



FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

ADVANCING DIGITAL EQUITY | 2025





## OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW

Health Forward Foundation is pleased to announce an open funding opportunity to support digital access, literacy, and equity through community-based organizations that have an authentic connection to Health Forward's prioritized communities of focus – Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, and rural communities. We are seeking to fund nonprofits that provide digital connectivity, device accessibility, and develop digital literacy skills. The goal is to increase access to reliable internet, technology, and digital skills to ensure full participation in society, from education and employment to health care, housing, and beyond.

This is an open funding opportunity, meaning any nonprofit organization that works within the scope of this announcement and within our service area (pg. 3) may apply. Please note that Health Forward will not fund organizations, projects, or advocacy focused on electing or opposing candidates for elected office. Other eligibility criteria is available [on our website](#).

We encourage you to review. These kinds of opportunities are instrumental in achieving specific outcomes within our strategic purpose areas.

Health Forward will award up to \$400,000 in funding to be distributed in 2025.

### Connect with us!

We are available to discuss your work before you submit your basic application. We encourage people and organizations who are new to Health Forward to [seek a consultation](#) prior to submission. Organizations with questions should contact [Adriana M. Pecina, Impact Strategist – Place](#).

# HEALTH FORWARD'S PURPOSE

Health Forward Foundation is committed to supporting and building inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems.

## KEY INFORMATION

### Purpose area

Place

### Strategy

Advance digital access, literacy, and equity

### Deadline

Basic applications are due in our funding portal by noon on Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

### Funding term

12 months

### Funding type

This open funding announcement invites applications from organizations empowering people and families from low-to-moderate-income households to gain knowledge and to build health and wealth by increasing digital access and literacy.

Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) organization or, if not, a fiscally sponsored organization.

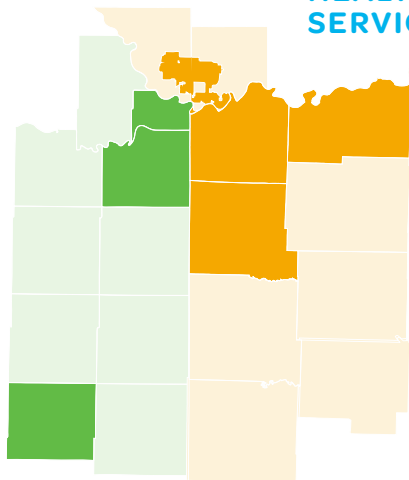
Organizations are encouraged to request a consultation with a member of the Place team to learn more about our work around digital equity.

### Where we fund

Health Forward provides leadership, advocacy, and resources to community-based and cross-sector organizations in Kansas and Missouri. In Kansas, we fund work in Allen, Johnson, and Wyandotte counties. In Missouri, we fund work in Cass, Jackson, and Lafayette counties, as well as all of Kansas City, Missouri.

We will consider organizations located outside our service area whose work will benefit our communities of focus living within our service area.

### HEALTH FORWARD SERVICE AREA



#### KANSAS

Allen County  
Johnson County  
Wyandotte County

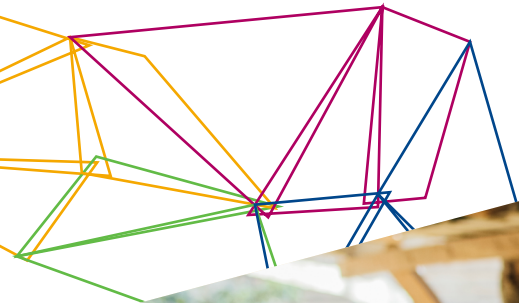
#### MISSOURI

Cass County  
Jackson County  
Lafayette County  
Kansas City, Missouri  
*(including portions of Clay and Platte counties)*

## FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR THIS INVITATION

Funding will support digital access, skill training, access to technology, and advocacy — all providing civic and cultural engagement, employment, education, and access to essential services in health, education, housing, and economic well-being.

- **Digital literacy training:** Programs that provide culturally relevant education and resources to increase the knowledge and skills needed to effectively access and use technology
- **Affordable high-speed internet access:** Initiatives that provide low-cost or free internet access to Health Forward's prioritized communities of focus
- **Access to quality technology/devices:** Projects aimed at distributing computers, tablets, hotspots, or other digital devices to people in Health Forward's prioritized communities of focus
- **Support for multilingual and multicultural communities:** Efforts that address the unique digital literacy needs of non-English speaking communities and culturally diverse groups through tailored programming.
- **Workforce development through digital skills:** Programs that provide people of color and rural residents with the digital skills necessary to participate in the modern workforce, increasing employment opportunities.
- **Access to telehealth:** The use of digital information and communication technologies to access health care services remotely and manage an individual's health care. Technologies can include computers and mobile devices. Telehealth can make health care visits more accessible to people in rural communities who have limited access to health care facilities and for individuals experiencing mobility challenges.



## ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD'S FOCUS ON DIGITAL EQUITY

Data from the Pew Research Center highlights the critical need for digital equity, particularly in Black, Latino/a/x, and rural communities. As health care increasingly moves online, access to quality equipment and strong digital literacy skills becomes crucial for effective telehealth services. A 2021 report revealed that while 93 percent of Americans have internet access, only 71 percent of rural residents have high-speed internet, compared to 77 percent in urban and suburban areas. Additionally, adoption rates for high-speed internet (known as broadband) show gaps among racial groups: 80 percent of white households have home broadband, compared to 71 percent of Black households and 65 percent of Latino/a/x households.

Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, and rural communities face significant barriers to digital access and literacy, starting with gaps in infrastructure that limit reliable high-speed internet in these communities. Affordability is another major issue, as the high costs of internet services, devices, and data plans make digital connectivity inaccessible for many who have been economically excluded. Additionally, limited digital literacy training in these communities hinders full participation in online activities. Many people also rely on mobile phones as their primary device, which, due to data caps and other functionality limitations, restricts engagement with digital learning and work. These challenges are compounded by large systemic gaps in education, income, and employment, further deepening the digital divide. Language and cultural barriers, including a lack of resources in languages other than English, also contribute to the exclusion of these communities from meaningful online participation.

## IMPACT WE SEEK

### Reduced disparities in digital access and literacy through the following:

- **Adoption of policies and practices that promote digital equity**
- **Increased digital equity (reliable connectivity, high-quality device accessibility and literacy)**
- **Increased use of digital services (for telehealth, job readiness, education, etc.)**

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Complete the basic application in Health Forward's funding portal and provide a brief overview of your organization's work, as well as alignment with this funding opportunity. A funding application template is available on our website.

If your organization has already registered for portal access, you can continue to use your established credentials to log in.

If you are a new applicant to Health Forward, or need access to the portal, you will need to register. New applicants may set up an account [through the portal](#).

If you need assistance, contact our impact administration team at [impactadmin@healthforward.org](mailto:impactadmin@healthforward.org) or 816-241-7006.

## NEXT STEPS

Following the basic application deadline at noon on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, Health Forward will review applications. During this period, we may seek additional information as part of our due diligence process.

## ABOUT HEALTH FORWARD

Health Forward Foundation is a nonprofit health conversion foundation formed in 2005. We recognize that racial equity and economic inclusion overlap. We cannot have one without the other. We also recognize that our efforts to build racial equity and economically just systems commit us to changing the education, health, and political systems that make up our society. These changes mean healthier people, an increase in community power, and creating equitable and just places.

We invite you to learn more about Health Forward Foundation by [visiting our website](#).

