



# Richmond Digital Health Literacy Project



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<sup>1</sup> City of Richmond Public Library Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP), <sup>2</sup> Communities in Collaboration | Comunidades en Colaboración



## Background

**The digital divide still exists:** 15% of American adults do not use the internet. This rate is worse for many populations, such as those who are low-income (25%), African American (20%), Latino (18%), or have less than a high school education (33%) (Pew, 2015).

These same populations also experience **health disparities** and have the most to gain from having access to quality online information about health conditions, health services, health insurance, and healthy living.

In 2014, the City of Richmond developed the Digital Health Literacy Project to address these key community health concerns in alignment with its **Health in All Policies strategy**.

## Objectives

1. Provide **digital training and tools** to low-income adults in Richmond, with a focus on helping them improve their digital literacy and use of online health information;
2. Expand **free and low-cost wireless internet access** for households and public facilities that are not connected to broadband service;
3. **Build partnerships** to continue and expand digital health literacy and internet access for low-income individuals and families to improve community health and promote health equity.

## Actions

Developed **bi-lingual (English and Spanish), publicly accessible, online Digital Health Literacy training program** using LearnerWeb covering eight key digital health topics:

1. Finding health information online
2. Finding health services
3. Health insurance
4. Using health services
5. Emotional wellness
6. Physical wellness
7. Family wellness
8. Community wellness

**Convened community partners** for curriculum input and support with outreach and sites to pilot the training program

Facilitated 100+ Digital Health classes in a **variety of community settings serving low-income adults**, including:

- Adult education program
- ESL class
- Public housing sites
- City community center
- Public school parent groups
- Non-profit social service sites

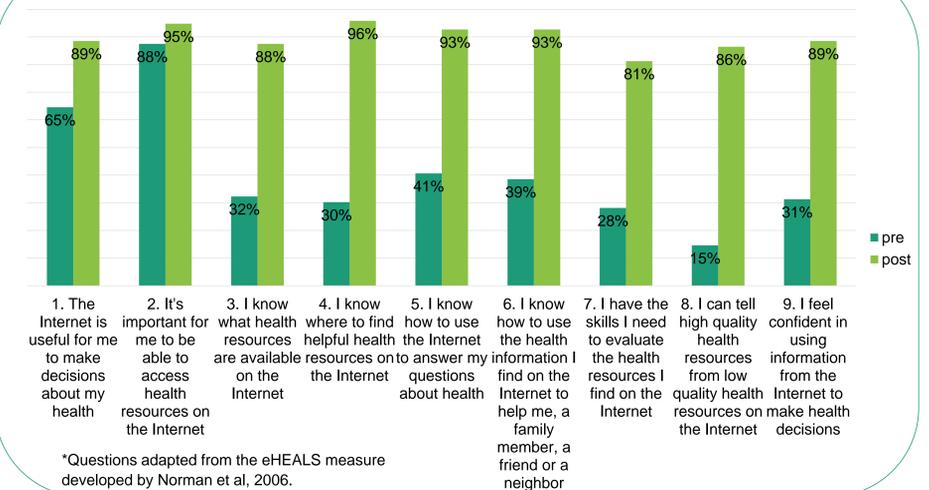


Within the first 6 months, 120 adults completed the Digital Health training

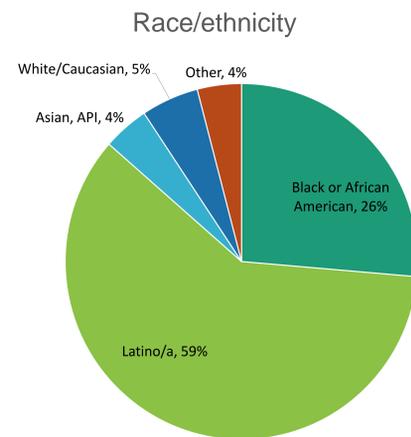
- Average class time=10 hours over 5 weeks
- All graduates earned a **free refurbished laptop, bag, mouse**, and certificate to enable their continued access to online resources.
- Graduates without home internet access also received a **free wireless internet hotspot device** and 3 month subscription.
- **95%** of graduates report that they would recommend the program to a friend.
- **30%** of graduates experienced **improvements in self-rated health** over the course of the program.

## Results

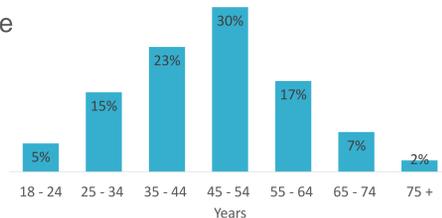
### Improvements in eHealth Literacy Measures\*



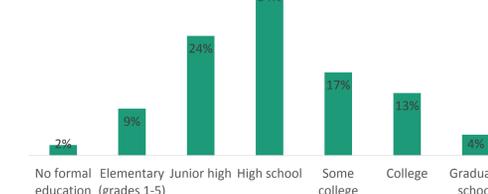
## Population Served



## Age



## Education



## Learning Gains

I learned how to make Richmond a better place to live.

It helps with your confidence in using computers and finding helpful information.

It has helped me become better acquainted with researching internet info and understanding the different programs and icons.

Nos enseña como ingresar a una página que es segura, información sobre una enfermedad, a donde hay lugares como clínicas, etc., en general muchas cosas



In focus group discussions, participants reported learning how to:

- Determine if they, their friends, or family members are **eligible for ACA health insurance coverage**
- Research their own symptoms to **assess whether they should visit a doctor, an urgent care center, or an emergency room**
- Better **understand diagnoses and treatment options** for diabetes
- Learn about **local community resources, nutrition, and exercise**
- Develop a better understanding of **mental health care** and resources

## Implications

- Improves Population Health:** Adult education programs and public libraries already work with vulnerable populations and can effectively empower them to access online health information and resources.
- Scalable & Replicable:** The online curriculum can be tailored to include national, state, and local resources based on where learners live, making it easy to expand to other communities and contexts.
- Cost-effective:** Providing digital health literacy training, laptops, and internet access to low-income adults costs just \$200-\$400 per person. The average cost of an emergency department for a preventable condition is more than \$1,000.

## Acknowledgements

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services award number LG-05-14-0126-14. The Minnesota Literacy Council and the Literacy, Language, and Technology Group at Portland State University helped develop the curriculum on LearnerWeb.