

LEARNING FOR LIFE: AN ILLINOIS PERSPECTIVE

Programs Ready, Willing, and Able to Embrace Digital Learning

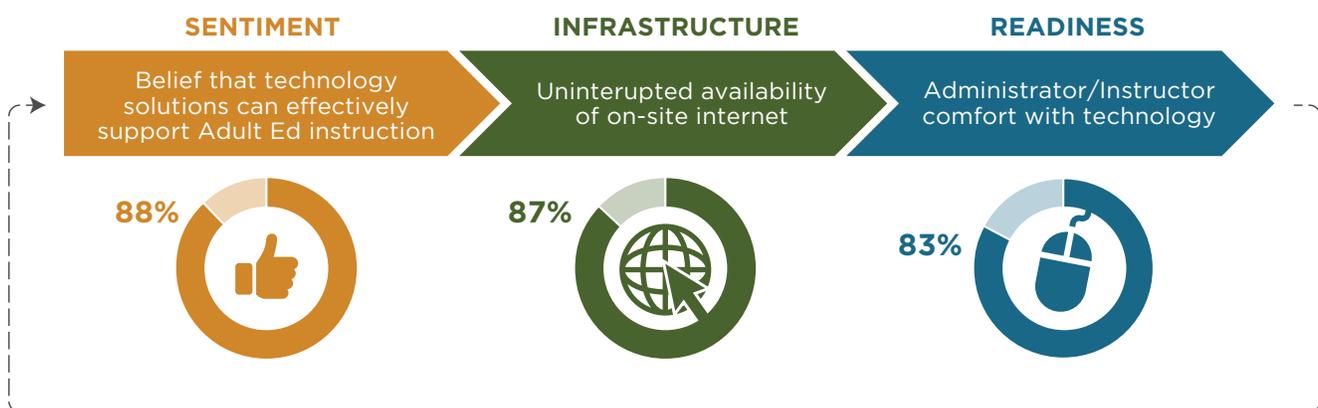
SURVEY SHOWS PROMISE FOR ILLINOIS ADULT LEARNERS

Grand Victoria Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Macon County commissioned a survey of adult education and workforce development program administrators and practitioners to better understand the conditions for using digital learning to advance education outcomes for adults in Illinois.

This survey drew upon a 2014 national survey, *Learning for Life*, completed by the Joyce Foundation and Tyton Partners that highlighted the role and opportunity for digital learning to transform adult education programs. The Illinois survey took place in February 2016 and generated responses from more than 330 adult education and workforce development professionals.

RESULTS IN BRIEF: ENCOURAGING CONDITIONS EXIST TO ADVANCE DIGITAL LEARNING

1. Illinois respondents are optimistic about the potential for digital learning, particularly in technology's facilitation of learning outside the classroom and its ability to foster digital literacy skills, critical for workforce success
2. Illinois programs are well situated compared to national peers in terms of access to computers and Internet availability at program locations; Illinois adult learners' smartphone ownership is in the top half of the range found in the *Learning for Life* national sample
3. Program instructors and administrators are comfortable with technology overall, but require greater availability of effective professional development on the use and implementation of digital resources for adult learners



WHAT'S NEXT: OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCELERATE DIGITAL ADOPTION

The Illinois results are promising, but gaps exist. Most important is the need for more and stronger professional development. Respondents desire more training on integration of digital learning resources and access to webinars and on-site training. They also seek a curated repository of free, high-quality resources for use in their programs. These efforts could significantly enhance the options and impact for practitioners and adult learners in Illinois' adult education and workforce development system.

SENTIMENT: OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR DIGITAL LEARNING MODELS

Nearly **90%** of respondents are optimistic regarding the potential for technology to support adult learners. Specifically, technology can motivate and engage students, as well as provide opportunities to improve digital literacy skills, facilitate practice activities outside class time, and deliver self-paced, personalized instruction.

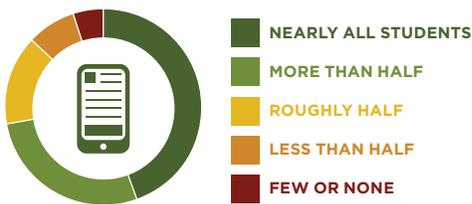


62% desire higher proportion of their budget devoted to digital resources

INFRASTRUCTURE: PROGRAMS READY FOR DIGITAL ADOPTIONS

Reliable student access to internet and devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones is a critical component for adoption of digital instructional resources. Illinois is well positioned relative to its national peers in this regard. As an example, **87%** of Illinois programs report Internet access available on site and **70%** of Illinois programs report having computers available on site for at least half of their students; in addition, approximately **66%** of adult learners own or have access to smartphones.

ESTIMATED SMARTPHONE OWNERSHIP



“STUDENT-OWNED SMARTPHONES HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO...”



READINESS: PROFESSIONALS COMFORTABLE WITH TECHNOLOGY, BUT NEED THE RIGHT TRAINING

More than **80%** of those surveyed expressed comfort in using technology, and instructors displayed a higher degree of autonomy in creating, choosing and using their own curricular resources relative to national peers. While instructor autonomy in these areas can accelerate experimentation with and adoption of innovative, digital learning resources, professional development and training opportunities must scaffold effective implementation of new tools and practices. In particular, respondents feel that professional development regarding the use of technology could be more relevant to their roles and could also more adequately train them to use existing digital resources.

“Professional development is the source of good instructional practices. If teachers are not trained adequately, they can have the best technology and print resources available, and students will not necessarily have better outcomes.”

– Part-Time Instructor

Grand Victoria Foundation invests its resources to strengthen early education opportunities for young children, protect natural lands and waterways, and promote economic vitality through robust employment development. For more information about Grand Victoria Foundation, visit grandvictoriafdn.org.

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