



Employer Laptop Challenge tops 5,000

by: Victoria Rosengarten

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The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City announced that the Employer Laptop Challenge, a community development program that encourages companies to donate used corporate devices, has helped coordinate donations of more than 5,000 laptops to nonprofits, schools and refurbishers.

The announcement came Jan. 6, National Technology Day.

“The Kansas City Fed focuses on promoting access to affordable home broadband, devices and skills needed to participate in today’s digital economy,” said Jeremy Hegle, senior community development advisor at the Kansas City Fed. “Technology is a key driver of economic growth of cities and regions. A robust, stable economy requires that all members have equitable access to technology and opportunity.”

A 2019 report from the Kansas City Fed showed more than 30% of low-income households lack a computer. The coronavirus escalated the need for Americans to have access to broadband and devices.

Nonprofit refurbishers, usually a source of free or discounted computers for nonprofits and lower income families, are unable to meet the current demand. Employers can donate large numbers of used, similar devices and easily solve an immediate community need.

Employers and the Fed answer the call

Since the start of the challenge in April 2020, 20 employers across the Tenth District and beyond have helped close the digital divide. Through the program, employers are encouraged to donate at least 15 used, surplus laptops or desktops to local nonprofits.

The City of Kansas City, Missouri, kicked off the campaign and donated 650 computers, monitors, keyboards and other accessories to Connecting for Good, a Kansas City-based nonprofit computer recycler.

At this time, the top laptop donor is H&R Block, a worldwide tax preparation service company. The company donated more than 2,310 laptops to the community.

To date, the Kansas City Fed has donated nearly 200 computers to nonprofits across the District, including 50 recently approved for donation at the Denver Branch.

“Our goal is to demonstrate to the broader community several low cost, high impact ways to improve economic conditions for lower income people,” Hegle said.

Employers and agencies of all sizes, across the country, can still participate in the challenge. Read the stories of other #LaptopHeroes in the Kansas City Fed [community development newsletter](#).

Visit the Employer Laptop Challenge page at kansascityfed.org/laptopchallenge for instructions on the donation process. For more on the digital divide, read the Kansas City Fed report on broadband access, economic impact and solutions for communities, “[Disconnected: Seven Lessons on Fixing the Digital Divide](#).”
