



SEPT 2025

A Historical Analysis of the TGH Program Model

Insights and Lessons from 25 Years of Digital Equity Programming and Evaluating Effectiveness of the Current Model.

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Introduction

Over the past twenty-five years, Tech Goes Home (TGH) has grown from a grassroots, school-based initiative in Boston into a nationally recognized program model that now serves thousands of learners across Massachusetts each year and, most recently, in Detroit. At its core, the [TGH Program Model](#) is often described as the “three legs of the stool”: digital skills training, access to devices, and reliable internet connectivity. Delivered through a train-the-trainer approach with trusted community partners, this model has continually adapted in response to changing conditions including the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting learner and community needs, and the evolving funding landscape for digital equity.

The [TGH Evaluation Model](#) and [Theory of Change](#) provides the framework for understanding how this model produces impact. By equipping learners with skills, tools, and connectivity, TGH supports improvements in digital confidence, well-being, and opportunity across multiple domains such as education, economic mobility, workforce development, health, community/civic engagement, and parenting. Over time, these individual-level outcomes contribute to stronger, more inclusive communities and to systemic shifts that reduce inequities in digital access and participation.

This report presents a historical analysis of the TGH Program Model, with attention to both process outcomes (i.e., who TGH has reached, how the model has expanded, and how it has become more inclusive) and, where possible, impact outcomes (i.e., changes in digital skills self-efficacy and well-being in key domains). Findings are drawn from TGH’s newly developed longitudinal TGH learner database, which integrates survey and administrative data across multiple cohorts. This database will also serve as the foundation for the forthcoming [TGH Validation & Impact Study](#), designed to rigorously examine long-term outcomes and validate the program model.

In addition to documenting TGH’s reach and outcomes to date, this analysis considers early evidence of systemic change and outlines key next steps. The trends highlighted in this report reinforce TGH’s role as a catalyst for closing the digital divide and underscore the need for future community-level research to more fully capture the systemic impact of digital equity initiatives.



Methods

Overview

This historical analysis draws on a comprehensive integration of administrative and survey data collected by Tech Goes Home (TGH) between 2017 and early 2025. The starting point of 2017 reflects the period when Salesforce became the central repository for program data, enabling consistent tracking across courses and learners. Records prior to 2017 were not available. Despite this, we estimate based on institutional knowledge that TGH's reach from 2000 to 2025, is approximately 50,000 learners and families throughout Boston, other Massachusetts communities, and most recently, Detroit, Michigan.

Three core survey instruments provide the foundation for the historical analysis. These are:

1. Enrollment Survey- captures basic learner demographics, and baseline digital access & self-efficacy. Collected prior to or on the first day of a TGH course.
 - a. There were a total of 34,742 raw records.
 - b. There were a total of 29,700 deduplicated, clean learner records.
2. Post-course Survey- captures short-term outcomes related to digital access & self-efficacy, as well as intention to engage in digital skills. Collected on the last day of a TGH course, which is about 1-3 months after baseline.
 - a. There were a total of 8,529 raw records.
 - b. There were a total of 7,806 deduplicated, clean learner records.
3. Annual survey- captures longer-term outcomes in key domains such as economic mobility, education, health, community/civic engagement, parenting. Collected approximately 12 months following a TGH course.
 - a. There were a total of 3,720 raw records
 - b. There were a total of 2,828 deduplicated, clean learner records.¹

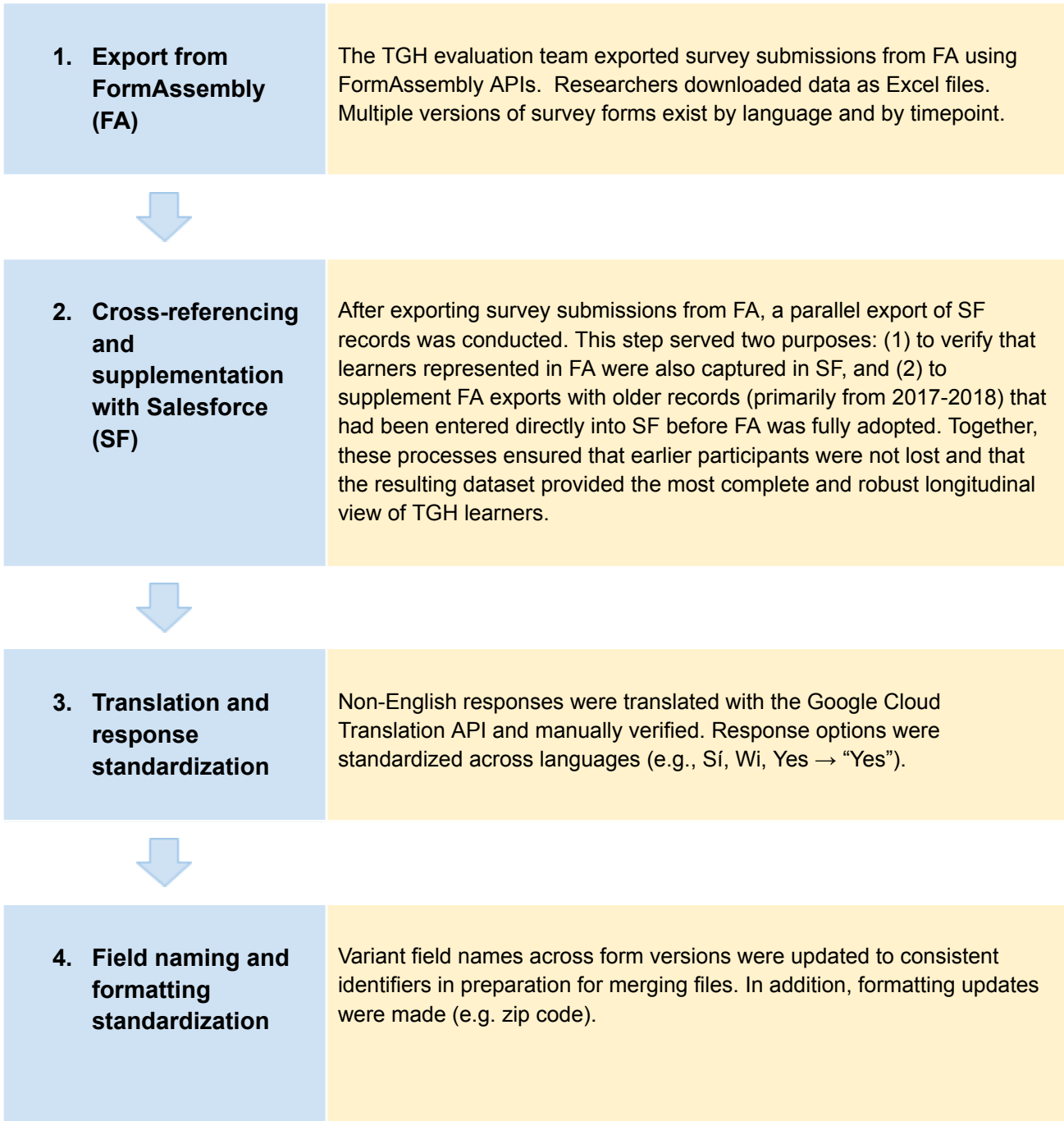
The TGH evaluation team collected survey data via Form Assembly in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese) and integrated into Salesforce via a live connector with other administrative data (e.g. course type, partner details).

¹ There were a total of 2,908 deduplicated records which includes 80 respondents who answered at more than one annual survey time point. Thus, the actual unique learner count is 2,828.



Data cleaning

Given the complexity of developing a clean, TGH learner database a rigorous process was employed for data cleaning using Excel, Python, and R. The key steps of the cleaning process were as follows:







Analysis

The evaluation team analyzed data using Excel and R. The team employed descriptive statistics to examine year-over-year trends in learner demographics, device and broadband access, and overall program reach and outcomes. Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to assess pre- to post-course changes in digital self-efficacy, with subscales constructed for email, computer, and tablet skills. Together, these methods provide both a broad view of longitudinal trends and evidence of statistically significant gains in learner confidence and skill application.

Limitations

As a retrospective analysis, this work faced several challenges. Missing data, evolving survey instruments, and shifting definitions of key measures limited comparability across years. Despite the use of multi-key variable matching, some learner journeys could not be fully reconstructed. In addition, comprehensive data sources were unavailable prior to 2017, meaning that process and outcome measures from TGH's first 17 years must be drawn from institutional knowledge rather than objective datasets. Even with these constraints, the development of a unified learner database, provides the strongest evidence to date of TGH's reach and impact and establishes the foundation for the forthcoming TGH Validation & Impact Study.



Key Findings

Program expansion and shifts

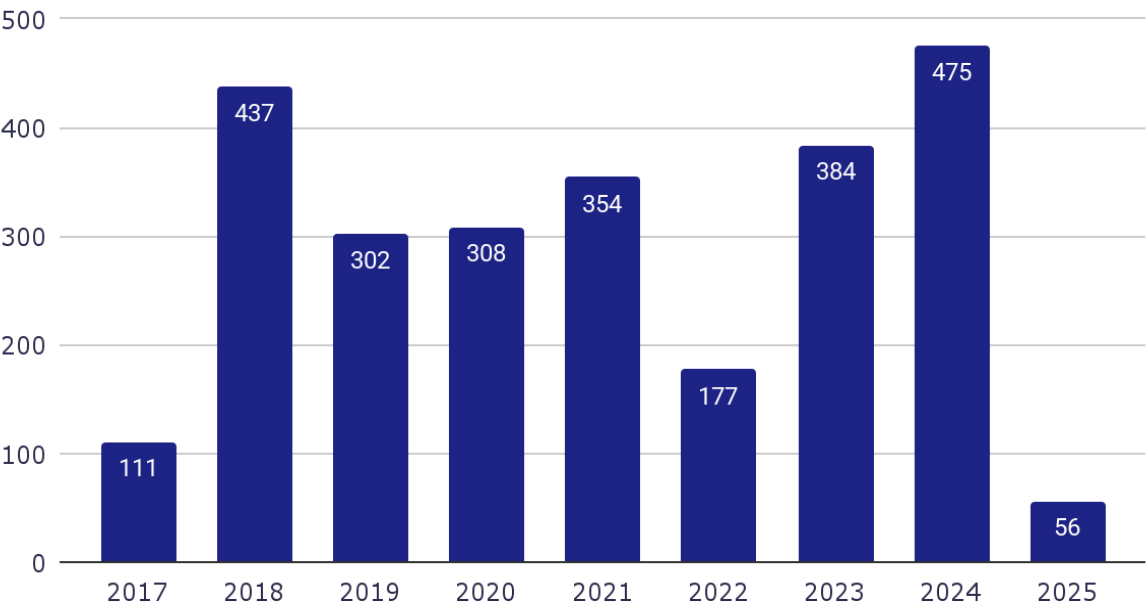
This section examines TGH program expansion and shifts from 2017 to present (2025). The dataset used for analysis includes 2025 data through the end of March only (i.e., just one quarter of data for 2025). Missing and “prefer not to answer” values are excluded from analysis.

Courses and Participation

Courses by Year

Since 2017, TGH and its partners have facilitated a total of **2,559 courses**. The average (mean) number of courses per year was 318, with a minimum of 111 courses in 2017 and maximum of 475 courses in 2024.

Number of TGH courses by year

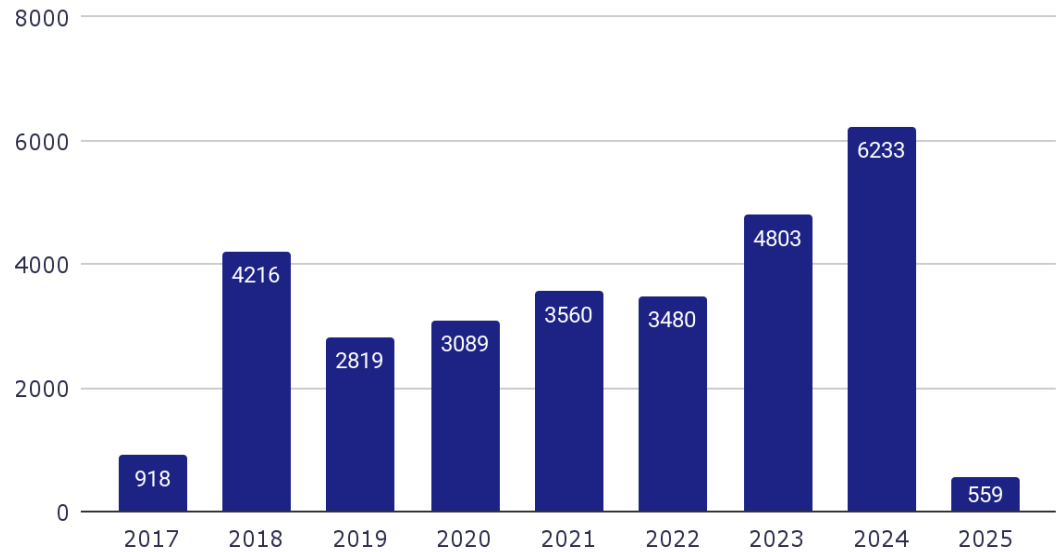




Learners by year

A total of **29,667** learners have participated in courses facilitated by TGH and its partners since 2017. The average (mean) number of learners per year was 3,640, with a minimum of 918 learners in 2017 and maximum of 6,233 learners in 2024.

Number of TGH Learners per year



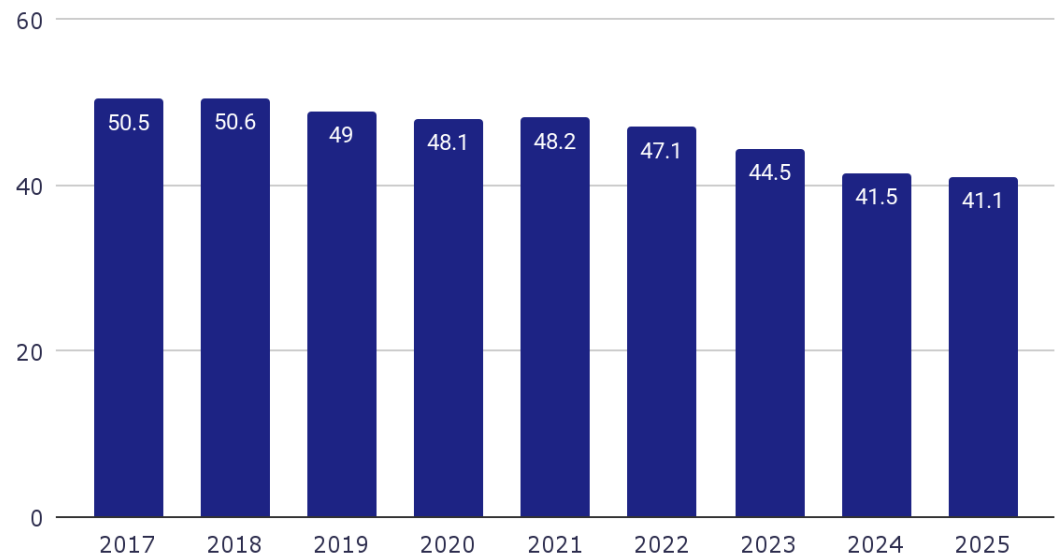


Demographics

Age

Across all years, the average (mean) age of TGH learners was **46.4**, with a minimum age of 6 and maximum age of 89. The mean age of learners has steadily decreased from 50.5 in 2017 to 41.1 in 2025.

Average age of TGH Learners by year

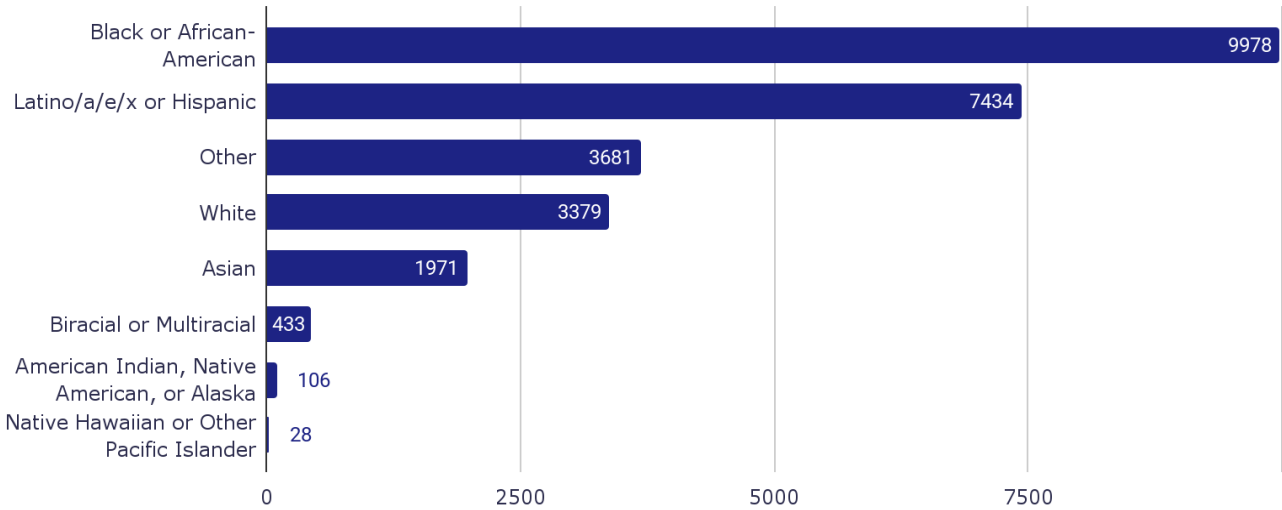




Race/ethnicity

TGH has served a diverse group of learners with respect to race/ethnicity, as shown in the chart below. Over one-third (**36.9%**) identified as **Black or African-American**, and over one-quarter (**27.5%**) identified as **Latino/a/e/x or Hispanic**.

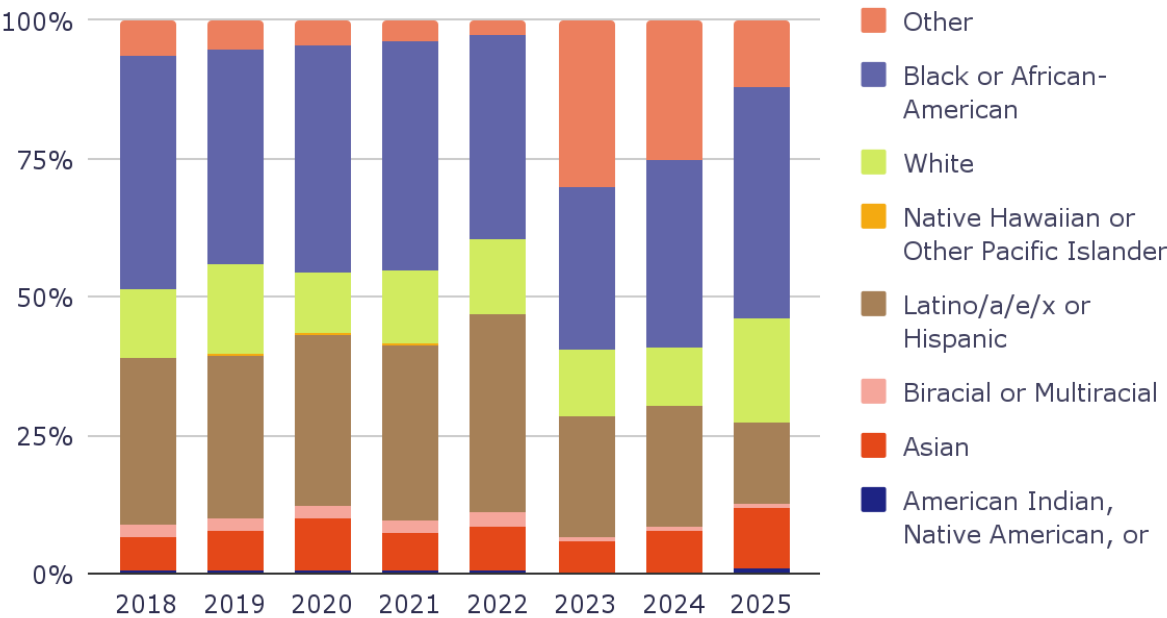
Race/ethnicity of TGH learners





Over time, the race/ethnicity of TGH learners has remained relatively consistent, with the exception of more learners self-describing “Other” race/ethnicity values in 2023, and to a slightly lesser extent, 2024 and 2025. However, caution should be used when interpreting this trend given that some self-described race/ethnicity values may correspond to existing categories.

Race/ethnicity of TGH learners by year

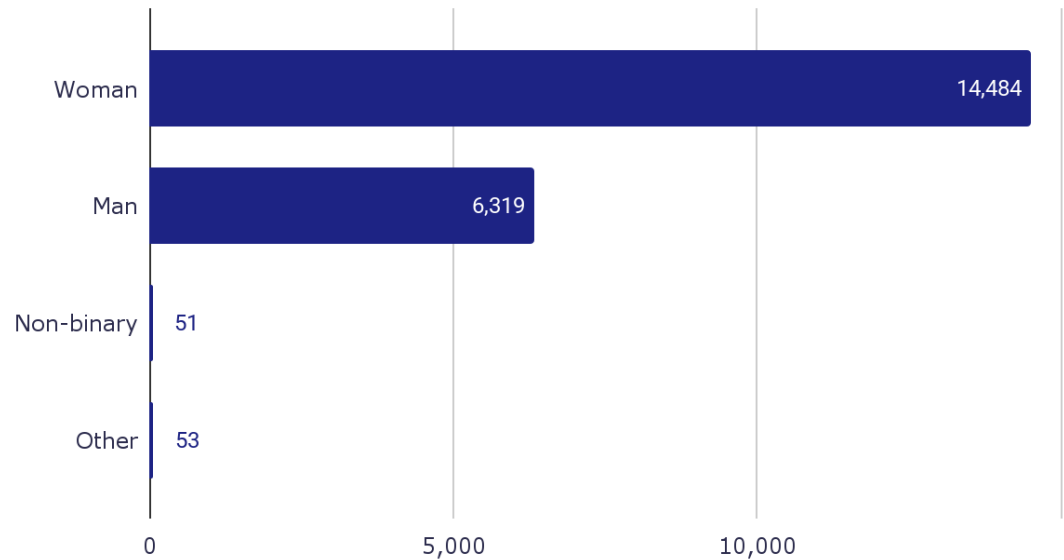




Gender

For the years gender data is available (2020-2025), over two-thirds of TGH learners **(69.3%) identified as women**, with remaining participants identifying as men (30.2%), non-binary (0.24%), or other genders (0.25%).

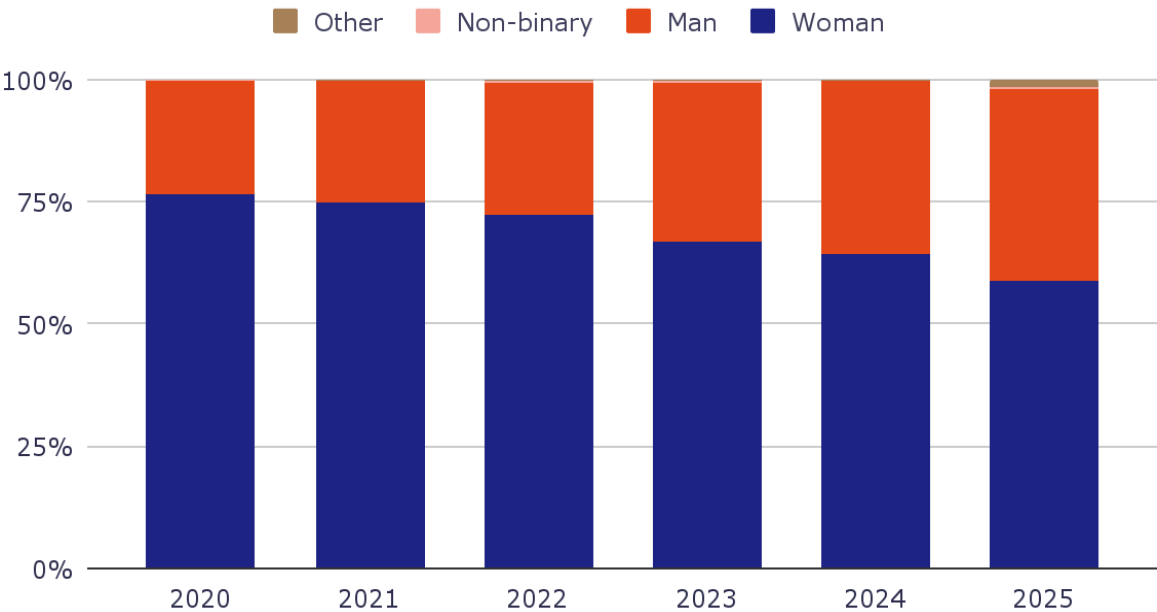
Gender of TGH learners





Although the majority of TGH learners have consistently been women, it is notable that the proportion of women has steadily decreased from 76.33% in 2020 to 59.82% in 2025.

Gender of TGH learners by year

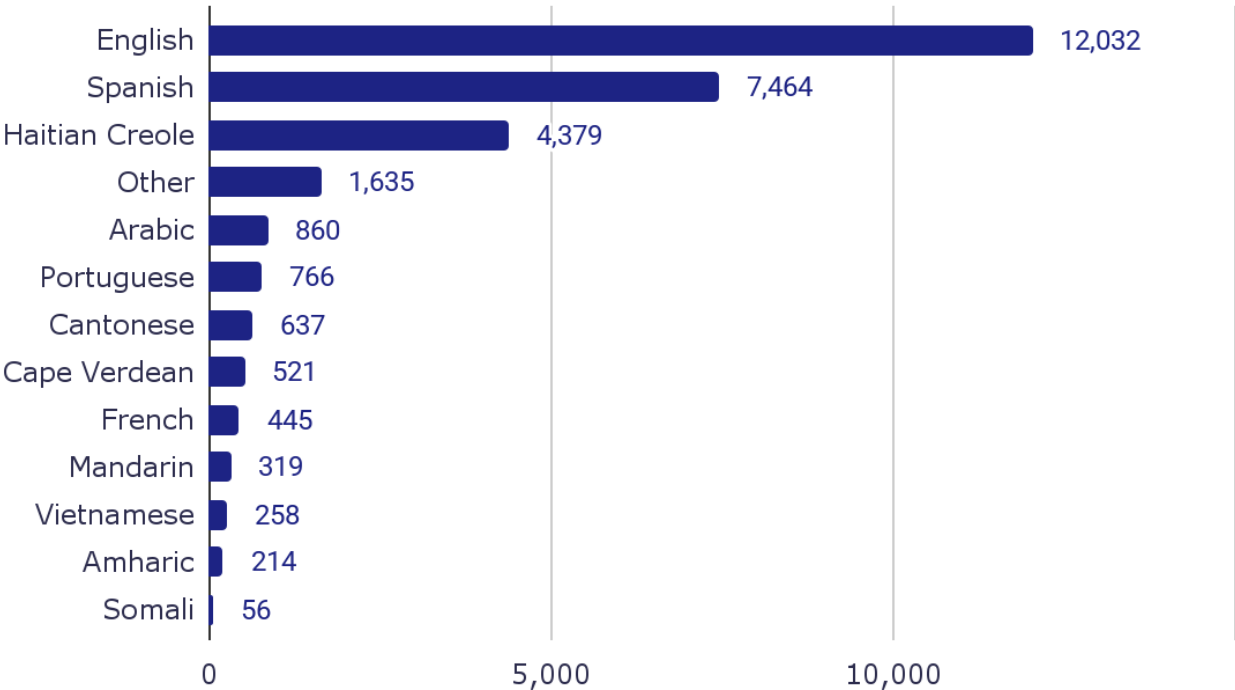




Primary language

TGH learners across all years identified over 13 unique languages as their primary language. These are displayed in the chart below.

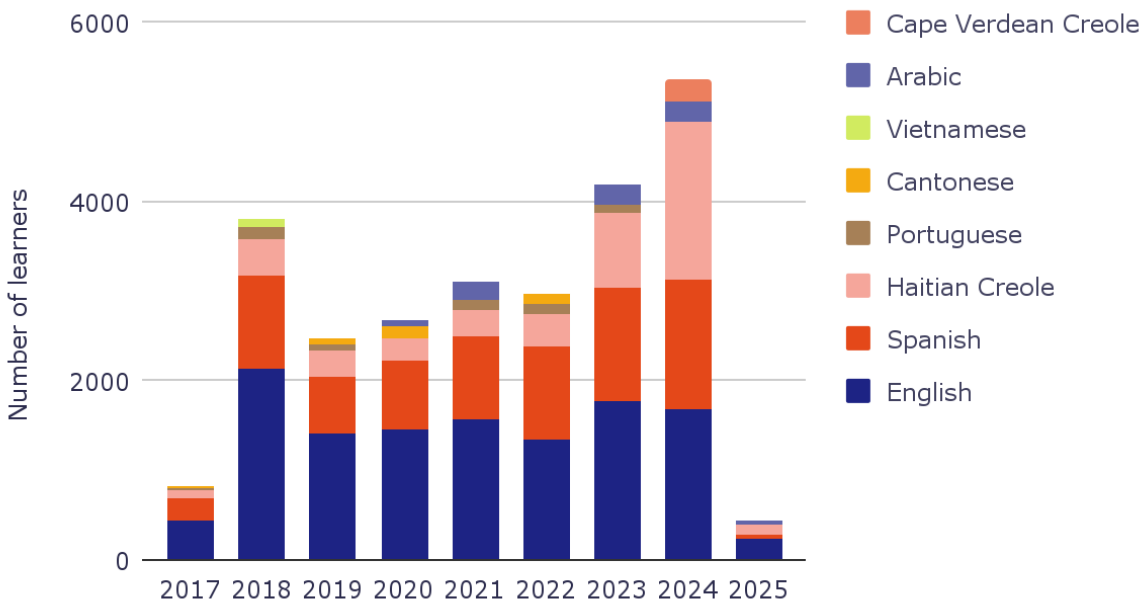
Primary language of TGH learners





The chart below displays the top five primary languages of TGH learners per year. The “Other” category is excluded. English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole represented three of the top five languages across all years, with the remaining two being Cape Verdean Creole, Arabic, Vietnamese, Cantonese, or Portuguese depending on the year. For nearly all years, English and Spanish were the top two primary languages; however, in 2024, Haitian Creole was the most frequently identified primary language, followed by English.

Top 5 primary languages of TGH learners by year

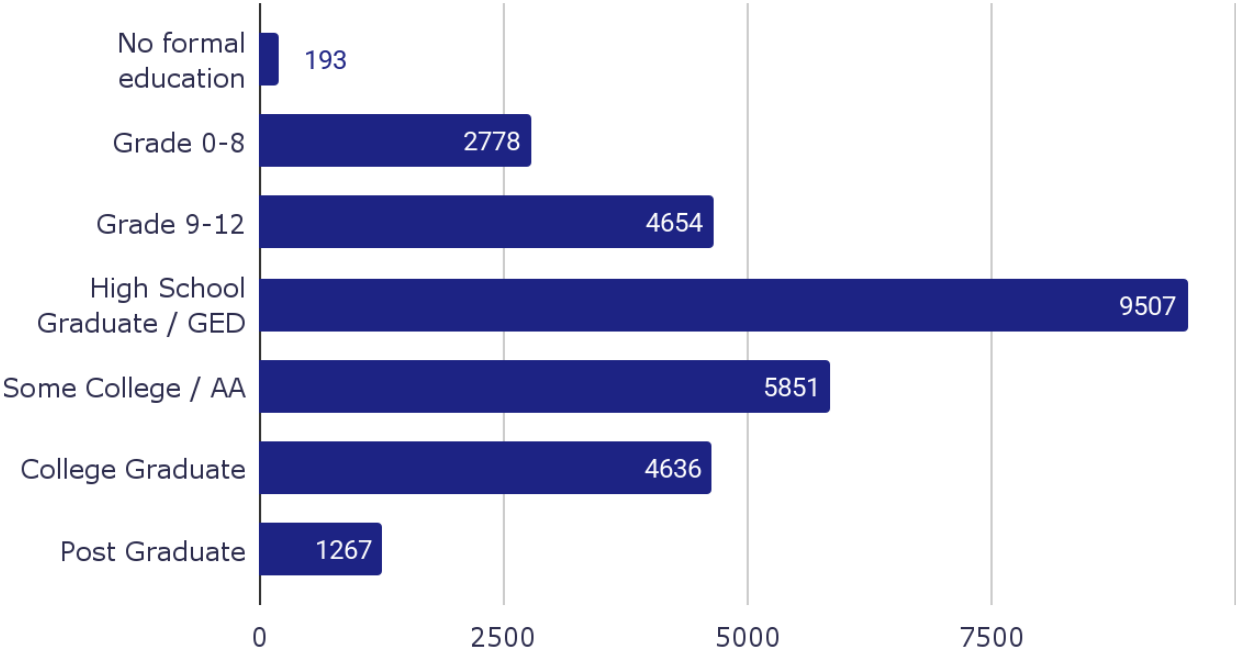




Educational status

Across all years, TGH has consistently served learners with a wide range of educational backgrounds. The most common educational status of TGH learners has been High School Graduate/GED (32.9%), with **59.3% of learners having educational status of High School Graduate/GED or below.**

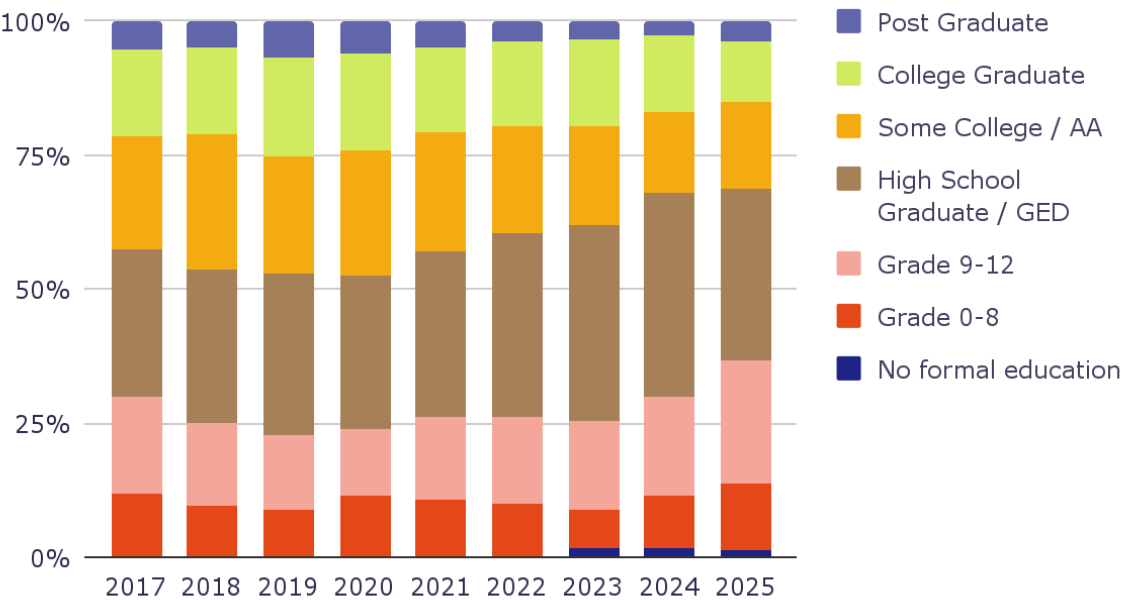
Educational status of TGH learners





Since 2020, the proportion of learners TGH has served with educational status of High School Graduate/GED or below has steadily increased, including serving learners with no formal education.

Educational status of TGH learners by year

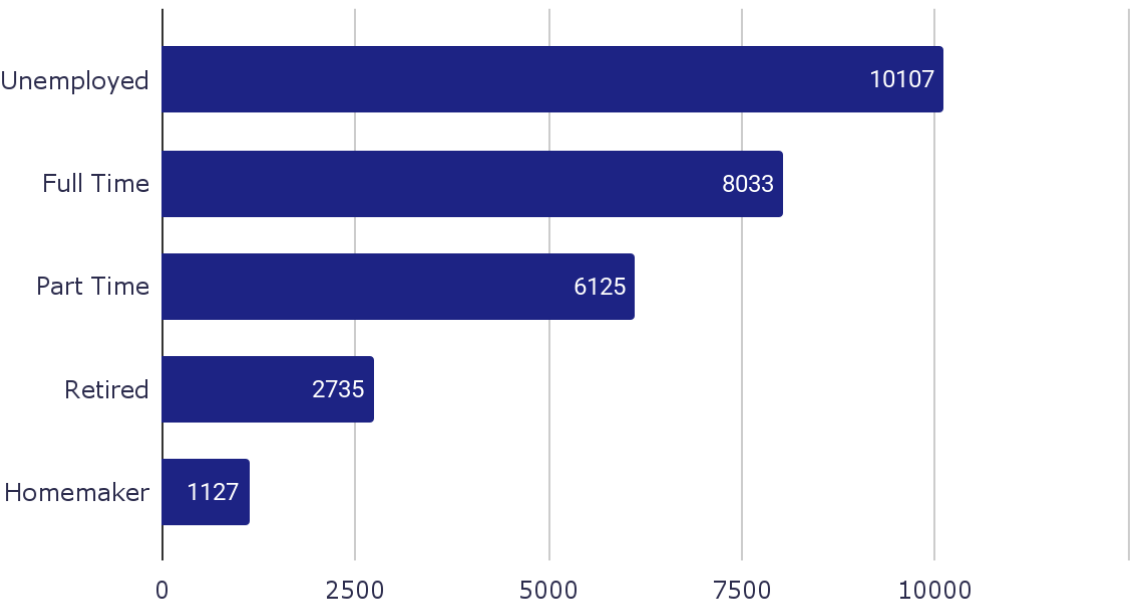




Employment status

Across all years, the most frequent employment status of TGH learners was **Unemployed (35.9%)**, followed by Full Time (28.6%) and Part Time (21.8%).

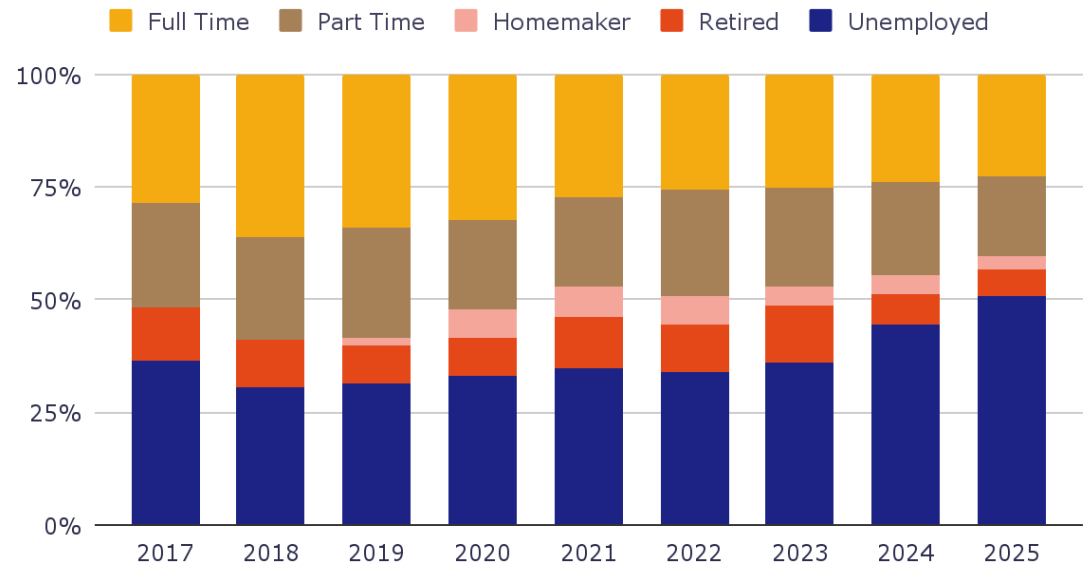
Employment status of TGH learners





The proportion of TGH learners with Unemployed status has grown from 30.40% in 2018 to 50.79% in 2025.

Employment status of TGH learners by year

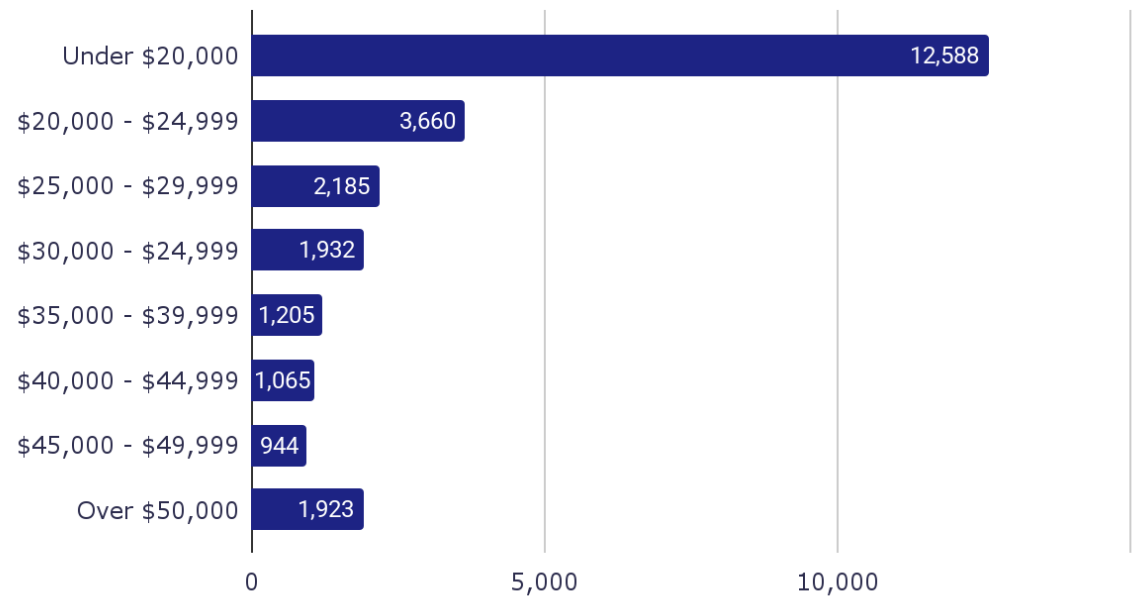




Household income

Nearly half (49.4%) of TGH learners from 2017-2025 have reported household income under \$20,000, with **nearly two-thirds (63.8%) reporting household income under \$25,000**.

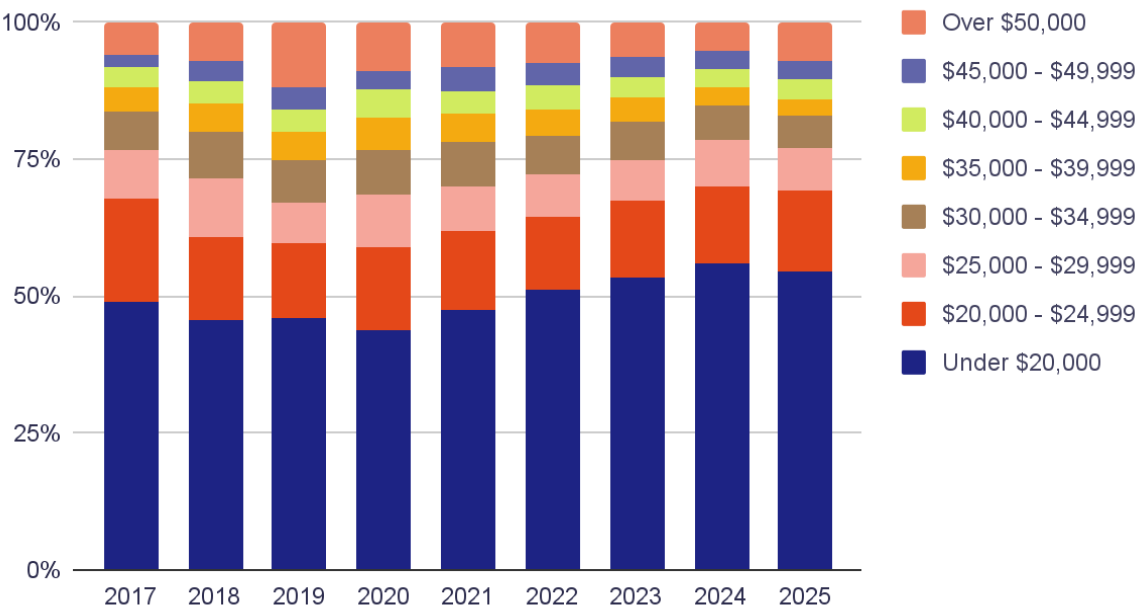
Household income of TGH learners





The proportion of TGH learners reporting household income below \$25,000 steadily decreased from 2017 (67.7%) to 2020 (59.0%) and then steadily increased until 2024 (70.1%), seeing a decrease again for the first time in the first quarter of 2025 (69.3%).

Household income of TGH learners by year

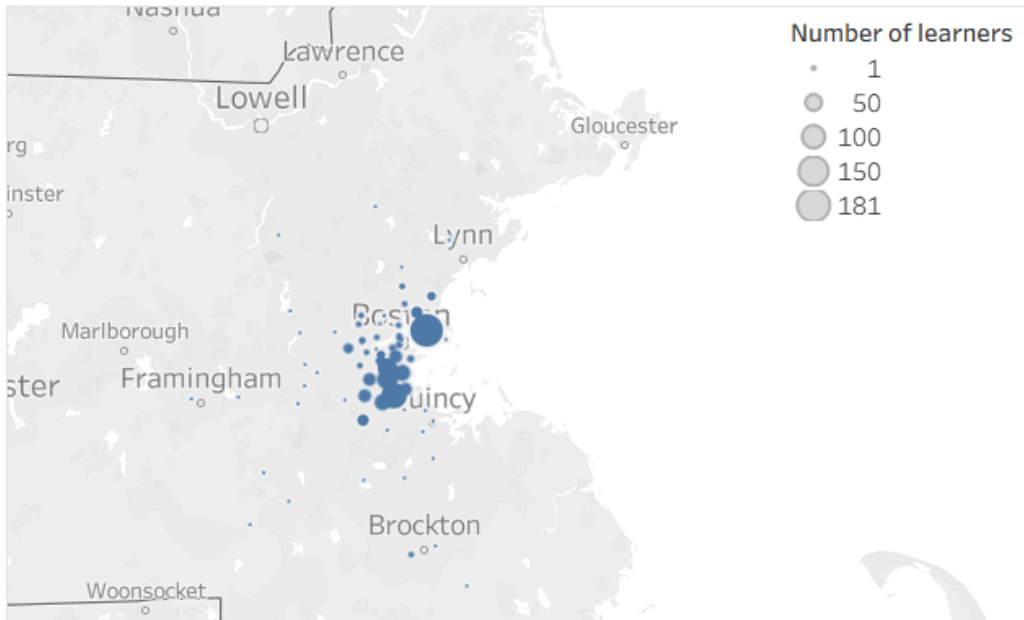




Geographic expansion

TGH’s geographic reach has expanded steadily since 2017. As shown in the 2017 map below, learners were originally concentrated in and near Boston.

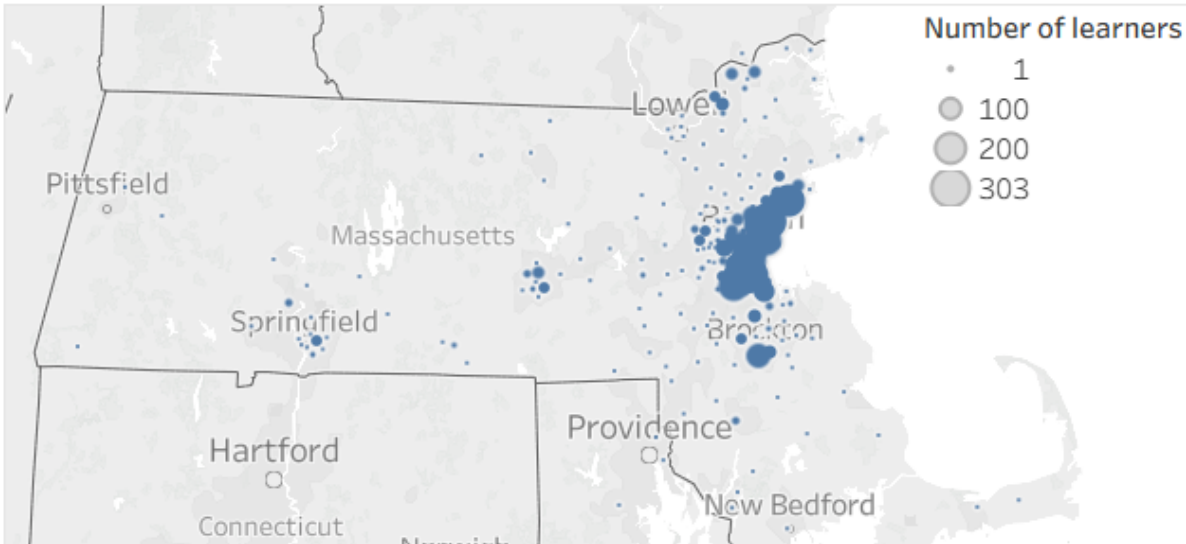
TGH Learner Zip Codes - 2017





TGH’s presence in and near Boston grew from 2017-2023. At this point, there was a key shift, with TGH expanding to serve learners in other parts of Massachusetts, as shown in the 2023 map below. This aligns with the timeframe in which funding through MBI allowed TGH programming to more fully enter Gateway cities of Massachusetts.

TGH Learner Zip Codes - 2023



The most recent milestone in TGH’s geographic expansion occurred in 2025, with learners now being served in Detroit and a more solidified presence in other parts of Massachusetts, as shown in the 2025 map below.

TGH Learner Zip Codes - 2025 (first quarter only)





Program Reach and Access

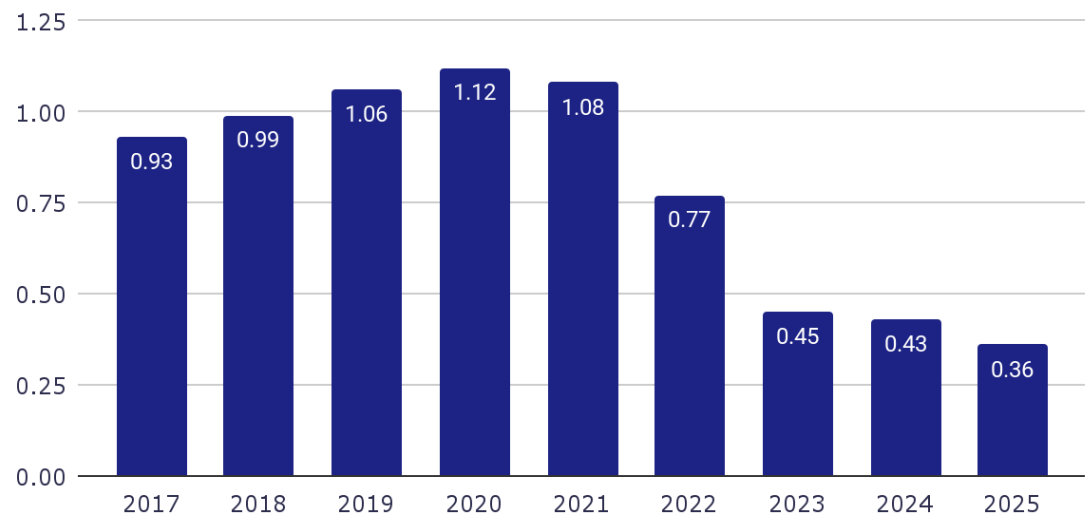
Patterns in Digital Access at Baseline

Devices

Computers

Across all years, the **average (mean) number of working computers** TGH learners reported having at home at baseline was **0.78**. The chart below displays the average by year. The average number of reported working computers reached its peak in 2020 at 1.12, and in 2025 has decreased to less than one-third of this value at 0.36.

TGH learners' average number of working computers at home at baseline

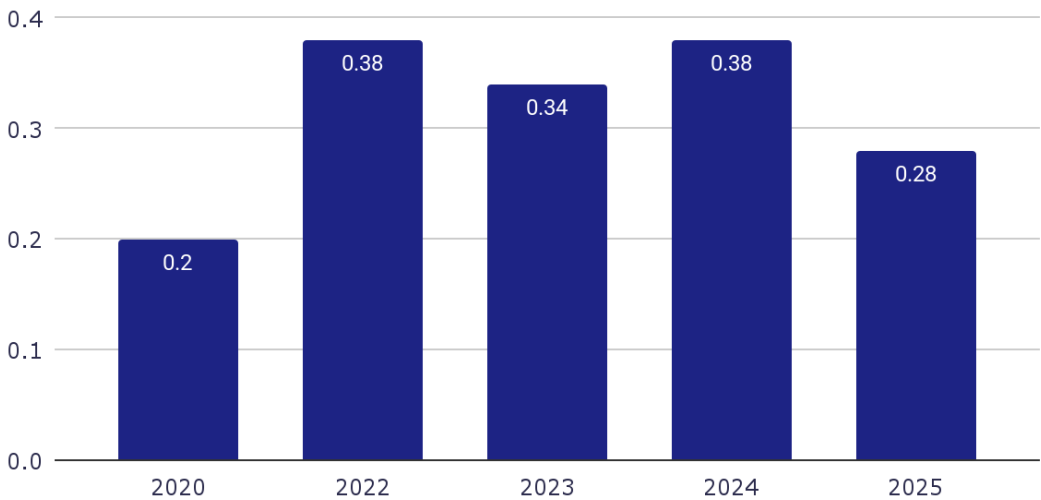




Tablets

Data on the number of tablets at home at baseline is only available for 2020 and 2022-2025. For these years, the **average (mean) number of tablets** TGH learners reported having at home was **0.36**. The chart below displays the average by year.

TGH learners' average number of tablets at home at baseline



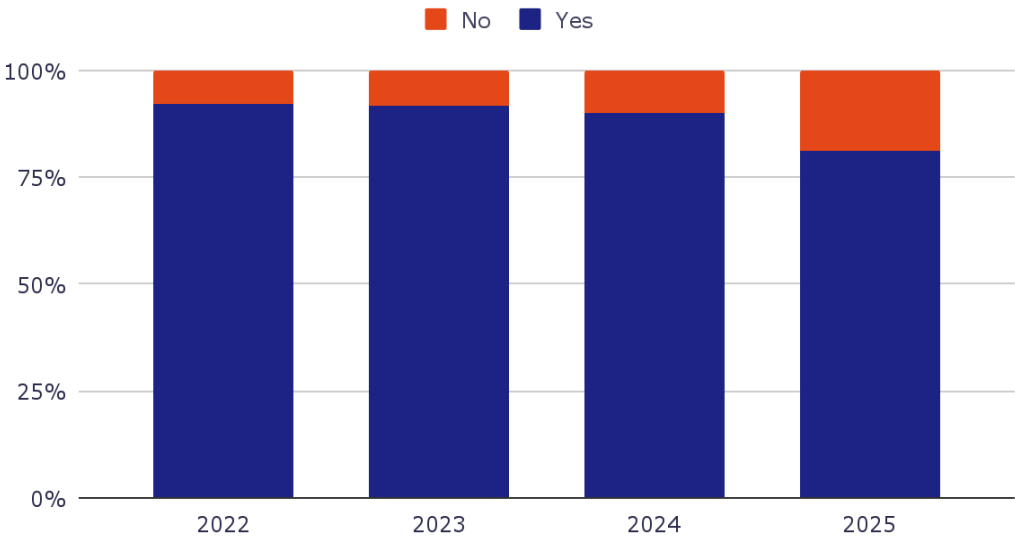


Smartphones

Whereas TGH asks learners about the *number* of working devices they have at home with respect to computers and tablets, the question about smartphones simply asks if learners have one (yes/no).

Like tablets, data on smartphones at baseline is only available for 2020 and 2022-2025. For these years, **the vast majority (90.6%) of TGH learners reported having a smartphone** at baseline. The chart below displays a breakdown by year; given that this data was only available for four learners in 2020, only 2022-2025 are included. The proportion of learners with a smartphone at baseline has decreased from 92.0% in 2022 to 81.3% in the first quarter of 2025.

TGH learners with smartphone at baseline

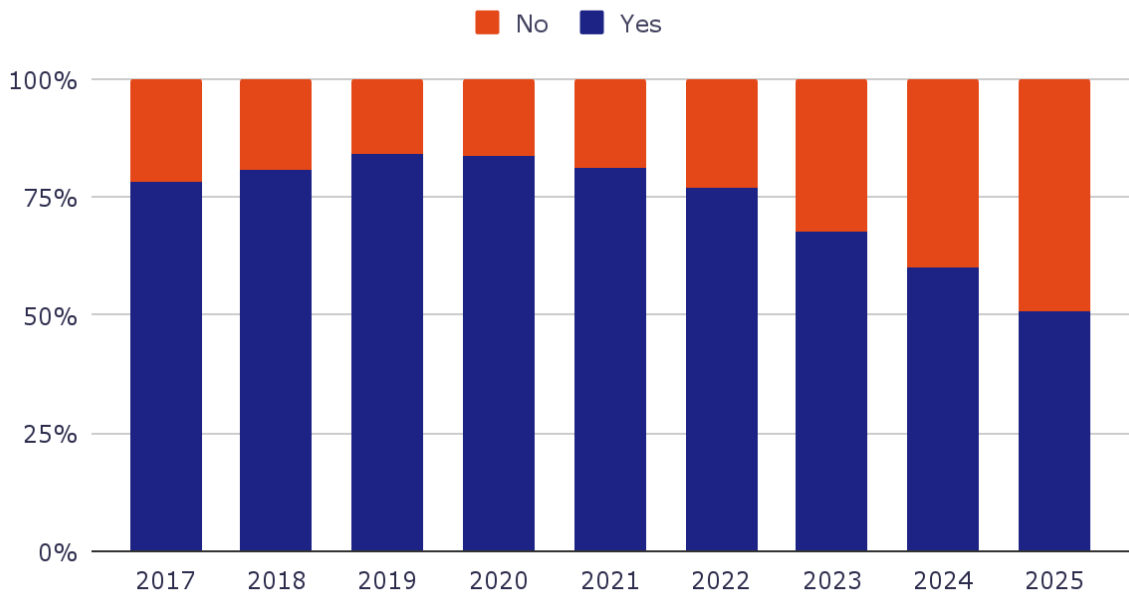




Internet

Across all years, **three out of four TGH learners (74.3%) reported having home internet access at baseline**. The proportion of learners with home internet increased from 78.10% in 2017 to a high of 84.18% in 2019, and has since steadily decreased to a low of 50.93% in the first quarter of 2025.

TGH learners with home internet access at baseline



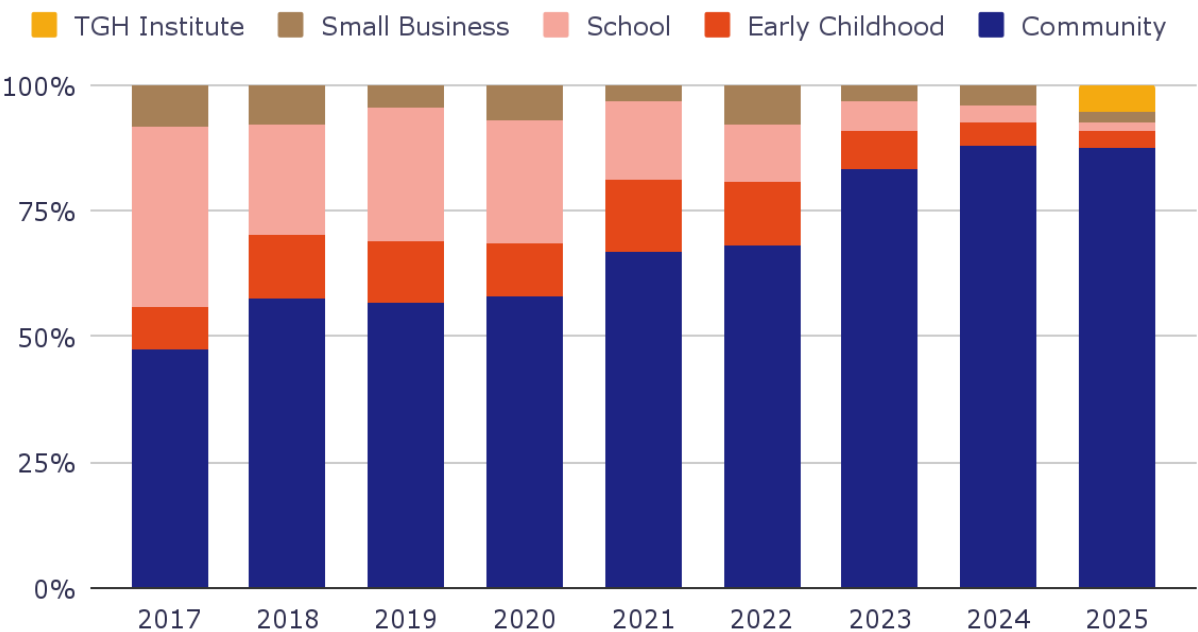


Evolution of delivery models

Course type

TGH and its partners offer several types of courses: Community, Early Childhood, School, Small Business, and TGH Institute. As shown in the chart below, while community courses have consistently been the most common course offering, they have expanded over the years, from representing just under half of all courses, 47.5%, in 2017 to 87.3% in 2025.

Courses by type by year



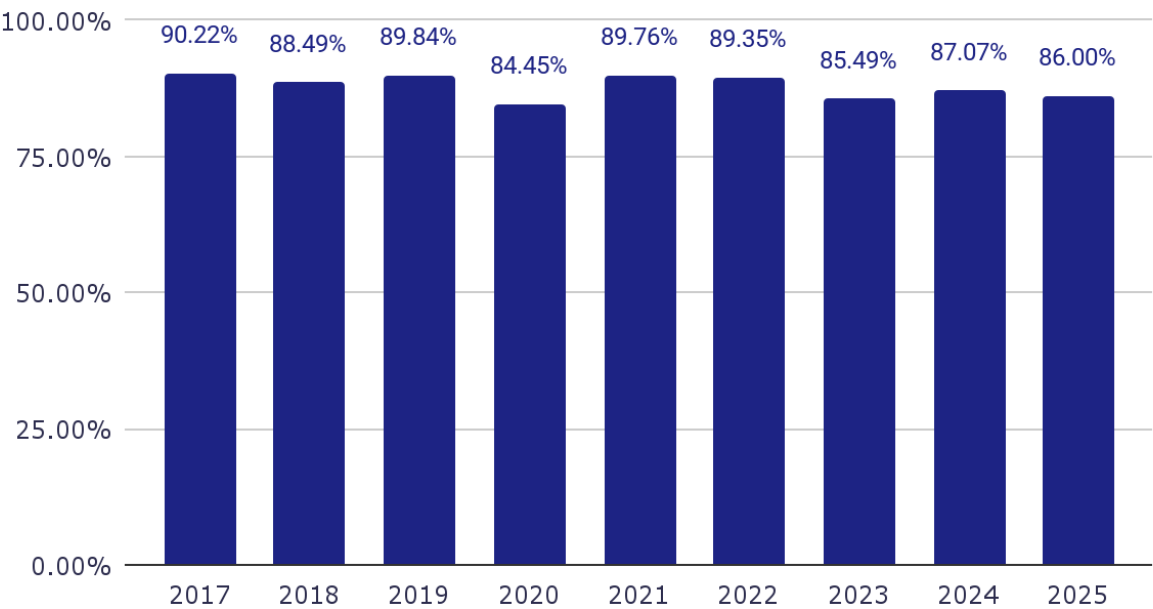


Retention rate

Retention rate represents the percentage of course enrollments with at least 15 total hours completed (a course enrollment represents a TGH learner enrolled in a specific course, so a given learner may be associated with multiple enrollments).

The **overall retention rate from 2017-2025 was 87.8%**, meaning that of the 44,212 enrollments during this period, 87.8% completed at least 15 course hours. A breakdown by year is shown in the chart below. Retention has remained relatively stable over the years, decreasing slightly from 90.22% in 2017 to 86.00% in 2025.

Retention rate by year





Program Outcomes

The TGH theory of change, represented in the TGH logic model, targets numerous short- to mid-term learner outcomes. Highlights from key outcome areas included in this historical analysis are discussed below.

Improved self-efficacy

A key short-term learner outcome TGH targets is improved self-efficacy in application of learned digital skills to improve well-being.

For the purposing of assessing self-efficacy, TGH learners answer questions on the enrollment survey (pre) and post-course survey (post) about their confidence regarding various aspects of email and computer or tablet² functionality. Response options range from “Not at all confident” (1) to “Extremely confident” (5). There are four questions related to email confidence, six related to computer confidence, and five related to tablet confidence. The email, computer, and tablet responses are summed to create subscales for email self-efficacy, computer self-efficacy, and tablet self-efficacy, respectively.

Paired-samples *t*-tests were run to compare subscale scores from pre to post. Overall, learners reported significant increases in confidence across all three domains, $p < .001$. Results for all learners are displayed in the table below.

Paired-samples *t*-test results for self-efficacy

Domain	Sample (n)	Pre Mean (SD)	Post Mean (SD)	% Change	<i>t</i> value (df)	<i>p</i> value
Email self-efficacy	4084	11.70 (5.21)	15.00 (4.03)	28.3% increase	-50.3 (4083)	< .001
Computer self-efficacy	3549	14.10 (6.28)	19.10 (4.78)	35.6% increase	-55.1 (3548)	< .001
Tablet self-efficacy	282	19.00 (5.42)	20.70 (4.22)	9.22% increase	-7.27 (281)	<.001

² Whether a learner answers computer vs. tablet questions depends on the course type.



Digital Skills Behavior Intention & Outcomes

Key mid-term to long-term outcomes for TGH learners is increased use of digital skills and technology devices to improve well-being surrounding key domains including economic mobility, workforce development, education, health, community/civic engagement, and/or parenting. In the **post-course survey**, learners answer a series of questions about their intention to engage in digital skills behaviors related to these key domains. Then, on the **annual survey**, learners answer a similar series of questions; however, at this time point, learners are asked about behaviors and outcomes related to the key domains.

Results are displayed in the table below. At post, for nearly all activities, at least three out of every four participants reported that they were more likely to do these activities digitally because of TGH. For most activities, the percentage of learners who reported actually doing these activities at the time of the annual survey was lower (which is to be expected), but this percentage varied and was over 50% for all activities, as shown in the table below.



TGH learners reporting behavioral intention (post-course-survey), or behavior/outcome (annual survey)

Activity	% of learners (post-course survey)	% of learners (annual survey)
Finding/researching general info. online	96.7%	93.0%
Education for myself	90.8%	82.1%
Using job resources (e.g., Indeed, LinkedIn, resume building, applying for jobs online)	85.3%	72.3%
Accessing health and wellness info. and resources (e.g., telehealth, health portals, managing insurance online)	84.9%	71.1%
Using digital skills for work/current job	84.5%	58.4%
Accessing local/city resources (e.g., food assistance)	82.6%	77.0%
Finding housing (e.g., shelter, apartment hunting/rentals, sublets)	82.3%	58.9%
Helping my child with school	79.5%	81.3%
Managing finances online (e.g., create budgets, online banking, paying bills)	76.9%	65.4%
Civic engagement (e.g., accessing voting information, filling out the census, attending virtual town/city meetings)	73.0%	56.7%

There are several other mechanisms for assessing learners’ outcomes related to finances and employment, as described below.



Financial well-being

On the enrollment survey and post-course survey, learners answer three questions related to **financial well-being**, which are averaged into a subscale. Learners reported a significant increase in financial well-being from pre ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .097$) to post ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(1191) = -2.93$, $p < .01$. **This represents a modest financial well-being gain of 3.9%.**

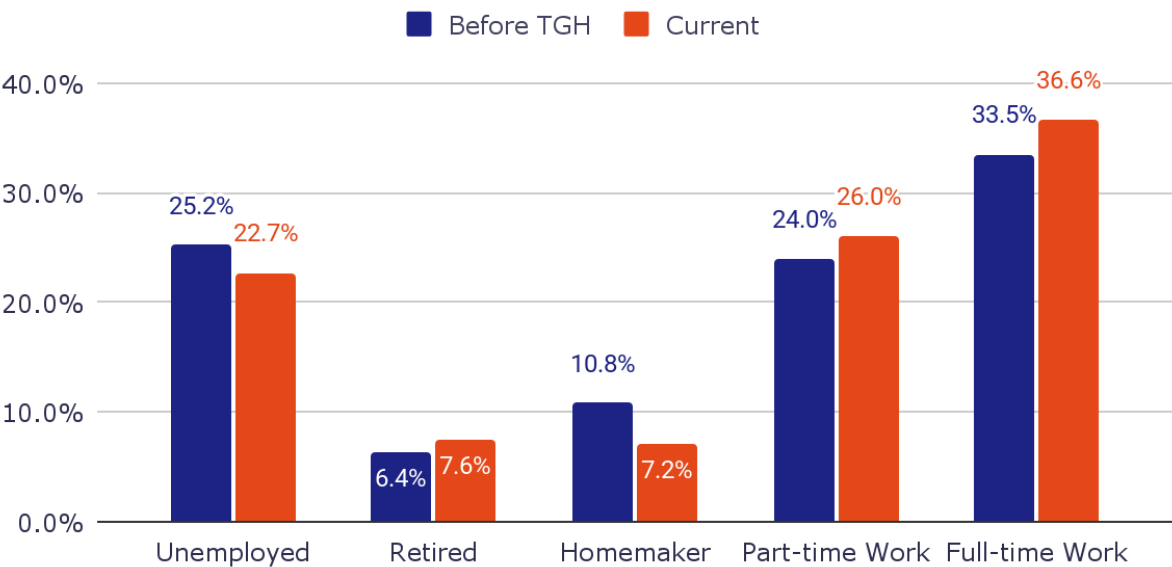
Employment hope

Learners answer five questions on the enrollment and post-course surveys related to **employment hope**, which are averaged into a subscale. Learners reported a significant increase in employment hope from pre ($M = 6.57$, $SD = 2.52$) to post ($M = 7.67$, $SD = 2.15$), $t(1127) = -14.1$, $p < .001$. **This represents a 16.7% increase in employment hope.**

Employment status

The annual survey asks learners what their employment status was before participating in the TGH program, as well as what their current employment status is. Results are displayed in the chart below. At the time of the annual survey, fewer learners reported currently being unemployed or a homemaker compared to before they participated in TGH, whereas more learners reported being retired or having full- or part-time work.

TGH learners' employment status reported at annual survey

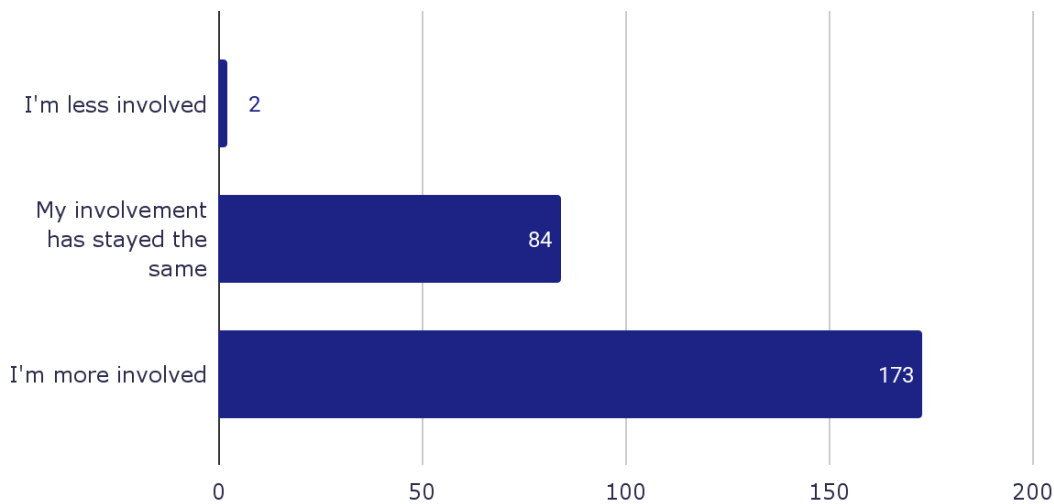




Parenting

A little less than half (44.4%) of learners reported on the annual survey that they took TGH with a child. These learners are asked if their involvement in their child’s education has changed because of TGH. As shown in the chart below, most learners (n=173, 66.8%), responded that they are more involved in their child’s education, followed by their involvement staying the same.

Has your involvement in your child's education changed because of TGH?





Reflections on Impact

Alignment with TGH Mission and Theory of Change

This report demonstrates that TGH's growth has been expansive and inclusive since its inception 25 years ago. Since 2017 alone, more than 29,600 learners have participated in TGH programming, supported by 2,559 courses across Massachusetts and Detroit. These numbers reflect not only geographic expansion but also alignment with TGH's mission of reaching historically marginalized communities most affected by the digital divide. Data on learner demographics reinforce this: 36.9% of learners identify as Black or African-American and 27.5% identify as Hispanic/Latino/a/e/x; nearly two-thirds of learners report household incomes less than \$25,000; and, more than half of learners have a highest educational attainment of less than a highschool diploma/ GED. These demographic trends align with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), which emphasizes centering low-income households, immigrants, learners of color, and adults with limited formal education in digital equity efforts.³

By prioritizing these groups, TGH demonstrates fidelity to its mission and its Theory of Change: increasing digital access and self-efficacy among learners who have historically been excluded from opportunity, which in turn enables stronger educational, workforce, health, and civic outcomes.⁴ In this way, TGH not only exemplifies best practice in the digital equity field but also contributes to the evidence base for effective program design.⁵ Moreover, this will lay the groundwork for validating its model and measuring longer term learner/family impact and broader systemic change.

³ National Digital Inclusion Alliance (2024). *Policy: Awareness*. Retrieved 09/05/2025 from: <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/awareness/>

⁴ Rhinesmith, C., & Kang-Le, S. (2025). Understanding the Value of a Digital Equity Researcher-Practitioner Collaboration Using Participatory Action Research. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods*, 6(2), 192–221.

⁵ National Digital Inclusion Alliance (2024). *The Digital Inclusion Program Manual: From the Community Doers Who Define the Field for Those Who Will Do the Work*. Retrieved 09/05/2025 from <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2024-NDIA-The-Digital-Inclusion-Program-Manual-PUBLISHED-.pdf>



Early evidence of systemic change in communities served

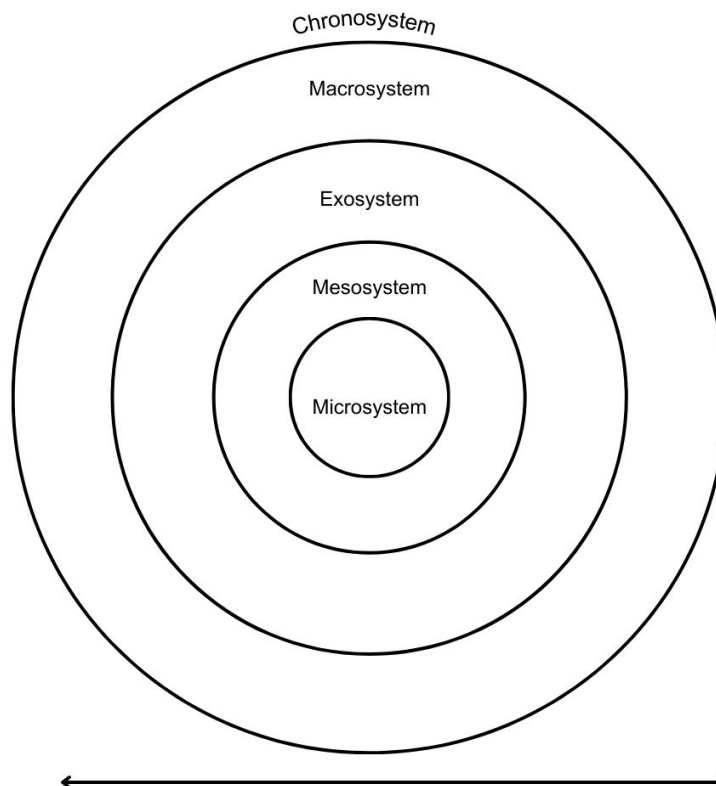
Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory provides a useful framework for understanding how digital equity outcomes unfold across multiple levels of influence. While originally developed in the context of child development, the framework adapts well to digital equity, where individual gains in digital skills and access to devices or the internet ripple outward into families, institutions, communities, and broader policy environments.⁶ The table below summarizes how TGH outcomes can be mapped to this framework, and the visual diagram that follows it illustrates how change at the individual level cascades outward into systemic impact.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory in a Digital Equity Context

Level	Traditional Focus using Child Development	TGH Adaptation using Digital Equity Lens
Microsystem	Family, peers, school, work, neighborhood	Individual learners, household internet/device access, peer/family support for digital use
Mesosystem	Interactions among microsystems (e.g., family–school)	Institutions learners interact with including schools, health systems, employers, workforce training agencies, community based organizations
Exosystem	Local government, parents’ workplaces, media	Community networks, local government digital services, broadband availability, social services
Macrosystem	Culture, social norms, politics, economy	State/federal broadband and digital equity policy, philanthropic investment, cultural values around tech, digital equity key actors (e.g. NDIA, NTIA)
Chronosystem	Time, sociohistorical context, transitions	Technological change (e.g. smartphones, AI), policy shifts (Digital Equity Act, ACP phase-out), generational change, long-term learner trajectories

⁶ Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.

Simplified Visual of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



At the **microsystem, or individual level**, TGH learners report substantial, statistically significant gains in digital skills self-efficacy outcomes measured consistently from baseline to post-course. These improvements reflect learners' increased ability to navigate computers, devices, and online environments with ease and confidence. As such, these individual level changes provide the foundation for broader systemic change.

At the **mesosystem (e.g., micro systems interacting with each other), or institutional level**, these skills strengthen how learners interact with schools, health systems, employers, and other community-based organizations. For example, more than 71% of learners reported using digital tools to access health information or services after completing a TGH course, and nearly 67% of parents reported greater involvement in their child's education, reinforcing institutional priorities for patient engagement and family-school communication, respectively.



In turn, these individual and institutional shifts connect to the **exosystem, or community level**, where earner outcomes position TGH as part of broader service and economic networks. For instance, more than 72% of participants reported using online job resources, highlighting TGH's potential role in workforce development ecosystems, which then results in local community benefits.

At the **macrosystem, or societal level**, TGH's expansion into Gateway Cities and Detroit demonstrates how digital equity programming can scale geographically when embedded in state and philanthropic digital equity initiatives. This signals a broader recognition of digital inclusion as foundational to the domains identified in TGH's Theory of Change, including economic mobility, workforce development, education, health, civic engagement, and parenting.

Finally, at the **chronosystem, or temporal level**, TGH's work is shaped by larger technological, policy, and generational shifts. The widespread adoption of smartphones, the emergence of artificial intelligence, and the expiration of programs such as the Affordable Connectivity Program illustrate how the digital landscape is continually changing. Learners' long-term trajectories are influenced not only by their participation in TGH but also by these broader sociohistorical transitions, underscoring the importance of ongoing adaptation in program design and evaluation.

Viewed together, the historical data presented in this report suggest that TGH's work extends beyond individual learners to influence institutions, communities, and social structures across time. Future evaluation will focus on documenting these ripple effects more systematically, particularly at the community and institutional levels, while also benchmarking TGH's outcomes against emerging national digital equity standards.



Conclusion

Over the past twenty-five years, Tech Goes Home has evolved from a grassroots initiative in Boston schools to a nationally recognized digital equity program reaching nearly 30,000 learners since 2017 alone. This historical analysis confirms that the program has expanded in both scale and inclusivity, consistently engaging the communities most affected by the digital divide. The data show not only strong outcomes in digital skills and confidence, but also early signs that learners are using those skills to navigate health care, education, workforce, and community/civic systems.

At the same time, this analysis highlights the importance of moving from descriptive mixed-methods evidence to rigorous validation and community-level measurement. The forthcoming Validation & Impact Study will provide critical insight into how digital equity interventions generate sustained individual outcomes and ripple effects across institutions and communities. By aligning with emerging field standards and strengthening partnerships, TGH is well-positioned to contribute not just to the success of its learners, but to the broader movement for systemic digital equity.

Continued investment in this work will be essential to sustain momentum, validate the TGH model, and scale its impact. The next phase offers an opportunity to comprehensively demonstrate how digital equity initiatives can transform not only individual lives, but also the systems and structures that shape opportunity nationwide.