



# TECHQUITY

## Why It's Important

This initiative began as an emergency response to COVID-19, providing devices and other essential digital resources to people who had technology needs.

Early Techquity-focused efforts included the distribution of smartphones and hotspots, along with data plans. For example, we provided 9,000 students with earbuds or headsets with microphones for virtual learning between 2020-21.

It was during this time that we learned more about the digital divide.

Individuals and families without access to computers or the internet struggle to stay connected in our technology-driven world.

Across our four counties, over 93,000 households lack a basic computer, and over 120,000 households lack a basic home internet connection.

A report by Employ Milwaukee indicates that 1 in 3 unemployed workers in Wisconsin lack foundational digital skills. According to the National Skills Coalition, 89% of jobs in Wisconsin require digital skills. This means people are not getting the jobs they want because they lack important digital skills.

## What We're Doing Together

**Our goal: We will provide 50,000 computers to people who need them across our four counties by 2027.**

The vision of Techquity is to ensure the digital equity and inclusion of every resident in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties.

Techquity connects stakeholders from business, governmental, educational, and social sectors to promote digital equity and inclusion.

Techquity is guided by these strategies:



**Broadband.** Promoting access to affordable, fast, reliable broadband throughout our community.



**Devices.** Ensuring all members of our community have access to the digital devices needed to flourish.



**Skills.** Equipping our community with the digital skills and literacy to better prepare people for a good job.

**THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IS THE GAP  
BETWEEN THOSE WHO HAVE WHAT  
THEY NEED TO ACCESS THE INTERNET  
AND THOSE WHO DO NOT.**



In 2025, volunteers are supporting the Techquity initiative by distributing laptops to people in need. Volunteer Brion Nash of Landmark Credit Union said: "Getting a free computer means so much to the people I meet. It gives them the access to study for a class, apply for a new job, or start a new business. They're getting connected and making it personal."

## How We're Changing Lives

Since the launch of Techquity, United Way and partners have distributed over 13,000 computers to organizations and residents in need of technology.

We continue to work with over 50 local partners who are supporting our important strategies. Computers have gone to schools, nonprofits, individuals, and families.

In 2024, United Way was awarded a state grant to advance Techquity's computer distribution goal. With just this funding, United Way will be able to purchase and distribute more than 20,000 computers to people who need them over the next two years.

Laptop distribution events connect people with essential digital resources: a laptop computer and guidance on how to use the computer. The events are focused on connecting job seekers, students, and others to computers and internet access to ensure everyone has the technology they need to succeed in our digital world.

## IMPACT IN ACTION



Patrick was living at a crisis resource center as he worked on the next steps of his life. Patrick told us: "Getting a computer is huge for me at this time in my life. Doing anything without a computer is almost impossible." He is going to use the computer to look for a job, to search for housing, and to go back to school.

"I'm starting over," said Patrick. "Everyone has their own journey in life, and for me, this is such a big step in helping me move forward."



Ericka faced challenges in her life. She told us: "I recently escaped a domestic violence relationship, and I lost everything. Right now, I'm grateful for this laptop." Ericka told us she's going to use the computer to look for jobs, find new housing, and help with her education.



**UNITED WAY**  
Greater Milwaukee  
& Waukesha County