

Digital Justice Principles

Internet Access, Hardware and Training for Those Most in Need:
In the Spaces Where We Live, Work and Gather

Created by the Philadelphia Digital Justice Coalition

During the summer of 2009, the city of Philadelphia will apply for a broadband stimulus grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Potentially millions of dollars will flow to the city for expanding internet access, hardware and skills training. Members of the Philadelphia Digital Justice Campaign are advocating for and believe that the following principles must frame the city of Philadelphia's broadband proposal.

About 150,000 households—or 27% of all Philadelphians—do not use the internet at all. Of those Philadelphians who do go online, exponentially more do not have internet access at home.

(Based on U.S. Census and Pew Foundation Data)

Principle 1

The city's broadband stimulus grant proposal must prioritize internet access for low-income and disenfranchised city residents.

"I got laid-off from my position as a journalist earlier this year. Applying for other jobs or taking online courses is an incredible challenge because I had to cut back on my expenses and can't afford high-speed internet access."

Gustavo Martinez, South Philadelphia resident

"I work until 7 p.m. and then rush home to make dinner for my 10 year-old daughter. Getting to a public facility to use the internet is not an option for my family."

John Hough, member of Unified Taxi Workers Alliance

Principle 2

The city's broadband stimulus grant proposal must emphasize connectivity to, and hardware in the home.

Principle 3

The city's broadband stimulus grant proposal must encompass a broad definition of digital inclusion. This means supporting initiatives that extend beyond just getting online to include programs that teach residents how to create content and use digital tools that benefit their families and communities.

"I learned video production, made a video about poverty in Philadelphia, and then circulated the video to other high school students on the Web. In the process, I learned I can make a positive impact across the city, region and world."

*Phuong Ninh, High School Student
& member of Philadelphia Student Union*

"Going online after meeting with my caseworker allowed me to follow up on disease-prevention programs she told me about."

*Teresa Sullivan,
Philadelphia FIGHT client and advocate*

Principle 4

The city's broadband stimulus grant proposal must provide funds for computers and other communication technologies in spaces where residents already obtain social services and participate in civic life.