



elevate digitalequity



COABE 2023 Digital Equity Challenges: Key Survey Findings

In January 2023, COABE conducted an online survey of its adult education members to understand their digital equity challenges in the classroom. Of the **558** program responses, representing minimally **462,000** adult learners annually, **61%** were federally funded, while **23%** received CARES Act Funding.

Respondents were comprised of school districts (**38%**), community colleges (**27%**), community-based organizations (**21%**), prisons (**3%**), and the remainder a mix of multi-service providers, libraries, workplaces, and others (**11%**). Of this mix, approximately **71%** of all respondents offer digital literacy classes.

CHALLENGES

23%

Only 23% serve as a digital hub for WiFi and device dissemination due to a lack of resources and funding.

26 %

About 26% do not have the WiFi and devices needed in the class; 58% reflected those organizations in rural/suburban areas.

39%

Only 39% of respondents indicated that their learners had devices and access to WiFi but had to share the device(s) at home.

67%

67% of respondents reported that the lack of WiFi and devices have negatively impacted adult learners' completing assignments and/or attending class.

89,671

In just this small snapshot of COABE's members, 89,671 adult learners have been affected by the lack of WiFi and devices.

COABE continues to gather data from the field on this important topic. If your organization has not yet participated in the survey, go to <https://www.tfaforms.com/5019713> and take it now!

SOLUTIONS

COABE has engaged Google and IBM to help provide solutions to adult educators facing these digital equity issues in the field. However, without adult education having the capacity to become digital hubs, students cannot access resources.

Doesn't it seem logical that adult education programs can be the hub to expand these services if there was funding to **#ElevateDigitalEquity?** Adult education programs must receive funding commitments that invest in digital literacy skills training.

Now is the time for policymakers and funders to invest in digital equity and literacy to ensure a competitive workforce now and in the future, so adult learners are not left behind.



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