

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As we look back on Fiscal Year 2025, I'm inspired by the progress we've made—together—to expand digital opportunity across our community. **It was a milestone year—defined by innovation, deep collaboration, and shared impact.** With your support, we expanded our reach and deepened our efforts in ways that empower more residents to connect, learn, and thrive in our increasingly digital world.

Celebrating Our FY2025 Achievements

In the past year, CDE dramatically expanded our Digital Navigator support, bringing tech help and on-site guidance to more residents than ever before. We hosted device clinics, held regular office hours in trusted community spaces, and responded to more than 3,700 personalized requests for support. Meanwhile, our community-centered skilling efforts soared. Together with local partners, we delivered more than 46,000 hours of digital skills training, many paired with device access and follow-up coaching to ensure confidence, not just connectivity.

We also launched new structures for ecosystem-wide coordination and data-sharing, equipping over 30 partner organizations to align their efforts and amplify their impact. We welcomed over 100 organizations into our growing partner network—including 25 who joined us for the first time—each stepping into the work of digital equity at the level and pace that makes sense for them. From rural communities to urban neighborhoods, the shared thread was clear: this work is strongest when we do it together.

Heartfelt Gratitude

None of this progress would have been possible without the people behind it. To our incredible CDE team, your daily commitment to equity, trust, and service is unmatched. To our funders, thank you for your belief in this mission and your partnership in sustaining it. To our community partners, from grassroots organizations to anchor institutions—you have shown what is possible when we align around a common cause. And to the residents we serve: thank you for your trust, your stories, and your resilience. You are the reason we exist.

Navigating a Shifting Federal Landscape

This year also brought new challenges. The federal funding environment for digital equity work is shifting rapidly, and with it, grant opportunities we had anticipated—and responsibly planned for—did not materialize. These losses have a chilling effect not only on our organization, but on the broader ecosystem we've worked so hard to build. When federal support falters, the weight of sustaining essential community services falls more heavily on local leaders and partners.

And yet, even as we face these headwinds, we see opportunity.

Well before this funding shift, the CDE had already begun building a more resilient model—one that generates mission-aligned revenue through system-level consulting, ecosystem planning, and shared infrastructure. While we expected a longer runway to scale this model, we remain committed to the vision: a financially sustainable CDE that can serve, connect, and strengthen our ecosystem—regardless of federal trends.

This isn't about stepping back from public investment—it's about stepping forward with a community-powered model that invites philanthropy, civic institutions, and the private sector to co-invest in long-term solutions. And as always, CDE will remain the trusted backbone—facilitating collaboration, aligning efforts, and driving progress.

Looking Ahead—Our Collective Future

We are entering a new chapter in the work of digital equity—one shaped by rapid advances in AI, automation, and online life. Generative AI is already changing how we access healthcare, apply for jobs, and connect with one another. And without intentional, inclusive strategies, it risks widening the very gaps we're trying to close.

But if the past year has shown us anything, it's this: we are ready.

Together, we've built something powerful—an ecosystem rooted in trust, shaped by community voice, and built to grow. And now, we must evolve with urgency and care.

The road ahead will require more than devices and training. It will require integrated systems, adaptive leadership, and a shared commitment to ensuring that digital opportunity touches every part of people's lives—work, health, and home. CDE will continue to serve as a coalition builder, backbone coordinator, and systems integrator. From Charlotte to counties across North Carolina—and in national conversations shaping the field—we will continue to lead, connect, and learn.

In closing, I am both proud and profoundly optimistic. Proud of what we've accomplished together, and confident in the path ahead. This work isn't easy—but it's worth it. And with you—our funders, neighbors, and partners—we'll keep building a future where digital equity is not an aspiration, but a lived reality for all.

Thank you for walking with us.

With deep appreciation,



Bruce Clark
Executive Director
Center for Digital Equity



COLLECTIVE IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



46,000+
DIGITAL SKILLING HOURS



3,750+
HELP REQUESTS



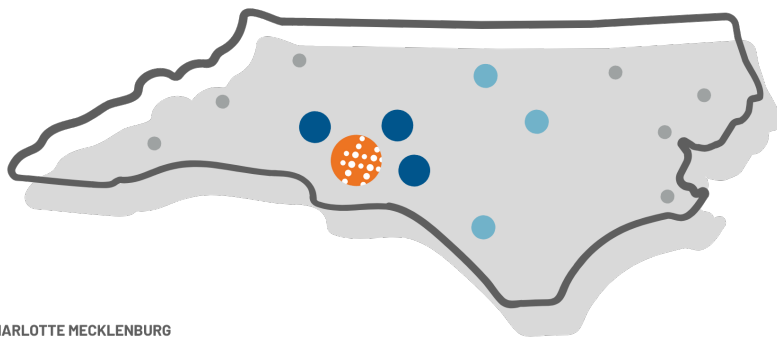
5,000+
DEVICES DISTRIBUTED



100+
PARTNER ORGS ONBOARDED

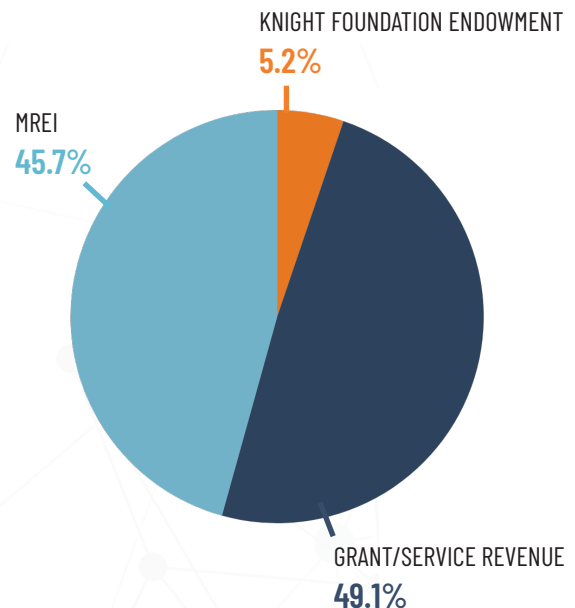
This report reflects a year of bold progress, collective action, and a shared belief that **digital opportunity should reach everyone, everywhere.**

OUR EXPANDING FOOTPRINT



- CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG
- COUNTY EXPANSIONS
- CDE-BASED AGELESS ACCESS
- EXTENDED AGELESS ACCESS

FUNDING



IMPACT IN ACTION



MINDSET



SUPPORT NETWORKS



INFRASTRUCTURE



= SUSTAINABILITY



A father and son turn CDE volunteer work into a shared mission to expand digital access and inspire community connection.

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A resident came for a laptop and found purpose—now he supports others as a CDE Digital Navigator through AmeriCorps.

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CDE and the Harris YMCA partnered to offer Spanish-language digital skills training for immigrant families in Charlotte.

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A senior builds digital skills and confidence with CDE through trusted, on-site support in her own community.

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