



## Returning Citizens Support Group

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# Digital Literacy Course 101: Essential Digital Skills for Everyday Life

## Program Overview

This Digital Literacy Course is designed to support the successful reentry of formerly incarcerated individuals by equipping them with essential digital skills.

Instructed by Ravi Ramsaran, each cohort will consist of 8-10 participants. Course sessions will be held on Mondays 6:00pm-8:00pm at RCSG headquarters: 32 Prince Street, Newark, NJ 07675. Each cohort will run for 8 consecutive weeks.

## Course Expectations

All prospective participants will do an intake interview with an RCSG staff member, who will review and verify eligibility (criteria described below). Exceptions to the eligibility criteria may be granted, but will require approval from the Program Director. Failure to meet the eligibility requirements may result in denial of admission or removal from the program.

Participants who complete the full 8 weeks of the digital literacy course will receive a Certificate of Completion (participants may add this to their resume). Attendance will be recorded at each course session.

Laptops will be provided for all course participants. Participants do not need to bring anything to course sessions, other than their full attention and commitment to course participation.

### ➤ Free Laptop Incentive Policy

- a. Participants released from incarceration **within the past twelve (12) months** of their enrollment date will be eligible to receive a free laptop upon successful completion of the Digital Literacy Course.

## Participant Code of Conduct

All enrolled course participants agree to the following code of conduct. Violation of these agreements may result in dismissal from the course

- **Respect the Learning Space:**
  - Treat instructors and fellow participants with respect at all times. Harassment, discrimination, or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
- **Appropriate Use of Technology:**
  - Course devices, accounts, and internet access must be used only for learning activities. Accessing inappropriate content or misusing technology is prohibited.
- **Protect Privacy and Confidentiality:**
  - Do not share personal information, login credentials, or private stories of other participants without permission. Respect everyone's right to privacy online and offline.
- **Attendance and Participation:**
  - Participants are expected to arrive on time, remain engaged, and actively participate in learning activities. If you must miss a session, notify the instructor in advance.
- **Safe and Responsible Online Behavior:**
  - Practice digital citizenship, including respectful communication, avoiding scams or unsafe websites, and following guidance on cybersecurity and online safety.
- **Follow Instructor Guidance:**
  - Participants must follow all instructions related to software use, device handling, and course policies. Repeated failure to comply may result in removal from the course.

## Eligibility Requirements

To maintain program integrity and ensure resources are allocated appropriately, the following eligibility criteria shall apply to all prospective participants.

1. **Formerly Incarcerated Status**
  - a. All participants shall be system-impacted individuals (people who have served time in jail/prison or family members).
  - b. Verification of status may be required during the intake process.
2. **Residency Requirement**
  - a. Participants shall currently reside within Essex County, NJ borders, as that is the designated service area defined by Returning Citizens Support Group.
3. **Program Commitment**
  - a. Participants will be required to attend all scheduled sessions, complete the required coursework, and adhere to the code of conduct as outlined in this packet to remain in good standing.
  - b. Participants will be required to complete an intake assessment with an RCSG staff member to gather basic information.

# Curriculum Overview

## Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Create, send, receive, and manage email communications
- Identify and use different types of digital devices
- Navigate device operating systems and file structures (focus on laptops)
- Access and safely browse the internet
- Use digital tools for practical everyday tasks (job search, form-filling, communication)
- Recognize and use basic AI tools safely

## Session Breakdown:

### Session 1: Introduction to Digital Devices and Terminology

- Types of devices (desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone)
- Basic hardware parts and software concepts
- Powering on/off, adjusting settings (volume, brightness, Wi-Fi)
- Chromebook overview
- Vocabulary: hardware, software, device, Chromebook, browser, app, click, tap
- Hands-on: device parts labeling, power on/off practice

### Session 2: Navigating Devices and Managing Files

- Touchpad and keyboard skills
- Opening, switching between browser tabs and apps
- File types and file management basics
- Using Google Drive: creating folders, saving, renaming, deleting files
- Vocabulary: click, double-click, folder, file, icon, drive, drag-and-drop
- Hands-on: typing practice, file/folder management in Google Drive

### Session 3: The Internet and Online Safety

- What is the internet? Introduction to Chrome browser
- Using Google Search effectively
- Website navigation basics
- Creating secure passwords
- Recognizing scams: phishing, pop-ups, malicious downloads
- Vocabulary: browser, search engine, URL, link, tab, pop-up, phishing
- Hands-on: searching for local info, filling out safe online forms, creating passwords

#### **Session 4: Practical Digital Skills for Everyday Life**

- Creating and using Gmail accounts
- Sending, replying, attaching documents in email
- Introduction to video conferencing (Google Meet, Zoom)
- Using Google Maps for directions
- Basics of online job searching (Indeed, LinkedIn)
- Creating and setting up a LinkedIn account for professional networking

#### **Session 5: Introduction to Google Docs**

- Opening and creating new Google Docs
- Typing and formatting text (bold, underline, font size)
- Saving and sharing documents
- [Resume](#) & [Cover Letter](#) building for job applications (templates linked)
- Vocabulary: document, font, bold, align, share, edit
- Hands-on: create simple resume or letter, share document with instructor

#### **Session 6: Social Media Basics**

- Overview of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube as a learning platform
- Privacy settings and safe social media use
- Identifying fake accounts and misinformation
- Using social media and YouTube for learning and connecting
- Vocabulary: profile, friend request, comment, post, privacy, feed, subscribe, playlist, channel
- Hands-on: set up sample profile (practice), adjust privacy settings, watch & summarize educational YouTube video

#### **Session 7: Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

- What is AI? Simple explanation and real-life examples
- Common AI tools: chatbots, Google Assistant, autocorrect, recommendations
- Introduction to AI tools like ChatGPT and AI in Google Search
- Safe and ethical use of AI: privacy, misinformation, bias awareness
- Vocabulary: artificial intelligence, chatbot, machine learning, algorithm
- Hands-on: try an AI chatbot, identify AI features in familiar apps

#### **Session 8: Review and Final Project**

- Review of vocabulary and key skills
- Final project: create a resume or cover letter in Google Docs and email it
- Submit project for instructor review
- Course wrap-up, certificate distribution (attended 7+ sessions)
- Exit survey/self-assessment