



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Bedford County

Program Title: Chromebooks For Community Success

Program Category: Customer Service

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Jenny Novalis

Title: Library Director

Department: Bedford Public Library System

Telephone: 540-586-8911 x1140 Website: www.bplsonline.org

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Justin Stauder

Title: Deputy County Administrator

Signature: Justin M. Stauder

Executive Summary

This collaborative program is an innovative approach to the traditional model of digital literacy services that helps to bridge the digital divide in Bedford County and enhance social capital among three anchor institutions and their constituents/community. The Chromebooks for Community Success computer literacy course teaches parents and other caregivers of public school students how to use a Chromebook, and its popular apps, to aid their child in school. This course also teaches adults how to practice socially responsible, safe behaviors on the Internet and identify unsafe behaviors their child may become involved with. Upon successful completion of the free 4 week course, participants take home a new Chromebook, complete with the confidence to operate it and support their child in school assignments and beyond. Citizens then take that knowledge out into their social circles to help the community. This course not only teaches digital literacy skills to adults in a practical way, but also gives them the equipment and tools to help their fellow community members, thereby building more social capital. The Chromebooks for Community Success program was a grant funded project through the Bedford County CARES Act Non-Profit Grant in November 2020 and the service is still active, pending additional funding sources.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by the Locality

In 2020/2021 the Bedford County Public School community had a problem - due to lingering COVID-related absences, and CDC guidelines for quarantine periods, caregivers of school-aged children were being asked to ensure at-home learning continued on student Chromebooks, even when the child could not attend school. However, many of these caregivers lacked basic

technology skills and the knowledge of how the Chromebook and its associated Google apps worked. They found it difficult to follow what their child or grandchild was doing online, difficult to track progress in Canvas and completely unable to assist with technology-related issues as they came up. Further exasperating the problem, community care organizations continued to shut down in-person visits or restricted in-person activities due to the lingering effects of the pandemic. The Public School system was already stretched thin due to staffing shortages and online assistance for at-home instruction was limited. The Bedford Public Library staff saw the demand for Chromebook-specific assistance increase during this time, and noticed that caregivers, who had not grown up with computers, had considerable difficulty applying the knowledge obtained from our traditional computer classes to their child's Chromebook apps.

How the Program Fulfilled the Awards Criteria

The Chromebooks for Community Success program is an innovative solution to a common problem parents and caregivers experience with education in an online environment, particularly during the pandemic and post-pandemic timeframe. The Bedford Public Library and the Bedford Get Together were already engaged in other digital literacy initiatives and social capital endeavors through family oriented programming, and other services that build connections among diverse people, based on trust, that enhance cooperation for the mutual benefit of our community. However, by leveraging the local support and resources of three active community/government organizations with similar goals, we were able to form a new model of interagency cooperation to meet the needs of an entire population of citizens. This model project can easily be replicated in other localities that possess a public school system, an adult education program, a local community action group and a public library.

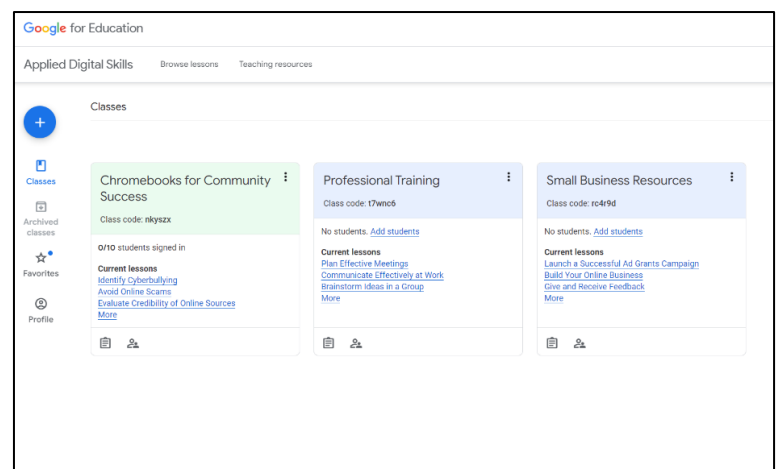
How the Program Was Carried Out

ACE of Central VA (<https://www.centralvaadulted.com/>) approached the Bedford Public Library with a collaborative plan to help leverage the social capital and reputation the Library already had to help fix the digital divide problem in the community. Our two government organizations, along with a local non-profit called the Bedford Get-Together (<https://www.bedfordgettogether.com/>), would apply for a \$10,000 CARES Act grant from Bedford County to build the digital resiliency of our community, with the primary goal of enabling caregivers to take charge of at-home instruction by providing them free technology education classes (specifically on Chromebook/Google apps) at the Library and the tools to continue the learning at home. Upon successful completion of the in-person, 20 hour Chromebook/Google app course, each adult caregiver would be awarded a free, new Chromebook to keep and the opportunity to continually practice their newly learned computer skills at home and out in the community.

The Bedford Public Library System staff put together the curriculum for each cohort of 4-6 adult learners, using pre-made lessons from the free Google Applied Digital Skills platform <https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com>.

Each cohort of 4-6 learners were enrolled as Bedford County Public School adult

education students through ACE of Central VA, and Library staff led the twice weekly group classes at the public library. Over 4 weeks, each class learned to work together to complete the lessons presented on the Google apps, all while using practical, hands-on means to solve the real-



world social problems presented through the digital skills curriculum. The classes taught them how to use common Google apps such as Drive, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Google Meet and others. All the same apps their children and grandchildren were using in the public school system.



For example, one lesson called, Cyberbullying, has the learner create a new Google Doc, give it a name, format the Doc, practice copy/paste, evaluate the validity of the online information they find and then share the Doc through Google Drive, all while learning to create their own plans to recognize and stop cyberbullying in their own families. Other practical lessons that the Library staff facilitated as part of the 20 hours of coursework were (not an inclusive list):

- Avoid Online Scams
- Manage your Time with Google Sheets
- How to Evaluate the Credibility of Online Sources
- Understanding Your Digital Footprint
- Make a Family Newsletter
- Make a Word Game
- Track Due Dates & Tasks in Gmail



The final class of each cohort included a visit from the Bedford County Public School offsite learning coordinator on how to access and use Canvas and Powerschool to track their child's or grandchild's progress and schoolwork. There was an awards ceremony and each adult who finished the class was awarded a new, free Chromebook to

keep, a certificate of achievement and the confidence to succeed in this digital world online.

Program Results

Overall, 45 adults completed the course and post-program surveys showed they were immediately able to follow along and keep up with their child or grandchild's homework assignments to ensure they were completed. Some adults of middle school aged kids reported they felt more involved in their child's education and in a better position to help their child in the case of late or missing assignments.



As the cohorts progressed, the Library staff also received success stories from adults who were using their new skills and Chromebooks out in the community too. Participants used their new Chromebooks to create online newsletters for their churches, to create home expense budgets to better manage finances and resumes to use for job advancement opportunities. A few even used this course as a jumping off point to return to school and finish earning their high school diploma or GED online. Success had found these people, the digital divide in our community had been lessened and social capital had been enhanced. They were giving back to their community in productive ways as well as enabling them to better support their children and grandchildren in school by being more involved in their child's education. The existing grant funds were exhausted in the spring of 2022 and the last cohort for the current cycle was held in December 2022 but, the service is still active as of January 2023 and seeking alternate funding sources.



Financing and Staffing

The Bedford Get Together organization applied for a \$10,000 grant through the CARES Act Non-Profit Grant Program that Bedford County was offering in late 2020. Bedford Get Together was to serve as the fiscal agent and to support its partner organizations, Adult and Career Education of Central Virginia (ACE) and the Bedford Public Library System (BPLS). The BPLS was to

provide the classroom/meeting space, organize the participants, create the curriculum and teach the classes. ACE of Central Virginia was to supply the in-class Chromebooks, facilitate the TABE testing process and track attendance. All organizations were responsible for advertising. \$9,972.11 of the grant funds were used to purchase 45 Chromebooks (of varying technological specs) and the remainder (\$27.89) was used for classroom supplies.

Appendix 1 – Timeline

Appendix 2 – Press release and advertising

Appendix 3 – Sample of curriculum

Appendix 1 -- Timeline

- November 2020: Bedford Get Together is awarded the CARES Act grant from Bedford County and the initial set of Chromebooks are purchased by the Bedford Get Together.
- January 2021: ACE requisitions Bedford County Public School Chromebooks to use in the library's classes and starts publicity.
- January 2021: Library designs curriculum for the cohorts (see appendix 2).
- February 4 to March 4, 2021: Cohort 1 held at the Bedford Central Library during a morning time slot (6 people graduate).
- March 9 to April 1, 2021: Cohort 2 held at the Bedford Central Library during a morning time slot (6 people graduate).
- April 15 to May 7, 2021: Cohort 3 held at the Moneta/SML Library during an early afternoon time slot (5 people graduate).

- August 2021: No classes held during the summer, due to public school schedule.
Feedback from participants were analyzed and the program's curriculum was updated and expanded. More Chromebooks were purchased by the Bedford Get Together.
- September 7 to September 30, 2021: Cohort 4 held at the Bedford Central Library (6 people graduate) during a morning timeslot.
- September 21 to October 14, 2021: Cohort 5 held at the Bedford Central Library (6 people graduate) during a morning timeslot.
- October 6 to October 27, 2021: Cohort 6 was held at the Bedford Central Library during an evening timeslot (6 people graduated).
- January 2022: No classes held during the winter. Feedback from participants were analyzed and the program's curriculum was updated. More Chromebooks were purchased.
- March 22 to April 21, 2022: Cohort 7 was held at the Bedford Central Library. Time was returned to a morning slot. (4 people graduated)
- December 7 – December 29, 2022: Cohort 8 was held at the Bedford Central Library. This cohort included one group session in the morning and two individual/one-on-one sessions in the afternoons. (6 people graduated)

Appendix 2 – Press Release

January 25, 2021

Jenny Novalis, Director
Bedford Public Library System
540-586-8911 x1140
jnovalis@bpls.org



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Chromebooks for Community Success class is now being offered at the Bedford Central Library

Helping to bridge the digital divide in Bedford County, the Chromebooks for Community Success class is a partnership between the Bedford Get Together, ACE of Central VA and the Bedford Public Library System.

Chromebooks for Community Success is a grant-funded, 20 hour instructional adult education class in basic computer literacy for parents/guardians of children enrolled in BCPS. The intent of this in-person program is to help parents/guardians gain computer skills and experience using Google apps; so they can learn new life skills, and help their child succeed in school.

The pilot program will be run at Bedford Central Library every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 9:30 – 11:30am, starting on February 2, 2021. If successful, the class will be repeated several more times throughout Bedford County. All programs will be structured as in-person classes, and will have limited enrollment due to COVID-19 safety protocols.

At the end of the 20 hour course, all eligible, enrolled adults will receive a certificate with continuing education (CE) credits and a free Chromebook computer to keep. This innovative program will not only equip adults with the skills to effectively use a computer safely, but also the tools to make it happen.

Call Jenny Novalis at 540-586-8911 x1140 to enroll or for more information.

-END-

Appendix 3 – sample of curriculum

The screenshot displays a lesson page for "Identify Cyberbullying". At the top, it says "Lessons > Identify Cyberbullying". The main heading is "Identify Cyberbullying" with a sub-heading "Create a plan to recognize and stop cyberbullying using Google Docs." Below this are three buttons: "Start" (highlighted in blue), "Add to class", and "Favorite". There are also social media share icons for Facebook and Twitter. A preview window titled "EXAMPLE OUTCOME" shows a document with "Community Guidelines" including questions like "Should I say that to someone in class?" and "Should I post comments to help this or make fun?". Below the preview are tabs for "Activities" and "Teaching Materials". The "Activities" tab is active and shows a table with columns for "TIME TO COMPLETE", "DIGITAL TOOLS", and "SKILLS".

TIME TO COMPLETE	DIGITAL TOOLS	SKILLS
45 - 90 minutes	Docs Search	Collaboration Digital collaboration Document formatting Internet search

Below the table is a "Videos" section with a list of video titles:



- 1. Identify Cyberbullying
- 1. Introduction to Identify Cyberbullying
- 2. Brainstorm Community Guidelines in a Document
- 3. Research Online for Reliable Sources
- 4. Plan What to Do When Cyberbullying Happens
- 5. Identify Cyberbullying Wrap-Up
- 6. Extensions: Identify Cyberbullying

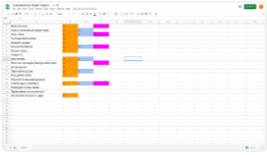
Lessons > Understand Your Digital Footprint

Understand Your Digital Footprint

Think about the actions you take online and then create a visual picture of your digital footprint in Google Sheets.

[Start](#) [Add to class](#) [Favorite](#)

Share to  




Activities Teaching Materials


TIME TO COMPLETE
🕒 45 - 90 minutes

DIGITAL TOOLS
Sheets

SKILLS
Data visualization
Digital collaboration
File sharing
Internet search
Spreadsheet organization

Videos

1. Understand Your Digital Footprint 

- 1. Introduction to Understand Your Digital Footprint 
- 2. Make a List of Things People Do Online
- 3. Revise Your List
- 4. Add Color to Your Digital Footprint
- 5. Understand Your Digital Footprint Wrap-Up