

Smart Technology Mentors Program

Pilot Overview for Participating Schools

The Smart Technology Mentors Program (STMP) matches seniors and people with disabilities with local students ready to assist them in installing, operating and troubleshooting smart home devices, and enrolling in cost-saving utility smart pricing programs.

During 2020, the program will be pilot tested across a diverse set of Illinois communities through Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and area high schools. Students with and without disabilities participating in the program will receive hands-on training to serve as Smart Technology Mentors and a \$15 stipend for every home assistance visit they conduct. The home visits are free of charge to assistance recipients.

Participants & Funders

The pilot program is being conducted by the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, the Progress Center for Independent Living and the Smart Self Reliance Collaborative (formerly Seniors Independent Living Collaborative). Technical support is provided by the Illinois Assistive Technology Program. Funding for the pilot program is provided by the Illinois Science & Energy Innovation Foundation and the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation. Upon completion, the program will be scaled-up for operation in communities across Illinois.

Role of Participating Schools & Students

During 2020, twelve Illinois high schools in six geographic regions, and up to 120 students between their junior and senior years will be provided an opportunity to participate in the project. Each school will be asked to allow a local CIL Coordinator to publicize and deliver a 45-minute, onsite pilot presentation to students during the month of March. Interested students will then complete and return an application and parent/guardian consent form and participate in a follow-up phone interview with the CIL Coordinator in April, to confirm eligibility and to discuss special needs to be accommodated.

During mid-July, participating schools will be asked to host one 4-hour, classroom training session where students will learn about independent living challenges and receive instruction on the use of smart devices to overcome them. During the same training, they will learn how to assist consumers to enroll in utility smart pricing programs. After passing an online exam, students will be certified as Smart Technology Mentors and approved to conduct home assistance visits scheduled and supervised by the CIL Coordinator after school hours from August until December. Grant funds are sufficient to support up to 128 home assistance visits during the pilot project.

For More Information, please contact: Doug Newman, Pilot Program Director at: 773-899-0801