



metro
DIGITAL SKILLSLINK | **2026**

metro **DIGITAL SKILLSLINK**



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LETTER FROM THE CIO



Dear colleagues and stakeholders,

As we reflect on our journey toward digital opportunity for all, I am proud to share the significant strides Metro Nashville has made in advancing our FY26 Digital Opportunity Strategic Roadmap. Our commitment to enabling everyone to thrive in a digital world is not just a technological initiative but a profound investment in the well-being and prosperity of every resident in our community.

We've launched and expanded programs like [TechTies Nashville](#), providing essential digital devices and training to people and neighborhoods across Metro Nashville and Davidson County. Our [Digital Navigators](#) initiative has empowered local nonprofits to offer personalized support, ensuring residents can confidently navigate the digital landscape. These efforts have been instrumental in fostering a more connected city.

Our achievements have not gone unnoticed. Metro Nashville was honored in January 2026 as a Visionary Digital Inclusion Trailblazer by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance for the third year in a row, recognizing our innovative approach and deep integration of digital learning and access support across government services. This accolade reflects the dedication and collaboration of our entire community.

These accomplishments would not be possible without the unwavering support of our program and community partners. From public libraries and educational institutions

to grassroots organizations and private sector allies, your contributions have been vital in turning our vision into reality. Your partnership exemplifies the power of collective action in driving meaningful change.

And a special thanks to Pearl Amanfu, the Program Director for Digital Learning and Advancement and Sally Stryker, the Project Manager for Digital Learning and Advancement here at Metro. Their tireless efforts and steadfast management of this program have been foundational to its success.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on creating sustainable, community-centered digital programs that enable residents to apply technology to support multiple areas of life and work. Together, we will continue to build a Nashville where every individual has the tools, skills, and opportunities to unlock their potential through digital access and education.

With gratitude,

John Griffey

Chief Information Officer and Director of Information Technology
Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County

INTRODUCTION

The year 2025 was a remarkable period of growth for our program.

Our progress would not have been possible without the steadfast commitment of our partners. Organizations like the **Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee (CFMT)**, **Comcast**, the **Nashville Public Library**, **Metro Action Commission**, the **State Broadband Office**, and many dedicated nonprofit partners have worked alongside us to support residents in ways that are meaningful, sustainable, and community-driven. The support and advocacy from the **Office of Mayor Freddie O'Connell** have strengthened our efforts, ensuring that digital learning and access remain shared priorities for Nashville's future.

Beyond our city, we owe gratitude to digital opportunity practitioners across the state and country. These leaders have persevered through challenges, shared knowledge and resources, and inspired us to innovate and collaborate. The collective wisdom of our learning community has been a guiding force for our program's maturation.

TechTies Nashville, a hub of digital opportunity, stands as a testament to what we can achieve when we listen to the community and design solutions that meet their needs.

As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate not only the milestones we've reached but also the shared vision that drives us forward. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected future for all.



METRO DIGITAL SKILLSLINK

As part of ITS's service delivery, Metro Digital SkillsLink encompasses three key areas of work:

Digital Navigators

Funded by Comcast with a grant administered by the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee and executed with our training partners at Tech Goes Home, Nashville's Digital Navigator program is designed for three purposes, all executed at no cost to the community:

1. Train nonprofit staff to weave technology-related guidance into services that they already provide to the community
2. Deliver multiple types of digital skills training to residents, from basic digital skills to advanced technical skills
3. Offer direct support to organizations that want to advance their digital opportunity services and residents who can benefit from direct guidance around applying new technology skills for beneficial purposes (e.g. job search or application)

The Digital Navigator program is the underpinning of our other services, because the Digital Navigator can leverage repeated interactions with members of the community





METRO DIGITAL SKILLSLINK (CON'T)

to help identify and address resident needs and determine the right ways to meet those needs.

TechTies

TechTies is a one-stop-shop for digital access, training, and support. In 2024, the State of Tennessee's Office of Economic and Community Development awarded grants to municipalities to support construction, rehabilitation, and renovation of municipal buildings. These renovations were intended to give municipalities space to conduct or expand their own digital opportunity programming.

Metro Information Technology Services partnered with the Metropolitan Action Commission and General Services on a successful \$1.9M proposal to remodel Airways Plaza, Metropolitan Action Commission's new facility at 1281 Murfreesboro Pike. The resulting facility has a state-of-the-art multimedia training room, as well as several smaller training spaces, to accommodate digital skills training, group work, and one-on-one support. The facility also houses a computer lab with publicly available devices for residents to use for various purposes.



METRO DIGITAL SKILLSLINK (CON'T)

Resources and Referrals

One of the core aspects of the TechTies program is the connections among participating organizations and the connections between those organizations and the community. Nashville's Digital Navigator program is more than a service offering. It is a network. One organization alone cannot meet the needs of a community—but we can do so much more together.

Organizations participating as digital navigator organizations have access to a collaborative community where resources, referrals, and expertise of all kinds are openly shared. When a resident walks in with a need—whether it's a device, digital skills training, help applying for jobs, or help providing food for their family—our partners can provide direct support or connect them to another trusted organization that can. This referral system ensures that people are not left out due to lack of resources or information, and that every participant has a clear pathway to the help they need, regardless of whether or not that need is technology related.

Over the past year, this networked approach has strengthened ties between nonprofits, Metro agencies, and community partners. It has also made it easier for residents to navigate services without the burden of repeating their story at every stop. By pooling resources and leaning on one another's strengths, TechTies has created a more coordinated ecosystem of support—one where residents feel welcomed, guided, enabled, and supported at every step.



PROGRAM SUCCESSES

1. **\$1.9M Connected Community Facilities [competitive grant](#)** from the State of Tennessee Economic and Community Development Department – Broadband Office.
2. **Renovation of Airways Plaza**, where TechTies is administered. Our partners at the Metro General Services Department renovated more than 58,000 square feet of space at 1281 Murfreesboro Pike, the new headquarters of the Metropolitan Action Commission, our primary TechTies program partner.
3. As part of the grant, Metro also installed **public computers** at Airways plaza for resident use.
4. Over this past year, **Comcast has expanded their contributions** to digital opportunity in Nashville, awarding a total of **\$175,000 to TechTies** through donations to the Nashville Digital Inclusion Fund. This support has enabled us to bring on new community partners, [train new Digital Navigators, and conduct community digital skills classes](#) at nonprofit organizations, faith centers, and community centers.
5. Thanks to the Comcast grant, we were also able to partner with Nashville Public Library to launch a series of community **classes at local library branches**.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES (CON'T)

- New Digital Navigators and trainers: **22**
- Residents who have received Digital Navigator support (May 2025 - December 2025): **6,738**
- Total number of Residents served at Airways Plaza (January 2025 – December 2025): **56,804**
- Residents who have used public computers (October 2025 - December 2025): **1,464**
- Number of community classes: **13**
- Residents trained: **138**
- Devices distributed: **138**
- New partner organizations: **14**



Together, these outcomes demonstrate both strong community demand and the operational capacity to scale services through additional partnerships.

This fiscal year's focus includes expanding service delivery to justice-involved individuals and residents seeking to enter, re-enter, or advance in technology careers through industry-recognized credentials.



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PARTNERS

This past year, our progress has been shaped by the tireless efforts of our partners and the expanded capabilities of our own Information Technology Services (ITS) team. Together, we are bridging gaps, building skills, and creating a more connected community.

Tech Goes Home

Tech Goes Home Tennessee is a statewide digital opportunity initiative that provides free technology training, affordable devices, and internet access support to individuals and families across 88 counties. Through a 15-hour curriculum tailored to various groups—including job seekers, older adults, English language learners, small business owners, educators, and justice-involved individuals—the program equips participants with essential digital skills for work, education, and daily life. Tech Goes Home was our primary partner in developing our Digital Navigator curriculum and training both the Digital Navigators and digital skills trainers providing support to our community.



In addition to their work with TechTies, Tech Goes Home has been instrumental in the digital opportunity work of the [Nashville Public Education Foundation](#), supporting service delivery to Metro Nashville Public Schools and their families. The program also launched a “Teacher Edition” for 25 MNPS educators to enhance their digital instruction skills.

PARTNERS (CON'T)

Metro Action Commission (MAC)

The Metropolitan Action Commission has made significant contributions toward expanding digital opportunity through the TechTies initiative. Through the Connected Community Facilities grant, MAC's facility at 1281 Murfreesboro Pike now offers a centralized location for digital services. MAC provides residents with tools and resources to break cycles of poverty and thrive in today's connected world.





Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee (CFMT)

The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee's community-anchored digital access, technology training, and workforce readiness initiatives play a crucial enabling role by:

- Providing seed funding for device distribution and training programs.
- Building partnership platforms with libraries, nonprofits, and civic groups.

Last year, CFMT distributed 264 Community Impact Grants totaling \$2,839,256. These grants, averaging \$22,000, reflect a strategic shift towards deeper, more impactful partnerships with grantees. The funding supports various focus areas, including child/youth development and education, aligning with CFMT's commitment to fostering a vibrant, inclusive community. As a core funder of Metro's digital opportunity work, CFMT contributed funding to set up a dedicated office for digital learning and advancement in Metro Government.

PARTNERS (CON'T)

Comcast

Also a core funder of Metro's digital opportunity work, Comcast plays a vital role in advancing digital literacy and access across Middle Tennessee through a combination of affordable broadband, community grants, and targeted training programs. Comcast's Internet Essentials program continues to provide affordable internet access, offering plans starting at \$14.95/month for qualifying customers. The program includes benefits like low-cost computers, free Wi-Fi hotspots, and digital skills training. In Nashville, Comcast has invested in initiatives like digital labs for Operation Stand Down Tennessee and a \$1 million grant to The Arc Davidson County & Greater Nashville to expand tech training for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These efforts are part of Comcast's broader Project UP initiative, addressing the digital divide through access, education, and community empowerment.

Comcast has also expanded its network infrastructure in Nashville, surpassing 22,000 miles of fiber-rich network and providing more than 130,000 Wi-Fi hotspots, contributing to Nashville's designation as a "Gigabit+ City."





COMCAST
TechTies

COMCAST
Pay to the Order Of **TECH TIES PROGRAM** Date May 22, 2025
One hundred thirty thousand and 00/100 \$ 130,000.00
MEMO Digital Navigators *J.S. Hayden*
Authorized Signature

PARTNERS (CON'T)

Nashville Public Library

Nashville Public Library is deeply committed to advancing digital skills and workforce development across the community. Through free in-person classes, one-on-one tech help, and online learning tools, NPL empowers adults, job seekers, and older adults to build essential computer literacy, navigate online job applications, and gain confidence with technology. Signature programs like NPL Digital Learn, Cyber Seniors, and Digital Drop-Ins ensure that digital skills training is accessible to all, supporting economic opportunity and lifelong learning for Nashville residents.



- Under their Adult Literacy program, NPL offers community classes for digital skills alongside HiSET, ESL, citizenship prep, and career readiness. This includes classes like Tech Goes Home: Computer Basics and Digital Drop-Ins that are often scheduled at local branches like Green Hills, Looby, and more.
- NPL is now partnered with TechTies to host digital skills training classes with Tech Goes Home Tennessee.



Community Partners

We also want to acknowledge our new community partners who have joined the program and have helped with teaching, hosting, or referrals for Tech Goes Home classes.

- African Methodist Episcopal Church Publishing House
- Drake's Creek Housing Cooperative
- Elimu Empowerment Services
- Greater Bethel AME Church
- Inspiritus
- Martha O'Bryan
- McGruder Family Resource Center
- More Computing
- Mt. Bethel Baptist Church
- Nashville Public Library – Bordeaux Branch
- Nashville Public Library – Hermitage Branch
- Sevier Community Center
- St. Pishoy Church
- Urban League of Middle Tennessee

METRO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Metro Digital SkillsLink is a division of the [Information Technology Services \(ITS\)](#) department of Metro Government. None of the work we do happens in a vacuum. Multiple ITS divisions help to extend digital opportunity to Metro Nashville and Davidson County residents. The Davidson County Asset Inventory, [Digital Inclusion Map](#), and [hubNashville Affordable Internet](#) request relied on the work of ITS's GIS and Data Insights and Service Applications teams. This annual report document and most of the public-facing Metro Digital SkillsLink assets are the work of the WebTeam.

Our ITS team has grown significantly, launching new services to enhance the digital experience for residents and staff. ITS employees help to ensure the usefulness, safety, and security of information and assets, while supporting good stewardship of Metro's resources. ITS team members:

- Support enterprise applications that Metro departments and residents rely on every day
- Support and maintain custom built or vendor applications, such as [hubNashville](#)
- Manage electronic documents
- Design, install, and maintain Metro-wide wired and wireless communications infrastructure



METRO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (CON'T)

- Host, manage, and monitor Metro Nashville and Davidson County data
- Develop and maintain databases to help us store, access, review, analyze and share data
- Provide and support secure access to desktop and web-based email services
- Provide server solutions for applications, data sharing, and keeping data secure as needs grow



- Provide technical support for employees, software, and hardware
- Offer [free Wi-Fi](#) in 108 locations, including on our entire WeGo public transit bus fleet
- Deliver and manage software and services to help secure networks and personal computers
- Purchase, install, configure and support personal computing devices
- Help Nashville make smarter choices by showing data in clear, easy-to-use maps and tools
- Provide [website design](#), maintenance and consulting services and support social media efforts
- Keep emergency radios working and tornado sirens ready to protect Nashville during disasters
- Tell Nashville's story through photography and [video](#), as well as ensure that residents have access to view or stream public meetings and receive critical information and announcements
- Deliver and manage tools and processes that enable Metro departments to deliver emergency alerts and important notifications to Metro employees and residents

These efforts underscore ITS's commitment to leveraging technology and data for the public good, ensuring that all Nashvillians can thrive in an increasingly digital world.

PROGRAM REALIGNMENT

The publication of our FY26 strategic roadmap brought with it an opportunity to realign our mission with evolving community needs. When we began this program, we did so with feedback from residents of Metro Nashville and Davidson County. Over the past four years, our program has grown alongside our city, and we have refined our approaches to meet the changing needs of residents and insights from local nonprofit organizations.

The most valuable piece of knowledge we gained is that **Nashville has untapped resources** to support digital learning and access.

More than 61% of respondents were providing digital opportunity support at some level, with more than half offering digital skills training. Learning opportunities are critical to successful application of the many technology tools available to us today.

We also know from the survey that many of the organizations offering these essential services have unmet needs that limit their ability to serve the community, given limited resources. Many of the resources that organizations need already exist within the community but often go unused due to lack of coordination or visibility. More than 90% of our participating organizations have resources they were willing to offer to support our collective work, from free meeting space to research and translation support. But without connecting points for the many conversations happening around the county, it would be difficult to **connect resources with needs**. This is the primary goal.



PROGRAM REALIGNMENT (CON'T)

The shared goal is to **integrate all of the information on available services and resources** to help residents get what they need to engage with the community, to learn new skills and build upon what they already know, and to prepare themselves for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Metro Digital SkillsLink: Technology Tools, Skills, and Real-Life Use

Metro Digital SkillsLink is Metro's integrated strategy to help build a digitally fluent, workforce-ready community. This evolution is the next step in Metro's decade-long commitment to ensuring that the public can successfully apply technology for real public benefit. It also provides a scalable model for aligning public infrastructure with community-based delivery. Our focus is linking resources with needs and building collaborative efforts to link residents with the tools, skills, and support needed to thrive in today's—and tomorrow's—technology-driven economy.

Program Foundations and Vision

Launched through Metro's *Connected Nashville* plan and grounded in cross-sector collaboration, Metro Digital SkillsLink connects technology access with career pathways. The program's cornerstone, **TechTies**, began in 2021 and continues to scale through partnerships with LocalTek, Tech Goes Home, the Metro Action Commission, Nashville Public Library, the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, Comcast Foundation, and others. Together, we are creating new pathways for learning, career advancement, and civic participation—especially for communities historically excluded from the digital economy and ecosystem.



Strategic Focus Areas

Our three-year roadmap supports:

- **Digital Fluency:** Building skills that go beyond basic literacy to include critical thinking, data use, and applied technology
- **STEM & Innovation Capacity:** Preparing youth and adults for high-growth sectors including AI, cybersecurity, and data analytics

PROGRAM REALIGNMENT (CON'T)

- **Community-Based Learning Networks:** Reducing isolation and aligning training with employer demand
- **Workforce Adaptability:** Supporting reskilling, apprenticeships, and access to postsecondary opportunities for nontraditional learners



Local Alignment, National Relevance

Metro Digital SkillsLink aligns closely with Mayor O’Connell’s priorities around creating opportunities for all residents, and it aligns with Metro ITS’s technology strategy. It also reflects national workforce guidance from the National Skills Coalition, including:

- Expanding earn-and-learn opportunities
- Supporting industry partnerships
- Investing in supportive services (e.g., transportation)
- Using data to drive program design and impact tracking

Why Now?

92% of jobs now require digital skills, yet many Davidson County residents remain unprepared. As technology evolves rapidly, our systems for education and workforce development must evolve with it. Metro Digital SkillsLink addresses this by combining public infrastructure, partner expertise, and a clear vision for inclusive economic growth.

Our Commitment

Metro Digital SkillsLink is not just a program—it’s a public commitment to a stronger, more resilient Nashville. We invite continued collaboration with Metro departments, education and training providers, employers, and funders to scale this model and ensure all residents have the opportunity to succeed.

FINAL WORDS FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Over the past year, I've been continually reminded that digital opportunity is not a single service or solution. It is a relationship. It's built through trust, consistency, and the willingness to meet people where they are while helping them imagine what's next.

What makes Metro Digital SkillsLink powerful is not just the programs we operate, but the network we've built together. Every class taught, device distributed, referral made, and conversation held is part of a larger ecosystem of care and capability. Our partners—inside and outside of Metro Government—bring creativity, cultural knowledge, and deep commitment to this work. Because of them, residents do not encounter technology as a barrier, but as a tool they can use with confidence and purpose.

As we move forward, our focus remains clear: connect resources to real-life use, align learning with opportunity, and ensure that no one is left navigating the digital world alone. The work ahead will require continued collaboration, honest evaluation, and bold investment—but I am optimistic. Nashville has the talent, the heart, and the collective will to lead in this space. I'm grateful to be part of this effort, and I look forward to what we will continue to build together.

With appreciation and resolve,

Pearl Amanfu

Program Director, Digital Learning & Advancement

Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County

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More Computing

Mt. Bethel Church

Multicultural Media, Telecom, & Internet Council

Nashville Digital Navigators and Trainers

Nashville Public Education Foundation

Nashville Public Library

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Urban League of Middle Tennessee

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THANK YOU

Thank you to all the partners, colleagues, and residents who continue to shape and strengthen this work. Your generosity, insight, and shared purpose make progress possible. We are honored to build this digital opportunity ecosystem with you.





Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County

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1st Edition

Art Direction and Design by Randall Williams.

Metro Information Technology Services

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To view the latest information about
Metro's Digital SkillsLink initiatives please visit:
<https://www.nashville.gov/skillslink>