

T.E.C.H. for Reentry

Digital Literacy and Public Library Programming for Formerly Incarcerated Community Members



By Estelle Yim

ABSTRACT

In our rapidly changing technology-driven world, digital skills are essential for people in reentry after incarceration as they navigate social services, access reliable information, and find community. Libraries can respond to the information and literacy needs of the more than 600,000 people who are released from state and federal prisons and more than 10 million who are released from jails every year.¹ Libraries serve as spaces where formerly incarcerated people can find support through existing literacy, education, social service, and digital equity efforts as they transition into their communities, but they need guidance on best practices. T.E.C.H. (Technology Education and Computer Help) for Reentry, a pilot public library program that was developed at four library sites across the country, addressed the particular barriers to technology access faced by formerly incarcerated people. A review of the pilot programs demonstrates the positive impacts of reentry-specific digital literacy programming and supports calls for the development of similar programs, library partnerships with local reentry organizations, and training for library staff to expand their understanding of the lasting impacts of incarceration in their communities.²

INTRODUCTION

As our world becomes increasingly digitized, people who are incarcerated in prisons and jails experience a distinct form of digital exclusion characterized by little to no access to developing technologies or the internet.³ For people in reentry—the process of transition upon release from incarceration in jails, prisons, or any other carceral facilities—accessing information and services that can help them find their footing is increasingly mediated through the very technologies that they have been kept from using. The development of digital literacy training programs that address the complex set of barriers to information access that people face in reentry is a pressing area of intervention for library services to people who have experienced

incarceration, their families and friends, and their larger communities.

The recently revised *Standards for Library Services for the Incarcerated or Detained* emphasize that libraries have the potential to play a significant role in assisting people in developing digital literacy skills as they prepare for reentry after incarceration.⁴ The American Library Association's Digital Literacy Task Force provides a foundational definition of *digital literacy* as “the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information,

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requiring both cognitive and technical skills.”⁵ Like information literacy, digital literacy requires skills in locating and using information and in critical thinking, as well as knowledge of digital tools and how to use them in communicative, collaborative ways through social engagement.

Effective library digital literacy training programs for people in reentry must be attentive to the far-reaching ramifications of incarceration. Creating programming specifically for formerly incarcerated people presents opportunities for libraries to serve as spaces where formerly incarcerated people can

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foster agency in their reentry as they navigate a world that has likely changed during their incarceration. This paper follows Dr. Ihudiya Finda Williams’s call to expand the American Library Association’s definition of digital literacy to include “skills to navigate oppressive systems for minoritized individuals” in order to address how

carceral facilities create specific conditions that inform the ways in which people’s engagement with technology after incarceration is marked by unfamiliarity with rapidly developing technologies, limited resources for acquiring personal devices, and high anxiety.⁶

Librarians and information professionals can provide more meaningful digital literacy support when they understand the limitations created by incarceration. This paper first presents background information regarding the current state of incarceration in the United States and the challenges that people face in reentry, especially as those challenges determine access to information, technology, and digital literacy development. The paper next summarizes how carceral

systems and institutions impact the conditions of digital (in)equity that currently and formerly incarcerated people encounter and the kinds of interventions that are possible. It then situates libraries as valuable sites of support and advocacy for people after incarceration, particularly in the areas of technology access, education, and digital equity.

The following case studies of the four library sites where T.E.C.H. for Reentry was piloted support library and information workers in planning, implementing, and sustaining similar programs for integrative digital literacy services for people in reentry. The detailed trends, assessments, and reflections from these experiences are offered to guide library and information workers as they develop similar programs for digital equity services for people in reentry. Importantly, this paper emphasizes that although libraries are not *the* solution, they are a valuable piece in a *network* of resources and programs that support formerly incarcerated people and challenge the expansion of mass incarceration in the United States.

BACKGROUND

Mass Incarceration and Reentry

With more than 1.25 million people held in state and federal prisons and more than 664,200 held in local jails, the United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world.⁷ Every year, more than 600,000 people are released from prisons, and more than 10 million people are released from jails.⁸ According to the Prison Policy Initiative, at least 4.9 million people have been formerly incarcerated in state or federal prison at some point in their lives.⁹

Among the major areas of concern for people in reentry are material (quality of life), social (community reintegration), and psychological (positive self-concept and self-worth) needs.¹⁰ Across these realms are countless everyday factors that have

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huge consequences: finding employment, maintaining health, accessing transportation, dealing with substance use and recovery, navigating ongoing state supervision, coping with financial instability, obtaining identity documentation, maintaining housing stability, and many more.¹¹ Accessing these basic necessities is difficult for almost anyone, but experiencing incarceration creates additional hurdles. People in reentry are faced with not only a series of immediate needs to sort out but also an onslaught of information to sift through in order to do so, especially considering technologies such as smartphones and the internet.¹²

Reentry is a process that has no clear end, and the social, political, economic, cultural, and psychological ramifications stretch far beyond individuals to their families, friends, and communities. There is no clear understanding of what constitutes “successful” reentry, and, most often, reentry is defined by “failure,” with recidivism used as a measure of whether a person who has been released from prison or jail is rearrested, reconvicted, and returned to prison.¹³ This focus on the quantitative measure of recidivism does not give us a clear picture of the qualitative measures of reentry across time. This paper advocates for library workers

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they are subjected to by the ramifications of incarceration. By focusing on success rather than failure, we can reorient the direction, objectives, and long-term sustainability of reentry services.

Technology and Reentry

Technology use in carceral facilities is extremely limited, surveilled, and restricted. Even when people are granted access to computers while incarcerated, more often than not, they are using outdated devices, programs, and systems with no access to the internet.¹⁴ Because of the mismatch between technology access inside carceral institutions and the technology used outside them, digital literacy training before release is often deeply inadequate.¹⁵ Qualitative measures that

illustrate formerly incarcerated people’s sense of self are essential to the design of digital literacy training programs for reentry.¹⁶ Such measures provide a strong basis for advocating for more and better digital literacy learning opportunities for people before they are released.

Bianca Reisdorf and R. V. Rikard’s Digital Rehabilitation Model advocates for digital skills training for people in reentry, based on connecting digital exclusion during and after incarceration with alleviating uncertainty and increasing agency as people take steps to transition into their lives after incarceration.¹⁷ In proposing digital skills training for formerly incarcerated people as a tool to address different realms of reentry, the model also allows us to think through how digital literacy development can mitigate some of the consequences of digital exclusion during and after incarceration.

Libraries and Reentry

Library services for people in reentry can be a continuation of essential library services in prisons and jails that connect people who have experienced incarceration with access to information, resources, and—most importantly—people.¹⁸ Digital literacy and technology services in public libraries are already extremely valuable to community members, particularly those who are seeking employment, living with disabilities, relying on government programs, and lacking access to the internet at home.¹⁹ As a result, library workers across the country have responded to the needs of their formerly incarcerated patrons by developing programming to create resource guides, promote workforce readiness, and, of course, provide technology access.²⁰

Best practices for digital literacy services for people in reentry are a developing area of attention in the field. T.E.C.H. for Reentry drew on previous examples of digital literacy, such as the Immediate Access program at Queens Public Library, and offers additional considerations for specific steps that can be applied to support similar programming.

The ethos of relational services was at the core of T.E.C.H. for Reentry. It challenged a needs-based orientation to formerly incarcerated people that positions library workers as “saviors”²¹ and instead approached formerly incarcerated people as agents in their technology learning and reentry by providing foundational

BEST PRACTICES FROM QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Given their experiences implementing the **Immediate Access: Technology Reentry** program at Queens Public Library, which provided mobile devices and technology assistance for people on parole, Jill Anderson, Nili Ness, and Diego Sandoval-Hernandez have offered the following best practices for library staff to consider in providing digital literacy services for formerly incarcerated people:



- Carefully consider staff capacity to inform services.
- Provide clear instruction for participants.
- Welcome and respect feedback.
- Have transparent policies.
- Be flexible and meet people where they are.
- Tend to the emotional labor involved in this work by creating a supportive environment for staff.²²

In addition to offering these best practices, the Immediate Access program found that, although technology and devices do indeed open doors for people in reentry, one of the most valuable things that library workers can offer is our attention and expertise. Participants expressed deep appreciation of staff time and support in researching and connecting participants with community resources, a result even more valuable to them than the provided devices: “The phone was more of a tool to accomplish other goals, than the goal in itself.”²³

tools and the opportunity to collaborate with library workers and each other.

T.E.C.H. FOR REENTRY: PILOT PROGRAMS

Technology Education and Computer Help (T.E.C.H.) for Reentry is a digital literacy training program that was designed as a model for how libraries can support formerly incarcerated people as they develop digital skills and learn how to find, connect to, and use local reentry-related resources. The program was created by the American Library Association’s Digital Literacy Fellow who, in coordination with the Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People Initiative at San Francisco Public Library and with the American Library Association, conducted research into the role of technology in reentry to inform pilot programs as a way to glean lessons about the implementation of T.E.C.H. for Reentry at different libraries. The following sections of this paper focus on those libraries’ experiences and incorporate insights from participants and library staff of the pilot site programs to offer best practices for librarians who wish to plan, implement, and sustain their

own relationships with formerly incarcerated community members through digital literacy programming.

As a digital literacy training program, T.E.C.H. for Reentry was designed to establish foundational computer basics and technology comfort for participants needing to apply digital skills in their reentry. Chromebooks were selected as the basic technology offering because of their beginner-friendly design and the ease of integration of Google services and cloud data across devices. The technology-based curriculum was supplemented with information about local community and state resources and databases. Most of the curriculum was derived from lessons developed by combining existing digital literacy training materials at library sites with lessons and content from online technology learning and education platforms. Although the breadth and depth of topics covered varied by program, lessons included the following content.

Technology-Based Topics

- Browsing the internet, connecting to Wi-Fi, and navigating web browsers
- Computer basics (hardware, software)

- Creating and using different file types
- Customizing computer settings
- Downloading and uploading files
- Google Drive, file organization and navigation, file sharing
- Google services, applications, cloud-based services
- Introduction to artificial intelligence (AI)
- Making accounts on websites
- Online security best practices
- Operating computers/laptops (using a mouse, touch pad, and keyboard)
- Résumé templates and practice
- Technology learning and practice resources
- Using peripheral devices (USBs, Bluetooth connection, wired/wireless devices)

Reentry-Related Resources

- Computer classes and learning opportunities at the library, locally, and online
- Local and library-based social services, resource fairs, and dedicated staff
- Financial planning basics
- Reentry-friendly employment search ([HonestJobs.com](https://www.honestjobs.com))
- Social services databases ([FindHelp.org](https://www.findhelp.org))

Four libraries across the country participated as pilot sites for T.E.C.H. for Reentry: Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL; California), Brooklyn Public Library (BPL; New York), Alameda County Library (ACL; California), and Meridian Library District (MLD; Idaho). Each library site received \$20,000 of funding to support the pilot and to sustain the development of future programs for reentry services. The deciding elements for the selection of these four sites were (a) readiness for taking on a program in partnership with the Digital Literacy Fellow, (b) staff capacity, and (c) administrative support. Other factors were the level of existing technology training resources, established reentry or incarceration-related services, and local conditions of incarceration.

Although many other libraries expressed interest in participating as pilot sites for T.E.C.H. for Reentry, they were ultimately unable to commit because of factors such as timing (needing more leeway to gather administrative support; prioritizing programs

T.E.C.H. FOR REENTRY PRIMARY OBJECTIVES



Taking into consideration the specific conditions of each library system and the surrounding community, T.E.C.H. for Reentry aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- **Equip participants** who have experienced incarceration with basic computer skills training that can support their reentry goals.
- **Develop participants' comfort** with using technology and raise their self-confidence in acquiring new digital skills.
- **Provide participants with access** to personal devices and accessories to support their learning and ongoing technology use.
- **Build collaborative relationships** between libraries, library workers, formerly incarcerated people, system-impacted communities, and organizations providing support for people in reentry.
- **Establish a model** for digital literacy services to people in reentry that can be adapted by libraries across the United States.

already underway), staff availability (having a limited number of staff who could support the program), and technology training capacity (relying on volunteers and outside organizations for existing digital literacy services). This white paper aims to encourage library workers to think creatively about how to initiate similar programs that are responsive to their library's unique conditions and build from their existing programs and collaborations.

The following four case studies illustrate how each library site worked with the Digital Literacy Fellow to apply the resources, training, and foundational curriculum of T.E.C.H. for Reentry to their communities. The Digital Literacy Fellow provided support with facilitating communications, conducting outreach, identifying local community resources, preparing

weekly curriculum, and facilitating sessions. Their level of hands-on support with facilitation varied according to the needs of each pilot program in terms of staff capacity, staff experience with digital literacy training, and the Digital Literacy Fellow's proximity to the program. The case studies detail the local impacts of incarceration at each library, the preparation process, and the outcomes of participation in each program to offer other library workers a sense of the steps to take in order to initiate their own digital literacy training program for reentry.

PILOT SITE 1: LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY (CALIFORNIA)

SUMMARY

Total Service Population: 4,040,079²⁴

Program Location: Central Library

Duration: August 1–September 5, 2024

Number of Sessions: 6

Days/Time: Thursdays, 4:30–6:00 p.m.

Staff Size: 3

Total Number of Participants: 7

Weekly Attendance: 3–5

BACKGROUND

Los Angeles County operates the largest jail system in the country—and the world—and an average of 13,000 people are incarcerated every night across its eight facilities; the county oversees the highest number of individuals reentering the community after release from jail.²⁵ In 2022, about 29,431 people incarcerated in the state prison system came from Los Angeles County, making it the top county in California to send people to state prisons.²⁶ One in three people released from California prisons are expected to reenter into Los Angeles County.²⁷

Ready Access: T.E.C.H. for Reentry at Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) was a collaboration with the Library Experience Office and LAPL Reentry Working Group. LAPL was identified as a pilot site for T.E.C.H. for Reentry to expand on the prior successes of reentry-focused programs held at the library, to create a space

dedicated to formerly incarcerated patrons within existing digital equity programs, and to build capacity for staff to implement more reentry services across the city. The name of the program was drawn from the LAPL web page entitled “Ready Access: Reentry Services for Decarcerated Populations” as a way to showcase the library’s existing efforts to reach people in reentry. Ready Access was a model created by California-based public library staff and includes a list of local and national resources, a map of library systems and carceral institutions in California, and a reading list of titles that discuss incarceration across various subjects.²⁸

The LAPL Reentry Working Group is composed of staff from across the library system who are committed to developing more services for formerly incarcerated patrons. With administrative support from the Library Experience Office, which is dedicated to providing library staff trauma-informed training and patron access to library social workers and Community Service Representatives, Reentry Working Group members were able to coordinate with their respective departments to pilot T.E.C.H. for Reentry.

In addition to offering system-wide computer basics classes, LAPL provides a variety of programs that support technology access and learning for all ages. Cybernauts, or computer aides, are stationed at various LAPL branches to offer one-on-one technology assistance, guide patrons through library e-resources, and provide computer skills instruction. The Tech2go program includes borrowable computer bundle backpacks, Chromebooks, mobile hot spots, and more.

Although these services and materials are available to all patrons, T.E.C.H. for Reentry was intended to establish a direct and dedicated program for people in reentry to access technology, technology education,

“Working with this demographic was a full-circle moment for me and will remain as my favorite highlight. Over the years of working with the public, I have seen the need for recently incarcerated individuals to have a space that allows them to learn peacefully and without judgment. Having people around them who can relate to them helps in creating a space where they feel comfortable being vulnerable.”

—Angela Charles, LAPL



LOS ANGELES
PUBLIC LIBRARY

and a space to learn and talk about reentry-related needs, experiences, and goals.

Planning

Initial conversations to explore LAPL as the first pilot site for T.E.C.H. for Reentry began in February 2024 between the Digital Literacy Fellow, library staff, and administration. This time was dedicated to finding staff to support the program, confirming departmental support from the Library Experience Office, and establishing cross-departmental coordination of schedules. Once staff were identified, planning for the program began in late May, with a launch date set for mid-July.

Three library staff members from the Reentry Working Group supported the planning, outreach, and facilitation of the program: Anders Villalta (Librarian III in the Library Experience Office, formerly Librarian I in YA Services at Will & Ariel Durant Branch Library at the time of the program), Amanda Mellor (Adult Librarian I in the Social Science department and Outreach to Persons Experiencing Homelessness), and Angela Charles. Cofacilitation of the program was split between one staff member and the Digital Literacy Fellow, with one-on-one support from the other two staff members.

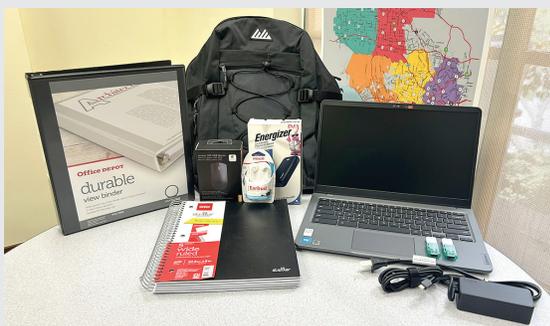
T.E.C.H. for Reentry was held at the Central Library because of its location in downtown Los Angeles and proximity to transitional housing

In 2014, Jacquie Welsh piloted **Pathways**, an eight-month-long program that connected more than 250 formerly incarcerated community members to LAPL's services and resources, including library cards, guidance on library computer use, instruction for navigating different reentry services, and a creative writing workshop. In addition to developing programming for the community, Welsh created a workshop for LAPL staff that provided training on how to provide equitable access to people in reentry.²⁹



facilities, to reentry, housing, and legal organizations, and to the parole office. The Central Library also houses the Octavia Lab makerspace and has multiple Cybernauts who are available for one-on-one technology assistance.

Staff set an outreach goal of ten to fifteen participants based on previous experiences with library computer classes. Staff shared the flier and details about the program with local reentry, housing, and legal organizations via email and tabled at events such as Parole and Community Team (PACT) meetings, which are held in the downtown Los Angeles parole office, and at The Source, a monthly resource fair held at the Central Library. Staff across the library system also supported outreach by displaying fliers for the program at branches and sharing the program with librarians and patrons.



LAPL tech backpacks contained a Chromebook laptop, two USB drives, a portable charger, a binder, a notebook, pens, wired headphones, and a wired computer mouse.

Implementation

The start date had been set for July 18, but the program had to be pushed back by two weeks to August 1 because of lack of attendance. During those two weeks, staff conducted follow-up outreach to organizations, identified more organizations as outreach sites, and continued sharing about the program at resource fairs.

During the adjusted program schedule, seven people attended at least one session of the six-week program, with weekly attendance ranging between three and five. Of these, five participants shared that they heard about the program directly from the library or from library staff, and two heard about the program through family or friends.

Although the outreach goal of ten to fifteen participants was not met, staff noted that the smaller class size encouraged high participation and discussion, allowed for deeper relationship-building between participants and staff, and made possible more capacity for one-on-one support.

Because of delays in deliveries, participants borrowed LAPL Tech2go backpacks and Chromebooks for use throughout the duration of the program and received their tech backpacks to keep as soon as the backpacks arrived, about three weeks after the end of the program.

PILOT SITE 2: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY (NEW YORK)

SUMMARY

Total Service Population: 2,504,700³⁰

Program Location: New Lots Branch Library

Duration: November 7–December 19, 2024

Number of Sessions: 5

Days/Time: Thursdays, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Staff Size: 6

Total Number of Participants: 11

Weekly Attendance: 5–9

BACKGROUND

Across its five boroughs, New York City's average daily jail population has steadily increased since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and approximately 7,200 people are in daily jail custody, 85.9 percent of whom are being held in pretrial detention.³¹ This number surpasses the Department of Correction's borough-based jail capacity by more than double.³² Of the more than 32,000 people incarcerated in New York State prisons, about 12,673 came from New York City. In 2024 approximately 2,807 people were released from state prisons on parole.³³

Welcome Home: T.E.C.H. for Reentry at Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) was a cross-departmental collaboration between two Welcome Home Reentry Services team members and the Technology Resource Center. BPL was identified as a pilot site for T.E.C.H.

for Reentry because of its Justice Initiatives department, which serves as a robust model for the potential of public libraries to develop embedded institutional support for system-impacted patrons and community members through tailored jail, prison, and reentry services that are intertwined with library outreach services. The title of the program aimed to firmly situate T.E.C.H. for Reentry within the existing work of the Welcome Home program, which provides free services for formerly incarcerated New Yorkers.

In developing T.E.C.H. for Reentry at BPL, Paul Rivera and Donald Washington, the two Reentry Navigators on the Welcome Home team, identified deeper and more-specific technology support as an opportunity to strengthen their work. Drawing from their day-to-day interactions with patrons as well as their own lived experiences, Rivera and Washington were aware that a lot of the support needed for reentry navigation hinged on consistent access to and use of technology. Because Reentry Navigators are situated in the library, they often refer their patrons to existing library technology services, such as classes and one-on-one help offered by Technology Resource Specialists (TRSs) and Digital Navigators.

In addition to providing on-site library services, TRSs hold once-a-week sessions at the Brooklyn district attorney's office, where they provide people in reentry employment-related technology guidance, such as résumé-writing and online job search. Given these existing but separately undertaken library services for formerly incarcerated people, T.E.C.H. for Reentry presented a unique opportunity for direct collaboration between Welcome Home and the

“This program has a profound impact by helping individuals transition successfully from incarceration back into society. By offering support, resources, and guidance, the program plays a crucial role in reducing recidivism, promoting rehabilitation, and empowering individuals to rebuild their lives. On a personal level, this work allows me to make a meaningful difference in people's lives, experience personal growth, and engage in social justice efforts that are essential for creating a more equitable society.”

—Nandi Adams (Technology Training Supervisor), BPL

Justice Initiatives projects at Brooklyn Public Library include Welcome Home reentry services, jail and prison services to incarcerated patrons, TeleStory to connect families with incarcerated loved ones via free and preapproved teleconferencing, and various other public programs that work to provide resources related to issues of racial, social, and economic justice. The Welcome Home program operates across six different library branches where Reentry Navigators assist patrons through one-on-one appointments to provide guidance on health, housing, reconnecting with loved ones, and identifying goals to map out their reentry journeys. The Welcome Home program also hosts monthly dinners where people are invited to come together as a community to share resources, stories, and support.³⁴



session of the program was led by Technology Training Supervisors and Reentry Navigators.

T.E.C.H. for Reentry was held at the New Lots Branch Library because of its high traffic (it is one of the branches where the Reentry Navigators hold weekly hours), the availability of TRSs based in the branch, and the dedicated computer lab where sessions could be held.

Given the high interest in technology training among the many participants in the Welcome Home program, staff set an outreach goal of ten to twelve participants. Outreach

was conducted within the Welcome Home community, at the district attorney's office, with local reentry and housing organizations, and on the BPL website.

In line with a precedent of providing transportation assistance for attendees of Welcome Home programs, funds were allocated to cover single-ride metro cards for T.E.C.H. for Reentry participants, each of whom received two metro cards per session (one for getting home and one for returning to the next session). With support from the New York Public Library's Jail and Prison Services

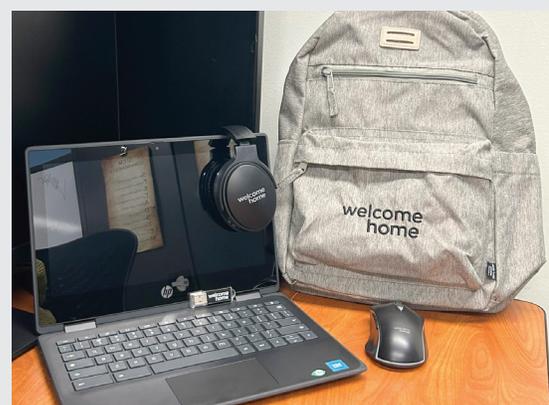
Planning

The Digital Literacy Fellow reached out to Justice Initiatives in April 2024 to assess the need and possibility for digital literacy training for participants in the Welcome Home program and to explore how T.E.C.H. for Reentry could supplement the program's services. Planning officially began in August after Justice Initiatives confirmed the opportunity to collaborate with TRSs, and a launch date was set for early November.

Library staff from the Justice Initiatives department and several members of the TRS team supported the planning, outreach, and facilitation of the program: Michael Carey (Coordinator of Justice Initiatives), Paul Rivera (Reentry Navigator), Donald Washington (Reentry Navigator), Nandi Adams (Technology Training Supervisor), Adrian McCurchin (Technology Resource Specialist), and one other BPL staff. Facilitation of the first four sessions of the program was split between a rotating team from the Technology Training Department and the Digital Literacy Fellow; the fifth and final

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BPL tech backpacks contained a Chromebook laptop, two USB drives, wireless Bluetooth headphones, and a wireless Bluetooth computer mouse, all of which were branded with the Welcome Home logo (not pictured: copy of NYPL's Connections).

team, each backpack also contained a free printed copy of *Connections: A Free Guide for Formerly Incarcerated People in New York City*, an annually updated resource guidebook for coming home after incarceration.³⁵

Implementation

With a total of eleven people attending at least one session of the five-week program, the outreach goal of ten to twelve was met, and attendance ranged between five and nine people every week. Five participants had heard about the program directly from the library or library staff, four had heard about the program through friends or family members, and two heard about the program through outside organizations. Participant ages ranged from 32 to 74, with an average age of 51.

One participant who was not formerly incarcerated joined the program starting in Week 2. She was invited by one of the original participants, who shared his belief that her growth in technology skills would greatly support him as well as the system-impacted people around her. Program coordinators agreed that they wanted her to join and complete the program, and they had the capacity to support this addition.

PILOT SITE 3: ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY (CALIFORNIA)

SUMMARY

Total Service Population: 583,837³⁶

Program Location: Albany Library

Duration: April 9–May 21, 2025

Number of Sessions: 7

Days/Time: Wednesdays, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

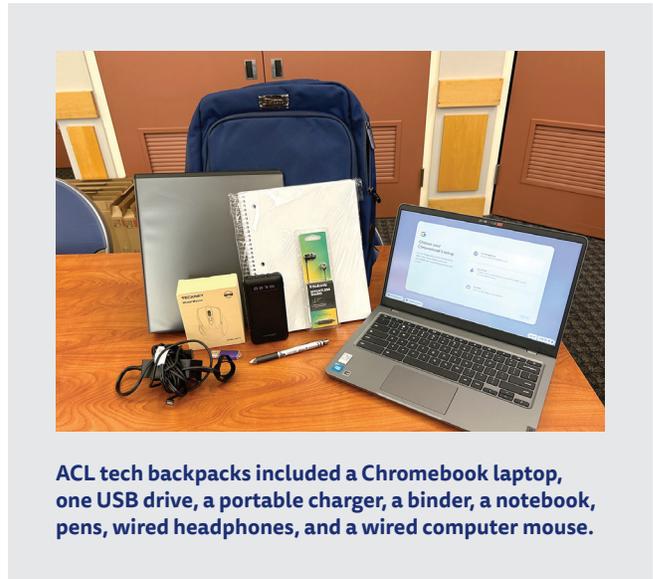
Staff Size: 2

Total Number of Participants: 11

Weekly Attendance: 7–8

BACKGROUND

In 2022 there were 2,501 people from Alameda County in the California state prison system. With an average daily count of 2,167, Alameda County had the ninth highest county jail



ACL tech backpacks included a Chromebook laptop, one USB drive, a portable charger, a binder, a notebook, pens, wired headphones, and a wired computer mouse.

population, the vast majority (92 percent) of whom were in pretrial detention.³⁷ The county's Adult Re-Entry Strategic Plan defines people in reentry as "all people who have had contact with the criminal justice system living in Alameda County" and estimates that approximately one-third of residents are included in the reentry population.³⁸

T.E.C.H. for Reentry at Alameda County Library (ACL) was led by staff members from the Social Justice Services department. ACL was identified as a pilot site for T.E.C.H. for Reentry to expand the reach of the library's services for system-impacted adult patrons and to gauge interest in and capacity for developing a library-based program for patrons after release. The ACL Social Justice Services department provides in-facility library services for people who are incarcerated in Alameda County's Santa Rita Jail, Juvenile Justice Center, and Camp Wilmont Sweeney.

T.E.C.H. for Reentry presented an opportunity for the Social Justice Services department to broaden its scope of support for system-impacted people by inviting adults who had been incarcerated to the library upon their release and providing them technology, reentry support, and direct connections to library staff. Computer classes and technology-related programs are offered by volunteer tech tutors at specific locations, and, in addition to using library computers, library card holders can borrow laptops through Tech It Out kiosks that are available at some branches for in-library use.

Planning

The Digital Literacy Fellow initiated conversations with the Social Justice Services department at ACL in November 2024 to explore the development of programming for people in reentry and to assess administrative support for the program. Official planning and outreach began in early March 2025, with a program start date in early April.

Two staff members from the Social Justice Services department supported the planning and outreach of the program: Jenny Rogers (Librarian II) and another Librarian II in the department. The Digital Literacy Fellow was the primary facilitator for all seven sessions of the program, with support from ACL staff in one-on-one help, discussions, and activities.

Staff chose the Albany Library for the program because it is the branch closest to Oakland, which has a high impact of policing and incarceration and a high concentration of reentry organizations. This selection led staff to focus on outreach efforts to local reentry organizations based in Oakland.

Implementation

A total of eleven people attended at least one session of the seven-week program, and attendance ranged between seven and eight people from the third session of the program to the end. Earlier sessions had lower attendance and, in the first week of the program, only two participants joined. Of the initial two attendees, one had seen a flier at a branch of the adjacent Contra Costa County Library. The other, a reentry coordinator at an Oakland-based organization, heard about T.E.C.H. for Reentry at the nearby Alameda Free Library. After learning about the goals of the program, the curriculum, and the dedicated tech backpacks, she invited a friend who attended the second session and echoed her enthusiasm; together, they invited nine other participants who joined the program in the third week.

Participants' active recruitment of other attendees made it possible to exceed the outreach goal of ten participants. Participants' ages ranged from 29 to 69, with an average age of 54. All but one of the participants lived in Oakland.

Through a cross-county partnership with the Office of Education and the Probation Department, Alameda County Library staff provide services to youth residents at the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center's library. Designated staff conduct weekly visits to the library, which holds hundreds of regularly updated books, and offer one-on-one literacy support to the incarcerated youth.³⁹



Program coordinators extended the original six-week program by one more session in order to accommodate the influx of people in the third session. The additional session was key to maximizing newer participants' time in the program and to covering past content, as was ordering another Chromebook. Positive reception of and enthusiasm for the program spread through participants' networks and resulted in more demand than could be met in the pilot, so staff created a list of contacts for future programs.

PILOT SITE 4: MERIDIAN LIBRARY DISTRICT (IDAHO)

SUMMARY

Total Service Population: 126,253⁴⁰
Program Location: unBound Library
Duration: July 8–August 12, 2025
Number of Sessions: 6
Days/Time: Tuesdays, 5:30–7:30 p.m.
Staff Size: 2
Total Number of Participants: 8
Weekly Attendance: 3–6

BACKGROUND

Approximately 8,000 people are incarcerated by the Idaho Department of Correction across ten state-owned prisons and five residential community reentry centers.⁴¹ Historically, approximately one-quarter of all people released from Idaho state prisons are under community supervision in Ada County,



representing the highest reentry population in the state.⁴² Ada County residents represent the highest annual count of admissions to jails and prisons across Idaho.⁴³ Managing a daily average population of 939 in 2024, the Ada County Sheriff's Office maintains the largest jail in Idaho.⁴⁴

T.E.C.H. for Reentry at Meridian Library District (MLD) was led by staff members from the unBound Business and Tech Library. MLD was identified as a pilot site for T.E.C.H. for Reentry because of its prior staff participation in the professional network of San Francisco Public Library's Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People Initiative, its committed support from all levels of library administration to establish reentry services, and its history as a long-standing advocate for access to technology in the local community.

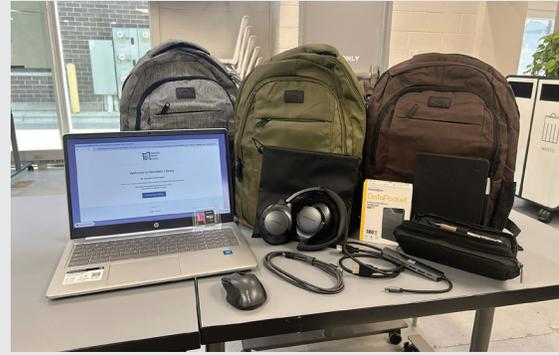
"I have family members who have been incarcerated, and I see the need for increasing supportive reentry services. I am also committed to serving where I see the greatest needs exist in my community. I want our library to be involved in inclusive programs like this."

—Jane Olsen (Branch Manager, unBound Library), MLD

In response to the growth and popularity of makerspace activities and an expressed need for technology education classes, MLD opened unBound in 2015 as a dedicated space offering access to technology and technology education, supporting businesses, entrepreneurs, and individuals who are dedicated to connecting people to community resources. As a result of long-standing efforts to develop library services for currently and formerly incarcerated people in the region, library staff have been providing outreach services at Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC) facilities. Over the years, these efforts have paved the way for MLD to work more closely with incarcerated people, other libraries in the Southern Idaho Lynx Library Consortium, and IDOC.

Planning

For the final pilot site, the Digital Literacy Fellow reached out to MLD in early April 2025 and contacted staff at unBound at the suggestion of MLD's assistant



MLD tech backpacks included a Chromebook, an external hard drive, a micro SD card, a multiport adapter, an HDMI cord, a USB cord, Bluetooth headphones, a wireless computer mouse, a notebook, and pens.

director. With a start date set for early July, planning for the program began in early May 2025.

Two staff members from unBound supported the planning, outreach, and facilitation of the program: Cortnie Brown (business liaison librarian) and Jane Olsen (branch manager). Every week, one or two library volunteers joined the program to assist with one-on-one support for participants. MLD staff led facilitation independently for most of the program, and the Digital Literacy Fellow joined the first and final sessions for the program's introduction and conclusion.

Implementation

A total of eight people attended at least one session of the six-week program, with weekly attendance ranging between three and six. Outreach was crucial for recruitment; participants heard about the program through LinkedIn, local reentry organizations, friends or family, and directly from the library staff. Participant ages ranged from 20 to 66, with an average age of 42. Four participants lived in Meridian, one in Boise, one in Nampa, and two did not disclose.

Although the outreach goal of ten participants was not met, staff noted that the smaller class size helped develop confidence in the potential for future programs, offered a sense of how to reach future participants, and established relationships with participants and organizations. One participant was not formerly incarcerated but attended because he

WEEKLY GUEST SPEAKERS AT MERIDIAN LIBRARY DISTRICT

- **Sawtooth Network Solutions:** Wi-Fi security best practices
- **Boise State University (BSU):** University databases and BSU resources
- **St. Vincent de Paul:** Reentry support and career development
- **Department of Labor:** Résumé and interview tips for people in reentry
- **AI Genius Automations:** Generative AI overview and ChatGPT
- **CapEd Credit Union:** Finance Planning 101



wanted to observe the program to learn about its goals, to share resources with other participants, and to gather information for future outreach to his personal and professional connections to people in reentry.

One unique aspect of T.E.C.H. for Reentry at MLD was that staff invited weekly guest speakers from local organizations to share materials and resources designed to support participants' technology learning and reentry. These partnerships were explored to support the library staff who were facilitating the program with less hands-on support from the Digital Literacy Fellow. These supplemental workshops demonstrated the positive impacts of bringing resources directly to participants and allowing them to access services during the program, rather than just referring them to local organizations.

SUMMARY OF PILOT SITES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Across these four cities, T.E.C.H. for Reentry reached at least thirty-seven formerly incarcerated people and connected them to the library, offered digital skills training, and provided tech backpacks to support their reentry. Library staff have been taking the lessons learned from their pilot programs to assess how they can expand T.E.C.H. for Reentry to reach more patrons in reentry. They have taken steps to identify ways to bring in more staff to support the program, conduct further outreach, and build stronger relationships with local reentry organizations. Through its implementation at four libraries of varying sizes, locations, and conditions of incarceration, T.E.C.H. for Reentry offers lessons for how more libraries across the country can

implement similar digital literacy training programs for formerly incarcerated patrons.

DISCUSSION AND TRENDS

This section synthesizes evaluations from participants and staff from each pilot site to highlight some of the main trends that library staff can consider in preparation for similar programs. Throughout the programs, staff transparently communicated to participants that they were taking part in their respective library's first attempt at T.E.C.H. for Reentry and that their feedback would be valuable not only for maximizing their own experiences in the program but also for gaining insight into adjustments that would be helpful for future participants. Using evaluation forms, designated time for feedback discussions, and ongoing check-ins with participants, staff collected quantitative and qualitative assessments of T.E.C.H. for Reentry. At the end of each program, the Digital Literacy Fellow collected assessments from library staff who helped organize the program.

Reentry Priorities

To help library staff learn about the issues that participants were navigating in reentry, participants completed pre-evaluation forms in which they shared the resources that most interested them. Using a checklist of more than twenty-five areas of reentry services, participants were asked, "What resources would you like assistance accessing information about?" Out of twenty-nine pre-evaluation form responses, participants expressed most interest in the following resources: technology access (seventeen responses), financial assistance (sixteen), housing (fifteen), employment (fourteen),

reentry support and advocacy programs/organizations (thirteen), job skills training (twelve), education (twelve), food access (eleven), clothing access (eleven), and public benefits (ten). These areas of interest align with existing research on the priorities of people in reentry. Notably, the area of highest interest was technology access, which demonstrates the value of offering T.E.C.H. for Reentry to formerly incarcerated people and shows that the pilot programs reached people who could benefit from participating.

Supportive Staff

In discussions and written feedback, participants shared how much they valued staff time, attentiveness, and consideration more than anything else. They expressed that staff established a comfortable and safe space, were willing to answer questions, and offered patience, kindness, and support. In post evaluation forms, twenty-one participants⁴⁵ responded “definitely yes” to the question, “Did you trust that library staff would do their best to support you throughout this program?” Having multiple facilitators available during sessions allowed staff to address individual questions as they arose during the program as well as before and after, when participants needed additional assistance. One participant shared that their favorite parts of the program were “the ease in which the lessons were taught and the individual time given to ensure our ability to comprehend the entire process.”

Growth in Participant Self-Confidence

With trust-building between staff and participants as one of the greatest strengths of T.E.C.H. for Reentry, it is notable that participants also built trust in themselves. Consistent with research findings that capture how formerly incarcerated people often feel like they are struggling to catch up with advancements in technology, many participants came into the program expressing feelings of self-doubt, uncertainty, and fear of failure about their ability to not only use technology but also learn more about it and develop their skills. To evaluate how participation in T.E.C.H. for Reentry might affect these initial feelings, participants were asked to rate their self-confidence in the following seven topics, before and after participating in the program:

- Computer hardware basics
- Google programs
- Keyboard, touch pad, and mouse skills
- Online privacy and security practices
- Smartphone use
- Using email
- Using the internet

All twenty-one respondents reported higher self-confidence across all the categories after participating in T.E.C.H. for Reentry. The program achieved its objective of raising participants’ self-confidence in acquiring new digital skills (see [Table 1](#) below).

Table 1. T.E.C.H. for Reentry program participants’ self-confidence in acquiring new digital skills

Participants assessed their self-confidence on a 5-point Likert scale. Each response was given a score (low = 1, somewhat low = 2, average = 3, somewhat high = 4, high = 5), and the table shows the average score in each category from the twenty-one available responses.

TOPIC	Computer Hardware Basics	Google Programs	Keyboard, Touch Pad, and Mouse Skills	Online Privacy and Security Practices	Smartphone Use	Using Email	Using the Internet	Average Score Across Categories	Sum of Average Scores (Out of 35)
Before	2.25	1.94	2.78	1.95	2.73	2.76	2.82	2.46	17.23
After	3.83	3.74	4.05	3.52	3.77	4.33	4.19	3.92	27.43
Change	+1.58	+1.80	+1.27	+1.59	+1.04	+1.58	+1.36	+1.46	+10.20

In addition to the quantitative growth in self-confidence shown in the preceding table, participants shared reflections on how that growth developed. Participants reported that they felt renewed confidence in using technology, increased ease with the idea

“Before this program, I got anxieties. My levels of stress, anxiety, and avoiding computer/tech were high. Now I’m more at ease dealing with computer/tech thanks to this wonderful program.”

—Participant at
Los Angeles Public Library

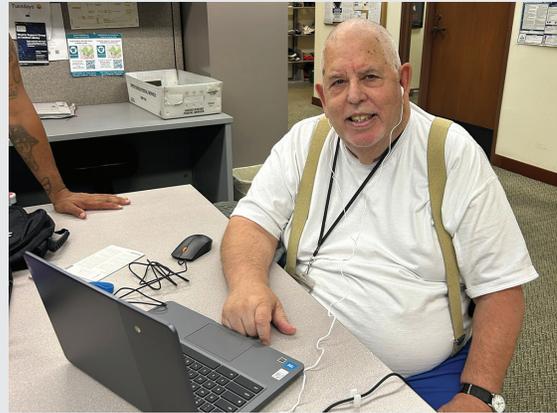
of troubleshooting technology on their own, and pride in themselves for having overcome fears of failure. Many participants shared that they stepped out of their comfort zones when they asked questions, volunteered to demonstrate activities in front of the group, and even when they decided

to join the program. Participants also emphasized the positive impact of being in a collective space of learning with people who have shared experiences of incarceration and who are coming into the program with similar relationships to technology. They developed a sense of camaraderie with each other through mutual support, shared motivation, and a genuine commitment to supporting everyone in the program.

Curriculum

Participants’ growth in self-confidence was made possible by T.E.C.H. for Reentry’s combined curriculum of digital skills and reentry resources. Because the curriculum broke down the basics of major areas of technology use, both familiar and unfamiliar, participants felt that they developed skills that helped them address their daily tasks in work and school and that the curriculum helped demystify simple and complex operations so that those tasks felt less intimidating. Guest speakers and compiled lists connected people to local and online resources that they had neither heard about nor understood how to find on their own. Participants appreciated the way in which the curriculum was presented and explained clearly, as well as that slides were shared with them at the end of each week’s program.

Some topics that stood out to participants included breaking down hardware and software, file navigation and organization, financial planning, learning how to log onto their laptop, navigating the internet, saving



Participant at Los Angeles Public Library

documents, and using USB drives. Although staff aimed to be as responsive as possible to suggestions for session topics as they arose, not every area of interest could be covered in the limited time of the program. Participants offered suggestions for deeper dives into, and more time dedicated to lessons and hands-on activities about, AI, organization, Google Workspace, online security practices, reentry resources, résumés, and smartphone basics. They also shared that they would be interested in learning about the history of computing, spreadsheets, and virtual private networks (VPNs). In response to participants’ enthusiasm for continuing learning, staff provided resources for online learning platforms (such as GCFGlobal and Google’s Applied Digital Skills) and library technology learning opportunities for participants to use outside the program.

Tech Backpacks

The T.E.C.H. for Reentry curriculum was designed to be applicable specifically to the devices and accessories that participants were given, and the tech backpacks ensured consistent learning, troubleshooting, and practice by providing all participants with the same equipment. Although models of devices and accessories varied across programs, the consistent use of Chromebooks for all participants simplified the ability of staff to address any troubleshooting needs and turned these moments into lessons for all participants in their own use of the Chromebooks.



Participants and facilitators at the Meridian Library District

Beyond their appreciation for receiving laptops to keep for themselves that would be useful tools in helping achieve their reentry goals, participants also found it helpful to learn how to use the laptops during the program. Some participants had never owned a laptop or did not have the means to get a new one, and others shared that they had been unsure about investing in devices that they would have trouble learning

Some participants had never owned a laptop or did not have the means to get a new one, and others shared that they had been unsure about investing in devices that they would have trouble learning how to use.

how to use. Additional accessories were also well received, and some participants said that they would not have even thought about

getting things like USB drives, mice, or portable batteries for themselves. Since the end of the pilot programs, staff have reported that participants who have returned to the library are still enthusiastically using their tech backpacks and supplies, demonstrating the lasting value of the tech backpacks to participants' ongoing use of technology.

Program and Session Structure

Each session of T.E.C.H. for Reentry was designed to encourage participatory and hands-on forms of learning. Participants responded positively to the combination of presentations and discussion with the whole group and time set aside for one-on-one

assistance because it allowed them to learn from the curriculum while also having the opportunity to address their specific concerns. This model also encouraged participants to move through topics at a similar pace; discussions gave room for them to ask questions, while also giving other participants, not just facilitators, the opportunity to answer.

However, this collaborative approach did not always account for the diversity of learning styles and interests of participants. Some participants reported that they struggled with distractions, interruptions, side conversations, and the need for more one-on-one support; some also expressed personal difficulty retaining information between sessions. To accommodate these varying needs, program staff incorporated weekly reviews of prior sessions, dedicated time for one-on-one help before or after sessions, and shared slides from sessions through email with participants. One participant offered the valuable suggestion to establish classroom agreements as a way to encourage participants to be considerate of how everyone in the room could meet their goals together.

Personal Commitments and Scheduling

In the planning phases of each pilot program, scheduling ultimately came down to factors such as staff and location availability, consideration of other library programs, and the projected timeline of completion for each pilot site. Within these constraints, staff tried to determine days and times that would be the most accessible. However, many participants shared that they struggled with time conflicts with work and school, and existing commitments were the most common reason that interested participants couldn't join the program. One participant reported that his least favorite part of the program was "work taking time away." In the outreach process, representatives from some reentry organizations noted that session times conflicted with their own programs. Ultimately,

it is important to keep in mind that availability is a constant battle for any program, and the biggest takeaway from the number of people who asked to be informed of future iterations of the program is that staff at each library site can be confident that there are more community members for T.E.C.H. for Reentry to reach in the future.

Location and Transportation

Participants expressed that T.E.C.H. for Reentry exposed them to various valuable resources available at their local libraries, a result that was in line with the objectives of the program. By bringing people directly into the library, the program presented the opportunity to sign participants up for new library cards, to reactivate old library accounts, or to offer temporary cards for immediate access to library resources. On the other hand, the locations of programs and participants' varying means of transportation often exacerbated their difficulty juggling participation in the program with existing obligations. Several participants encountered limitations in attending the program because of reliance on public transportation or on rides from other people; some shared that their commutes were up to an hour or more, while others would wait at the library for hours before the start of the program to accommodate ride schedules.

This feedback was given with a strong emphasis on participants' belief that these hurdles were worth overcoming to participate in the program, but it is important to note that location and transportation still presented barriers to access for many interested participants who ultimately could not join the program because of conditions outside their control. Participants suggested that future programs be held in libraries that are more accessible by public transportation or closer to city centers. Others suggested exploring whether the program could be held at nearby reentry organizations themselves, since people in reentry are often already familiar with or frequent these locations.

Accessibility

In some cases, limitations in physical ability (such as in hearing, vision, and motor function) informed how



Participant at Brooklyn Public Library

sessions were facilitated and how participants were offered time, space, and support in becoming more comfortable with their devices. In one case, at Brooklyn Public Library, a facilitator who is fluent in American Sign Language provided live interpretation for a deaf participant in addition to captioning on the presentation slides. Many other participants from all the pilot sites struggled with identifying visual cues on screens and maintaining precise control over the keyboard, touch pad, or mouse.

One lesson from the pilot programs is that guiding participants through accessibility options—rather than waiting for people to share what they were struggling with and then addressing those issues as they arose—helped identify participants' access needs and how those needs would affect their computer use. Accessibility features on the Chromebooks (such as voice-to-text, screen magnification, text size, and mouse sensitivity) helped address some of the specific ways that participants used their devices. Especially given the understanding that formerly incarcerated people are more likely to live

Guiding participants through accessibility options—rather than waiting for people to share what they were struggling with and then addressing those issues as they arose—helped identify participants' access needs and how those needs would affect their computer use.

with disabilities,⁴⁶ future programs should be attentive to participants' accessibility needs and proactive in identifying ways to offer accommodations.

Gender

Women were underrepresented across all the programs: Of the thirty-seven people who attended at least one session of a program, only eight were women.⁴⁷ Comparatively low women's attendance throughout the pilot programs reflects a broader gap in reentry services and post release programs for women, especially in technology access and use.⁴⁸ At the end of the Alameda County Library program, which had the highest attendance by women, one participant noted that he had never been in a room with so many women who were also incarcerated and that he valued the program for the opportunity to learn alongside them. This insight encourages librarians and staff to consider developing reentry programs as spaces for community-building for formerly incarcerated people.

Overall Assessments

The thorough and supportive feedback shared by participants clearly demonstrated their commitment to the growth of T.E.C.H. for Reentry for others who have experienced incarceration. Of the twenty-one post evaluation forms that were collected, nineteen participants answered "definitely yes" to the question, "Did you gain skills that you believe will be helpful to you in your reentry process?"⁴⁹ Twenty respondents answered the same to the question, "Would you recommend this program to others who are in the process of reentry and looking for technology help?"⁵⁰ Participants also expressed their commitment to supporting future iterations of the program by sharing it with their communities, contributing testimonies, introducing staff to community advocates, and even showing interest in facilitating sessions. These assessments clearly illustrate how T.E.C.H. for Reentry

"I wish I received this type of support as soon as I [was] paroled. But better late than never."

—Participant at Alameda County Library



achieved its objectives to equip participants with digital literacy skills to support reentry, help build their confidence, provide technology for ongoing use, create collaborative relationships, and offer an example for libraries to follow.

CONCLUSION

Reentry-specific programming is an important area of outreach services that allows libraries to provide integrated services for people in their communities who have experienced incarceration. T.E.C.H. for Reentry serves as a foundational model for libraries across the country to develop their own digital literacy training programs for formerly incarcerated patrons.

The pilot programs demonstrated that digital literacy programming for people in reentry has the potential to meet some of the material, social, and psychological goals of people in reentry by providing practical skills in using technology, creating a space for collaborative learning with others who have experienced incarceration, and establishing a strong foundation for building self-confidence and agency in participants' use of technology to navigate reentry. Amid a network of resources and organizations that support formerly incarcerated people locally and nationally, libraries can serve as valuable hubs of information, services, and resources that support people in defining their own successful reentry.

"It was 100% helpful to me and I was able to utilize a device that's been a great stepping stone to reach my goals during reentry."

—Participant at Brooklyn Public Library

BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A SIMILAR PROGRAM

Planning

- Build connections with library colleagues who support library-based reentry services to collectively advocate for the development of the program.
- Develop a community asset map⁵¹ to identify local reentry resources that can inform outreach strategies and to build relationships with these communities.
- Assess existing digital literacy curriculum or programming available through your library or local organizations to see if it is responsive to the needs of formerly incarcerated people.
- Seek out potential partnerships with outside organizations that offer technology donations to support technology programs.
- Explore options with local reentry organizations that may be interested in hosting the program in their spaces.
- Research the local conditions of incarceration and reentry to understand their impacts on the community.
- Conduct regular outreach to reentry organizations, councils, and advocates to build ongoing trust between programs.
- Be intentional about outreach to organizations that support people with identities that are particularly vulnerable to incarceration, such as people of color, women, queer/LGBTQIA+ people, and the unhoused.
- Use various means of communication in outreach, such as phone calls, email, and in-person visits to local organizations or resource fairs.
- Consider the accessibility of locations, days, and times for the program.
- Establish a metric that can be used to provide quantitative insight about how participants assess the impacts of the program.

Implementation

- Foster a safe, open, and supportive environment for participants to ask questions and provide honest feedback.

- Be as flexible and responsive to participants' interests and requests as you can be; survey them for topics to incorporate into the curriculum.
- Integrate dedicated time for one-on-one assistance into sessions, either before or after the program.
- Encourage opportunities for collaboration between participants, such as group activities and discussion.
- Create hands-on practice activities for people to follow, and allow participants to demonstrate for each other.
- Identify potential accessibility needs of participants, and work with them to accommodate.
- Provide program materials (slides, handouts, references) for participants to explore on their own time outside program sessions.
- Gather as much written and verbal feedback from participants and staff as is appropriate.
- Contact participants before sessions to confirm their attendance.

Sustaining

- Use curricular materials, feedback from participants and staff, and photos of sessions as items for promotion.
- Document relevant details (staff time, budget, participation, and outcomes) of the program to present to colleagues, administrators, stakeholders, and potential funders to build ongoing support for the program.
- Explore opportunities to share the impacts of the program, such as presentations at local, state, and national conferences or publications.
- Assess how the building blocks of the program (location, time, day, and staff support) impacted participation to inform adjustments to future programs.
- Contact local library systems to inform them about the program, and explore opportunities for collaboration and engagement.
- Collect the contact information of interested people who are unable to join the program to ensure follow-up for future programs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Estelle Yim (they/them) worked as the American Library Association's Digital Literacy Fellow from 2023–2025 in support of the Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People Initiative at San Francisco Public Library. They received their MLIS from the University of California, Los Angeles with a specialization in Library Studies. Estelle is passionate about the potential for libraries to intervene in and challenge the carceral system through creative library programming, relationship-building across institutions, and community engagement through collective advocacy and care. For more information about this publication, contact Estelle Yim (estelleysj@gmail.com)

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The ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services supports library and information science workers in creating responsible and all-inclusive spaces that serve and represent the entire community. To accomplish this, we decenter power and privilege by facilitating conversations around access and identity as they impact the profession and those we serve. We use a social justice framework to inform library and information science workers' development of resources. We strive to create an association culture where these concerns are incorporated into everybody's everyday work.

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