed project:

The Technology Program addresses critical needs in Olathe and Wyandotte Counties, both of which face significant disparities in access to technology, particularly in economically distressed areas. In Olathe, increasing poverty levels leave many families unable to afford the technology and tools required for academic success, while Wyandotte County's underfunded schools face challenges in providing students with access to advanced learning technologies. This gap often leads to lower academic performance and leaves youth ill-prepared for tech-driven careers.

By providing youth with access to computers, coding programs, and STEM education tools, the program fosters digital literacy and career readiness. Participants learn essential skills in areas like web design, graphic arts, digital media, and robotics. These fields that are in high demand but underrepresented by underserved communities. This exposure not only prepares youth for STEM careers but also helps close the digital divide, ensuring that all youth, regardless of their socio-economic background, have the tools needed to thrive in the 21st-century economy.

The program also addresses the lack of diversity in STEM fields, particularly among minority and underserved youth. By offering hands-on activities and mentorship, the program encourages students to pursue careers in technology, fostering a more inclusive workforce and providing equal opportunities for all participants.

Service partners involved in the proposed project:

The Technology Program at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City collaborates with several key service partners to provide essential resources and ensure the program's success.

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- Spectrum (Breidenthal Unit, Wyandotte County): Spectrum provides reliable internet access, technical resources, and digital tools at the Breidenthal Unit. These resources ensure youth can fully participate in online learning components like My.Future and Netsmartz training, bridging the digital divide and supporting the program's online curriculum.
- Comcast (Olathe Unit, Johnson County): Comcast supports the Olathe Unit by providing internet access, digital devices, and technical support. This ensures youth can engage effectively with learning platforms and digital resources, helping them gain critical digital skills and improve academic performance.

These partnerships allow the program to offer youth the technology and mentorship they need to succeed, helping to eliminate barriers and ensure equitable access to tech education and career development opportunities.

Community and/or stakeholders involved in the proposed project:

The Technology Program at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City relies on key community partnerships to enhance its impact and sustainability.

- T-Mobile: Through Project 10 Million, T-Mobile provided mobile hotspots to qualifying families, offering five years of free internet access. This initiative, held at the Breidenthal Unit in Wyandotte County, empowered families to access the internet at home, promoting online learning and job searches. The event also provided backpacks and family-friendly activities to enhance the experience.
- Comcast: Comcast established a Lift Zone at the Olathe Unit, providing free internet access to Club members. Additionally, Comcast donated over 70 laptops and pledged a \$25,000 matching donation to expand the Club's tech resources. These efforts ensure youth have access to essential tools for academic success.

These partnerships are crucial in ensuring that underserved youth have the technology and support needed to thrive. Through collaborative community efforts, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City bridges the digital divide, promotes tech equity, and provides youth with growth opportunities.

Intended impact of the proposed project:

The Technology Program has a significant impact on youth in Olathe and Wyandotte Counties, addressing the technology gap and equipping participants with essential skills for academic and professional success.

- Short-term impact: The program enhances digital literacy, academic performance, and builds confidence. Youth engage in hands-on activities like web design and digital media projects, preparing them for future educational and career opportunities.
- Long-term impact: The program sparks interest in STEM careers, fostering a more diverse workforce and helping close the skills gap, ultimately empowering youth to become leaders in the digital economy.

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Total amount requested in DOCK 2.0 funding:
\$125,000.00 USD