

A man with dark, curly hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue polo shirt, is smiling at the camera. He is sitting at a desk in a workshop or studio. In the background, there is an easel with a colorful abstract painting, a wooden mannequin, a white water bottle, and various art supplies. On the desk in front of him is a laptop, a pink cup filled with colored pencils, and a paint palette.

# SCALING THE VENTURA COUNTY DIGITAL UPSKILLING INITIATIVE

SCCRC 9-19-2025

# ABOUT EDC

## Ventura County Based 501(c)3 Founded in 1996

- Serves Ventura & Santa Barbara Counties with specialty concentrations in Los Angeles
- Focus on public-private partnerships
- Economic development focus on business growth and retention, entrepreneurship, business attraction, regional research and analysis
- Deliver business consulting, provide access to capital and support strategic initiatives that support the regional economy
- 18 full-time staff members with over 45 business advisors on contract





EDC | UPSKILL

DIGITAL UPSKILLING INITIATIVE

The Ventura County Digital Upskilling Training Program is an economic mobility initiative that seeks to increase earning potential and opportunities for participants.

- Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin secured **\$5 million in the 21- 22 State Budget** for a **Digital Upskilling Pilot in Ventura County**
- **4-year initiative** (June 2022-Dec 2025)



**Pilot innovative digital upskilling programs that can be scaled across CA**

# 3 GROUPS PROVIDED NO COST UPSKILLING CLASSES



## COMPUTER BASICS

### **NEW TO TECH LEARNERS**

who need basic digital skills  
to get a well-paying job.



## COMPTIA A + & SEC+ GBL AWS CERTIFICATES

### **ICT UPSKILLING FOR CURRENT WORKERS**

who already have some  
basic digital skills but need  
training and/ or specific  
industry certifications to  
qualify for more  
opportunities.



## GET YOUR SMALL BUSINESS ONLINE

### **SMALL BUSINESSES**

and entrepreneurs who  
need to get their  
business online and  
implement ecommerce  
to grow and stay  
competitive.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a classroom or computer lab. Several people are seated at long tables, each with a laptop. They are facing a front wall where two large monitors are mounted. The left monitor is black, and the right monitor displays a web application. On the wall above the monitors are several small framed posters. A dark wooden door is visible on the right side of the frame. The EDC UPSKILL logo is overlaid in the top left corner.

EDC

UPSKILL

# COMPUTER BASICS

Replication the Success of the Ventura County Initiative

# CONTENTS

**I. The Need for a Computer Basics Course**

**II. Course Overview**

**III. How to Teach the Course**

**IV. Replication Toolkit Resources**



# BACKGROUND



**The Computer Basics program was developed** by the nonprofit Economic Development Collaborative (EDC) to train and empower individuals underserved by current upskilling opportunities and who have little to no experience with computers, enabling them to confidently navigate the digital world, improve their job prospects and increase their earning potential.

EDC created a **Computer Basics Course Replication Toolkit** that can be used by anyone FOR FREE to expand the impact of the course and get the critical curriculum to more people across the state.

The program is part of a four-year, \$5 million-dollar Ventura County Digital Upskilling Initiative created by funding secured by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin.

One of the core goals was to:

**Pilot an innovative digital upskilling program that could be scaled across CA**



# NEED FOR COMPUTER BASICS COURSE



Digital Upskilling Training Program

## Without digital skills, people cannot:



Search for, apply for, and interview for a job



Enjoy the flexibility of being able to work remotely



Earn the higher wages given to middle-skills workers



Reserve an airline ticket, hotel room, table at a restaurant, or even a picnic table at a park



Access online or digital payroll systems, workplace benefits, and work schedules



Avoid cybersecurity threats and scams



Communicate with a boss, coworker, friend, or child's teacher

**People without digital skills are in danger of being left further behind as digitization expands.**

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARN

## Units of Study

1. **Basic Computer Intro-** Turn on and shut off a computer, using a mouse, keyboard functions
2. **Exploring the Computer-** Using file explorer, locate a downloaded item, Computer settings, using a mouse
3. **Google Accounts and Email-** Create and use email
4. **Chromebooks-** Set up and work on a Chromebook
5. **Introduction to the Internet-** Web browsers, hyperlinks, internet search
6. **Using the Internet-** Internet Security, Two-factor identification, completing online forms, etc.
7. **Word processing-** Creating, saving, & using documents
8. **Video Calls-** logging in and navigating a virtual call



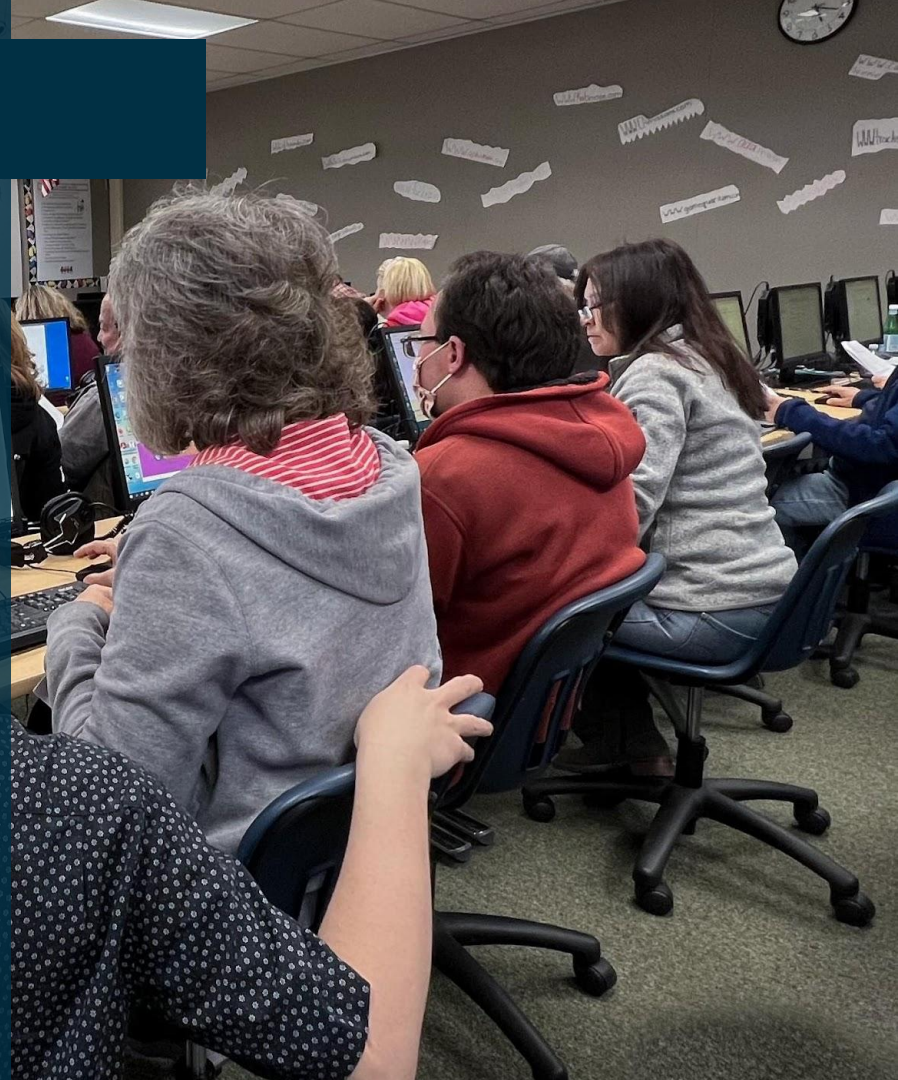
## What is this course meant to achieve?

The course is designed to give individuals the basic computer skills and confidence they need to:

- Navigate digital devices
- Be more technically proficient in the workplace
- Get a better job
- Access additional resources

# TARGET AUDIENCE

- Adult learners with limited to no digital or computer skills.
- Learners who need more computer skills to get a job or to move into a higher-paying job.
- Participants need to have basic literacy skills, including basic reading and writing skills.
- English or Spanish-speakers



# HOW THE COURSE IS TAUGHT

- **Short Course:** 6-8 week course (~24 hours)
- Taught by an instructor in a **classroom setting (Ideally with a super staff)**
- **Small class size:** Recommended max. class size is 15 students.
- Curriculum material available in **English and Spanish**
- Learners completed course using a **Chromebook**
- Provided “**Direct to community**” at community sites when possible (E.g.; Housing Authority, Elementary School, Juvenile Justice Ctr.)
- **FREE** to all learners

# WHY CHROMEBOOKS?

## **Why does the course teach students to use Chromebooks & Google documents?**



During the pilot program in Ventura County, every student received a Chromebook that they were able to keep upon completion of the course. Chromebooks are more accessible than personal computers (PCs), and they also provide access to the FREE Google suite of services.

## **Affordability**

- Cheaper to purchase and maintain
- Don't need to buy software (e.g.; MS Office)

## **Evolving Workplaces**

Many are converting to the cloud and already use Google suite. Using Google prepares learners for the future of work

## **Cloud-Based Storage & Collaboration**

Integrates with Google's suite of cloud-based tools that can be used to share and teach.

## **Ease of Use**

Simplified Chrome OS that streamlines applications which can help adult learners.

# IMPACT OF COMPUTER BASICS PROGRAM



**750+**

Students  
Trained to Date

**50**  
Average  
Age

**70%**  
Female



**40+**

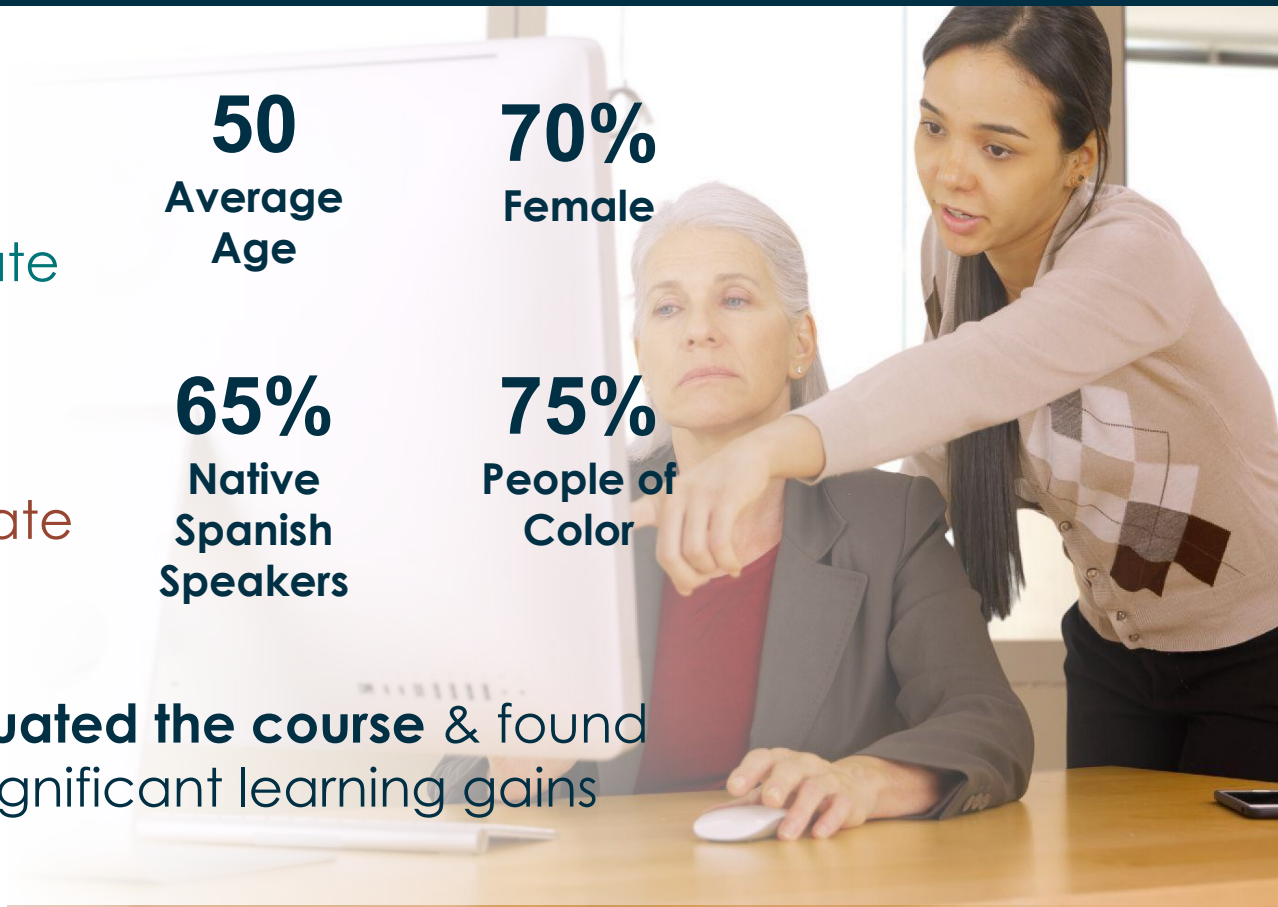
Classes to Date

**65%**  
Native  
Spanish  
Speakers

**75%**  
People of  
Color



**WestEd evaluated the course** & found  
statistically significant learning gains



# COMPUTER BASICS IMPACT TO DATE



The course has changed how people carry out activities in their personal and work lives.

## 6 months after the course\*:

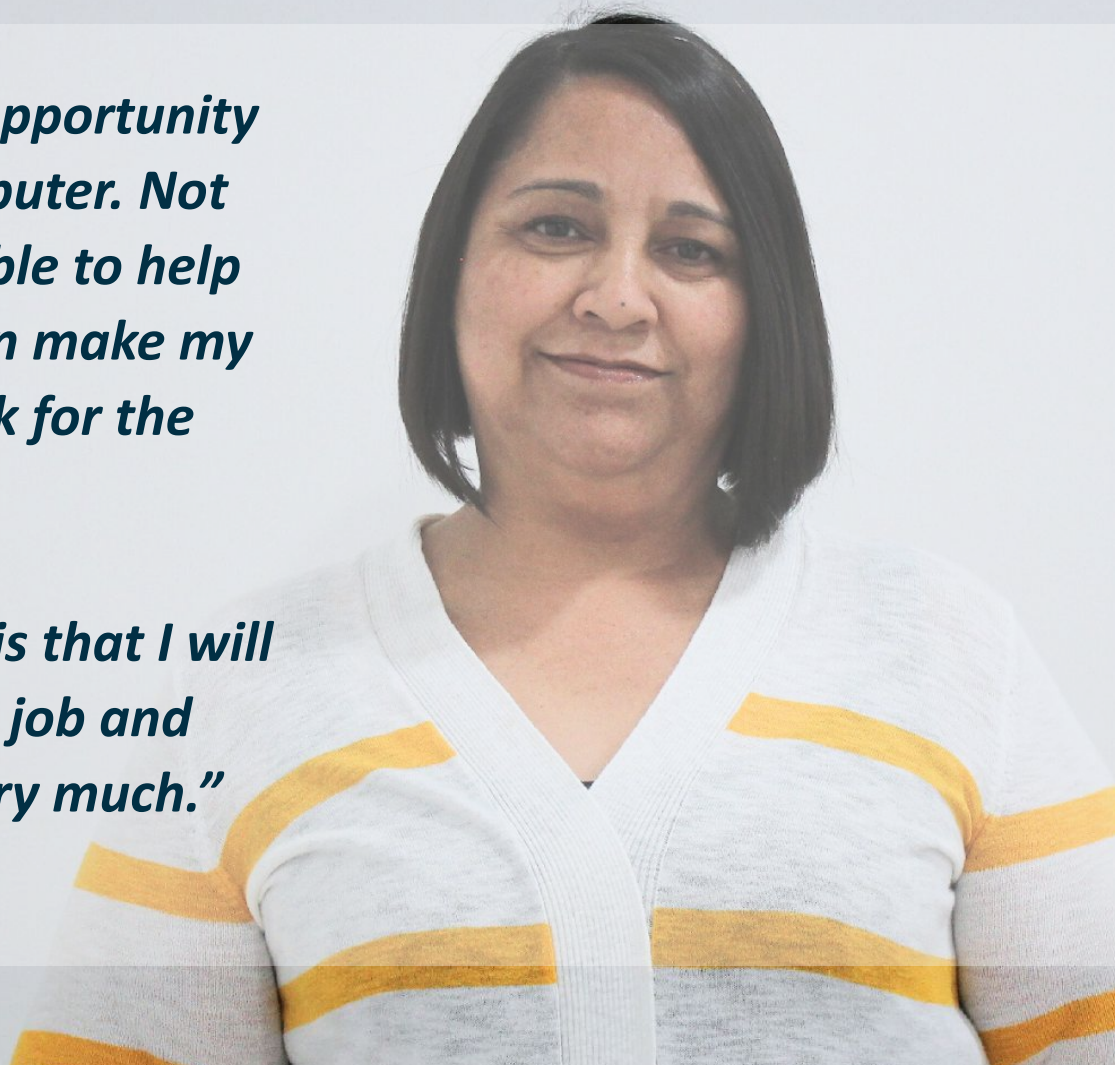
- Most participants use **Chromebook 3-7 times a week**
- The course gave the students the **confidence to try new things** using technology
- **80%** of respondents want to **take another computer class**
- **53%** said that the course helped them get a better job
- Participants have newfound **access to online scheduling, remote education opportunities, and other online resources.**

*\*6-month follow-up to all 63 students who participated in the pilot.*

***“Thank you for the great opportunity to learn how to use a computer. Not only did it help me to be able to help my daughter, but now I can make my payments online, I can look for the information I need.***

***The most important thing is that I will get a better position in my job and that's great. Thank you very much.”***

***– Itzel H.***



***“Before the course, I looked for someone to help me complete computer tasks at work, and now I can do them on my own. Looking towards the future, I recommend this class because it will help you to get a better job and to climb and not stay where you are.”***

**- Maria R.**





**“Before I came here, I didn’t know anything about computers, and now I feel very comfortable working with one.**

**The teacher was very energetic, and I learned a lot. Now I can pay bills online and conduct other business on the computer.”**

**– Richard B**

# REPLICATION TOOLKIT

To expand the reach and impact of the program, EDC created the Free [Computer Basics Replication Toolkit](#) that provides everything you need to teach the **Computer Basics course to adult learners**. The toolkit is available to any organization, school or community group that wants to teach essential computer skills to others.

- **Bilingual Digital Upskilling Curriculum**  
(Google Slides presentations and notes for all 8 units)
- **Student Activities and Worksheets**
- **An Instructor Guide**
- **Program-Evaluation Tools** to help orgs. measure the impact of their courses
- **Program-Administration Tools** to help implement and scale the program (such as marketing fliers)





**GET YOUR  
SMALL  
BUSINESS  
ONLINE**

# NEED FOR THE GET YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE COURSE

## When businesses are not online they cannot:



Have website & Be found in online searches



Increase revenue through online sales and customer identification



Reach customers



Expand into new business opportunities available online and through remote opportunities



Create or send invoices



Access online or digital payroll systems, increase operational efficiencies



Avoid cybersecurity threats and scams



Communicate with a employees, coworkers, clients, and customers

**83%** of shoppers conduct research online before visiting a physical store

**41%** go directly to online stores or business websites.

# GET YOUR SMALL BUSINESS ONLINE COURSE

**Teaches business owners and entrepreneurs essential digital skills that are needed to get their businesses online.** Helps students modernize their businesses and implement ecommerce to grow and stay competitive in an increasingly digital world.

## **Students learn how to**

- Launch & Create A Business Website
- Identify Digital Marketing Tools
- Use Email Marketing
- Make a Company Searchable Online (SEO)
- Create and Implement Online Marketing
- Implement Ecommerce Strategies
- Create Social Media Content
- Develop A 6-Month Action Plan

# HOW THE COURSE IS TAUGHT

**Target audience:** Microenterprise or small business owners with no or very minimal online business presence

- **FREE** to all learners
- **9-session course** to accommodate busy schedules
- Taught in-person and online
- Provided in **English or Spanish**
- Small class size (15-20 students)
- **5 FREE hours of one-on-one business consulting** (2 course required hours and 3 bonus hours)

# GET YOUR SMALL BUSINESS ONLINE – IMPACT

155

people trained  
to date

10

classes to date

72%

of participants are  
People of Color

77%

of participants  
are Female

62%

said their confidence  
has **increased A LOT**

47

average age of  
participants



"I've been an illustrator and a mural artist for 27 years, before tech, before online, before social media. I felt very overwhelmed in the next kind of pivot that I was in so I decided this class was the perfect fit for me. There was a lot of information, but the advisors, the workbook and the web learning center helped me pinpoint my targeted next steps."

**-Traci Adams**

# REPLICATION TOOLKIT



## **The NO-COST Get Your Small Business Online Replication Toolkit includes curriculum and instructor tools in English and Spanish!**

- Full curriculum in English & Spanish
- Ready-to-use or modify Google Slides
- presentations with instructor notes
- Student activities & worksheets
- Detailed instructor guide with lesson plans
- Program administration & evaluation tools



# PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

*I want to replicate the Computer Basics Course. Now what?*



Digital Upskilling Training Program

## 1) Send the EDC updates on your course's progress

Share Cohort Outcomes Form with the EDC upon completion of a training cohort. Email the form to [info@edcollaborative.com](mailto:info@edcollaborative.com).

- a. # of total classes completed to date
- b. # of participants per class
- c. Demographic information of students (with no student-identifying information)
- d. Outcomes (# of completers, any follow-up outcomes such as increase in wages, better job, etc.)
- e. Success stories

## 2) Give attribution & acknowledgment to the Digital Upskilling Initiative of the EDC of Ventura County

Suggested language is provided below:

*"The Computer Basics training program was developed by the Economic Development Collaborative of Ventura County, California, to increase the digital skills of adult learners. The program is part of a larger EDC Upskill Initiative that seeks to expand the opportunities and earning power of Ventura County participants by providing them with much-needed digital skills, training, and resources to help both individuals and employers in the county grow."*

*The Computer Basics program initiative was made possible by State Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, who developed the project idea and secured \$5 million in state general funds for a Digital Upskilling pilot in Ventura County from June 2022 to December 2025."*

A photograph of a modern classroom or computer lab. Students are seated at long white tables, each with a laptop. They are facing a large digital display at the front of the room. The room has a high ceiling with exposed pipes and a large window on the left. A dark door is visible on the right. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

**QUESTIONS?**



“Not every initiative should be delivered at large scale, but if the aim is to expand and deepen the impact of a particular project, program, innovation, or approach, then designing with scale in mind from the start is a must.”

— Brookings.edu



# QUESTIONS?

## **JAIME FALL**

EDC Workforce & Economic Strategies Director

[jaime@edcollaborative.com](mailto:jaime@edcollaborative.com)

## **JESSICA DAUGHERTY**

Consultant

[jessica@causeimpacts.com](mailto:jessica@causeimpacts.com)



# APPENDIX



# COURSE OVERVIEW

The table below provides a course overview for each unit of study.

Unit	Summary	Student Learning Outcomes	Benchmark Skills Assessment
<b>Introduction</b> <i>(Included in Unit 1 slides)</i> <i>½-1 hours</i>	<p>The introduction provides an overview of the course, resources for students.</p> <p>Optional Pre-Course Survey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand what the course entails and commit to attending</li> </ul>	
<b>Unit 1</b> <b>Basic Computer</b>  <i>1–2 class sessions or 1–2 hours</i>	<p>This unit covers basic computer terminology, including identifying different parts of a computer and understanding their functions, and learning how to use a keyboard and mouse. Also covered are proper procedures for turning on and off the computer and how to access the internet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate how to turn on and shut down a computer and monitor</li> <li>Identify and locate computer hardware components</li> <li>Use all mouse functions—left-click, right-click, scroll</li> <li>Demonstrate basic keyboard skills—commands</li> <li>Locate the Wi-Fi icon on the taskbar</li> <li>Demonstrate steps used to connect the device to the internet</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the essential parts of a computer.</p>
<b>Unit 2</b> <b>Exploring the Computer</b>  <i>1-2 class sessions or 2-3 hours</i>	<p>This unit covers fundamentals of using a computer, including exploring operating systems and applications, creating desktop shortcuts, e/storage options, learning how to use keyboard shortcuts such as cut, copy, and paste, and using the mouse to drag and drop, minimize, and restore windows.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate computer settings and taskbar</li> <li>Locate the notifications icon in the taskbar</li> <li>Create application shortcuts to place on the desktop</li> <li>Locate a downloaded item</li> <li>Locate deleted files</li> <li>Demonstrate keyboard shortcuts for cut, copy, and paste</li> <li>Demonstrate mouse functionality by using the right- and left-click buttons, <u>dragging</u> and dropping, and minimizing and maximizing windows</li> </ul>	<p>Power off a computer using a mouse.</p>
<b>Unit 3</b> <b>Google Accounts and Email</b>  <i>1-2 class sessions or 2-3 hours</i>	<p>This unit introduces students to Google accounts and email. This unit covers the creation and use of email and includes the creation of a Google Gmail account following guidelines for professional and secure account creation. It also includes a review of different email clients, opening, reading, and replying to emails, and identifying suspicious emails.  <i>*Guide students to create a personal email that is not related to a school district or other agency</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Gmail <u>account</u></li> <li>Identify the characteristics of strong passwords</li> <li>Distinguish between a URL and an email address</li> <li>Open, read, and reply to an email</li> <li>Create, address, and send an email</li> <li>Define the difference between reply, reply all, and forward</li> <li>Sign in and out of your email</li> <li>Recognize and use caution when opening suspicious emails and attachments</li> <li>Create a signature line</li> <li>Understand Professional email format</li> </ul>	<p>Create, address, and send an email to another student adding an attachment. Use the subject line correctly. Then respond back and forward the email to another student</p>

# COURSE OVERVIEW

<b>Unit 4</b> Chromebooks <i>1–2 class sessions or 2–3 hours</i>	This unit covers how to set up and work on a Chromebook. Students learn some of the unique features of Chromebooks . <i>*Students need access to a guest-network log-in at the school site to demonstrate this skill.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Log in to a device using a username and password</li> <li>• Connect a device to the internet</li> <li>• Adjust settings</li> <li>• Use the touchpad</li> <li>• Use keyboard shortcuts specific to the Chromebook</li> <li>• Find and install apps</li> <li>• Use the camera</li> </ul>	Connect Chromebook device to Wi-Fi.
<b>Unit 5</b> Introduction to the Internet <i>1–2 class sessions or 2–3 hours</i>	This unit covers the fundamentals of using the internet, including conducting a safe search, using various browser tools and website functions, and understanding and managing browser settings. This unit also covers the fundamentals of securing your computer data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the similarities and differences between different types of web browsers (ex. Chrome, Firefox, Edge) and search engines (ex. Google, Bing)</li> <li>• Perform a basic internet search</li> <li>• Switch primary language used in browsers and search engines</li> <li>• Identify and set browser security settings</li> <li>• Identify secure vs. not secure websites</li> <li>• Understand when a website is secure/not secure and what impact that may have on personal information</li> <li>• Navigate and leverage functions in a website (e.g., hyperlinks, play button)</li> </ul>	Clear cookies; clear browsing history.
<b>Unit 6</b> Using the Internet: Working Online, Safety, and Security <i>1–2 class sessions or 2–3 hours</i>	This unit teaches more features of using the internet. In addition, students will learn the basics of captcha use and its purposes, two-factor authentication, and other safety and security features needed when working online. Students will also practice completing online forms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and use the Refresh function of a web browser</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of when it is safe and appropriate to share personal or financial information (e.g., recognize phishing and insecure sites)</li> <li>• Understand two-factor authentication and when it is appropriate to use</li> <li>• Identify suspicious email and internet content</li> <li>• Identify suspicious text messages and know how to delete them</li> <li>• Recognize and use caution when opening suspicious emails and attachments</li> <li>• Complete an online form</li> <li>• Complete a fillable PDF</li> </ul>	Complete an online form for employment support.
<b>Unit 7</b> Word Processing <i>1–2 class sessions or 2–3 hours</i>	This unit covers the fundamentals of using a word-processing program. Google Docs is introduced. This unit includes creating, composing, saving, sharing, and closing documents. In addition, students will learn about file extension types, using spelling- and grammar-checking tools, and fundamentals of formatting such as font, paragraph, and spacing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open, save, and close documents</li> <li>• Use the Save As/Make a Copy and Move functions to change a document name or location</li> <li>• Apply formatting to a document—font type, size, spacing, and alignment</li> <li>• Apply bullets and numbering to a document</li> <li>• Use keyboard shortcuts and menu functions to cut, copy, and paste</li> <li>• Save/download a document as a PDF</li> </ul>	Create and name a document using word processing. <i>*This assessment is designed to use Google Docs.</i>

# COURSE OVERVIEW

<b>Unit 8</b> Video Calls  <i>1 class session or 1-2 hours</i>	<p>This unit covers the fundamentals of using video and audio technologies to communicate and collaborate. This unit will focus on using zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Join a meeting using a link invite sent to their email addresses</li><li>• Join a meeting using the invite code and password</li><li>• Rename themselves in a meeting</li><li>• Turn on/off audio and video</li><li>• Troubleshoot audio and video issues</li><li>• Mute and unmute while participating in an online meeting</li><li>• Use the chat while participating in an online meeting</li><li>• Move from the main meeting room to a breakout room and back</li><li>• Describe the purpose of the waiting room in meetings and webinars</li><li>• Create a Zoom account using Google account created in Unit 3</li></ul>	<p>Sign in to and participate in a Zoom meeting.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>  <i>½-1 hour</i>	<p>Instructor distributes Certificates of Completion to all students who successfully demonstrate mastery of benchmark skills. <i>*Template Certificate of Completion provided.</i></p> <p>Optional Post-Course Survey</p>	<p>Complete the survey online</p>	