PHLConnectED

August 19, 2020

City of Philadelphia

Problem

- Consistent digital access is essential to participate in education, telehealth, find and maintain employment, access benefits, connect to life-saving information.

- Digital Access is inequitable – with residents of color more likely to be digitally disconnected.

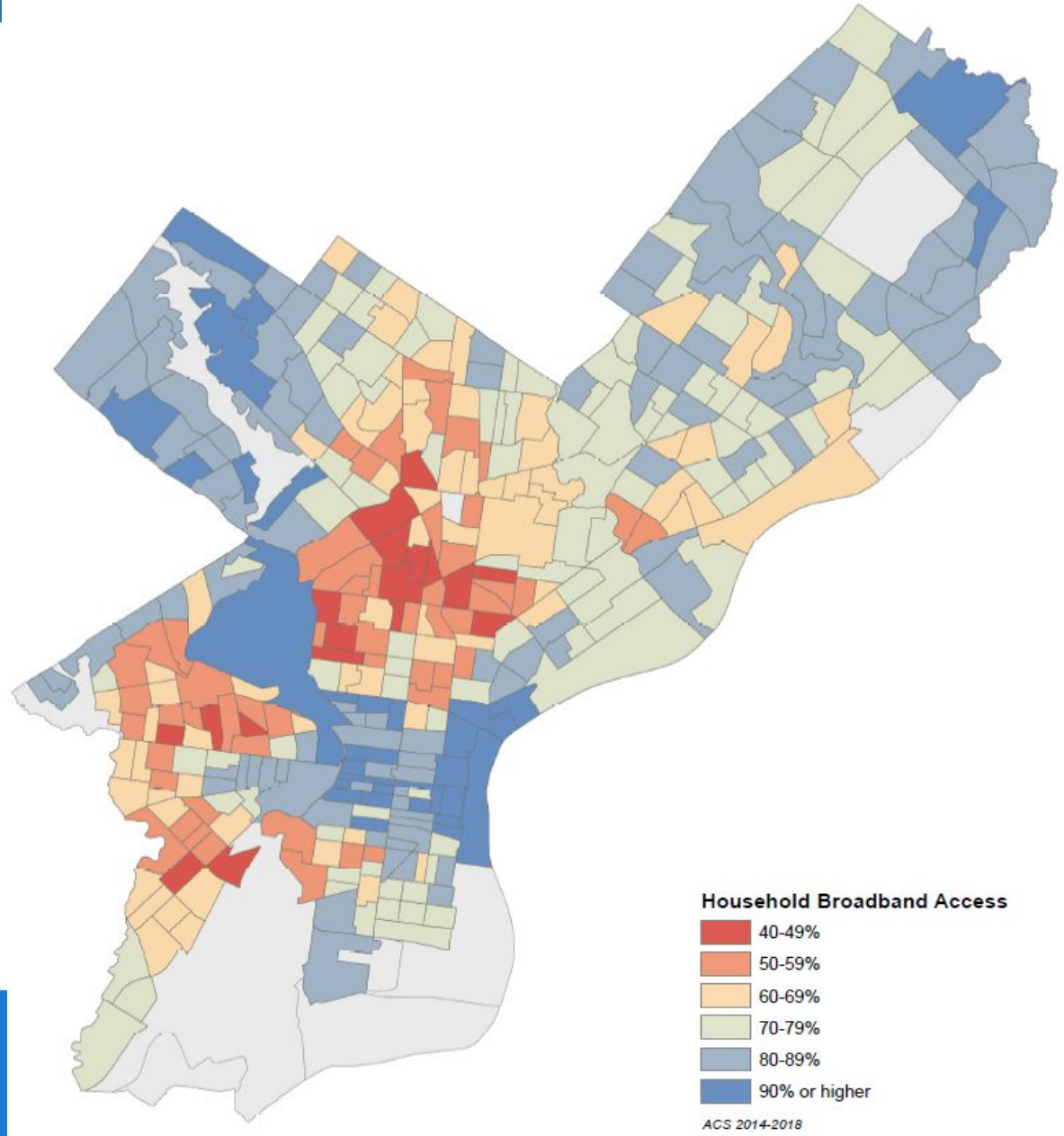
- **An equitable recovery is not possible absent a commitment to address Philadelphia's digital divide**.

Neighborhood and Racial Inequities

50% of black households have broadband Internet at home compared with 74% of white households (Phila Federal Reserve 2020).

30% of K-12 households lack broadband Internet not including smartphone access (US Census 2018).

Income is the strongest determinant of Internet access: 58% of households making under $70,000/yr do not have Internet at home. (US Census 2018).



Three Key Strategies

Our goal is to identify and implement **affordable, simple, and reliable digital solutions** for all residents.

1	Ensuring **K-12 public school students** have consistent access to the technology, internet, and technical support required for remote learning in the Fall of 2020 and beyond.
2	Reimagining **public technology centers** such as KEYSPOTS in the context of a constrained municipal budget, social distancing requirements, and increased in-home access needs for students and families.
3	Providing Philadelphians with **affordable, simple and reliable digital solutions** so they can participate fully in the workforce, education, training, healthcare, public benefits and essential online services.

K-12 Solution: PHLConnectED

Bulk Purchase of Home Wired Internet Solution for all HH without access negotiated by the City

Bulk Purchase of Wifi Hotspots for those who are mobile negotiated by the City

Schools supply devices (laptops, iPads, etc.)

City and Community Orgs assist the LEAs with digital navigation focusing on high-need populations. Establish workforce pathway.

Why This Solution for Philadelphia

1. **Tiered Outreach:** LEAs are most concerned about students without Internet in the fall. As funding is secured, City will need eligibility requirements to maintain and expand beyond K-12 households.

2. **Device Variety:** Schools purchased tablets or preferred device solutions last spring. Managing devices is easier lift for them and can use their CARES act funds to procure.

1. **Household Solution:** The City seeks to support the entire household to enable adults to also access jobs, health care, services and goods.

1. **Wired = More Reliable:** A wired home solution is the most stable, reliable kind of Internet access.

1. **Bulk Purchase:** Requested by LEAs to leverage best pricing and ensure equity of services across students/families at a minimum threshold of broadband speed.

1. **CBO Involvement:** CBOs are local-level family advocates and already doing digital navigation work. CBOs can help the City connect this new program to those that may be hardest to reach.

Internet Access Provisioning: Internet Essentials (Wireline Internet)

WIRELINE INTERNET DEPLOYMENT PROCESS – PROACTIVE APPROACH

1. **PROVIDE ENROLLMENT CODES**
   Comcast provides enrollment codes
2. **ASSIGN AND COMMUNICATE ENROLLMENT CODES**
   SDP assigns codes in SIS and communicates them to students
3. **CONTACT COMCAST**
   Wireline customers need to contact Comcast with enrollment code
4. **HOUSEHOLDS GET DEVICES**
   Comcast ships router and modem to households for wireline internet, if needed
5. **FOLLOW SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS**
   Use instructions to set up internet
6. **SUCCESS**
   Students can successfully use internet for distance learning.

HOUSEHOLD INITIATES CALL

1. **HOUSEHOLDS CALL HOTLINE**
2. **HOTLINE PROVIDES INFO AND DIRECTION**
   Describes program, collects basic information and directs household to the right district or charter school phone number

Needed from Charters:

- Proactively communicate enrollment codes to households
- Update SIS

Pros:

- Reliable access, greater bandwidth for entire household
- Enrollment codes decrease risk of duplication and facilitate data tracking and reconciliation

Cons:

- Comcast is limited to releasing 15,000 enrollment codes per week; mitigate by targeting most at risk households

Pathway to Digital Equity in Philadelphia

Year 1

- ✔ **K-12 Education:** Connect as many students as can from 35,000 to 45,000 families with no access
- ✔ **Digital Navigators:** Build capacity and workforce pipeline – focus on high-need residents
- ✔ Convene and connect to finalize **Citywide Digital Equity Strategy** including state and federal policy plan

- **Estimated Cost: $7.9M - $9.2M**
- ***Mix of philanthropy, Local CARES Act, LEA, state, federal funds***

Year 2

- ✔ **Expand Internet access for additional families without access or in need**
- ✔ **Digital Navigators:** Evaluate and establish as career pathway
- ✔ Reworked **future of computing** centers strategy
- ✔ **Advocacy** at state and federal for long-term solutions

- **Estimated Cost: $6.9 - $8.1M**
- ***Mix of philanthropy, LEA, state, federal funds***

Years 3 - 4

- ✔ **Reliable, affordable Internet access for all Philadelphia residents**
- ✔ **Digital Navigators:** Workforce pathway integrated into tech sector
- ✔ **Diversified internet access infrastructure**
- ✔ **Long-term, sustainable funding and policy solutions realized**

- **Estimated Cost: TBD**
- ***Need long-term corporate ISP/public (local, state and federal) funding solution***

City of
Philadelphia

States and Cities are developing solutions

Working across school district, local government, philanthropy and carriers

State Announcements	
California	• Has a robust public/private fund, universal service that includes a surcharge that supports digital equity work. • The coordinating entity, the California Teleconnect Fund (CTF) program provides 50% discount on the monthly recurring service charge for mobile data services. Schools or districts apply through an online application.
Maryland	• Governor issued an executive order that includes preventing the termination of service by any ISP to its MD customers. • Announced $45.6 million for additional education funding for students affected by the coronavirus pandemic, of which $15.6M will go to technology and Internet access needs.
New Jersey	• Announced that DOE will offer a one-time $10M grant using (CARES) Act ESSER funds. • will redirect up to $44M in (CRF) funds to fill the unmet digital device and internet connectivity needs for students.
City Announcements	
San Antonio	• $27M fund to connect the students in some low-income neighborhoods. • Each student would have a device to connect to the school's fiber network in that neighborhood school.
Chicago	• $23M for years 1-2, $50M over 4 years. • Has collaborative agreements with 2-ISPs, and mobile providers and data sharing with the district to enroll households. • Uses 30 CBOs to provide outreach, digital navigation and digital literacy to help families connect.
NYC	• Announced $157M to fast track broadband Internet to 600,000 New Yorkers with a focus on public housing. • A robust digital equity plan that called for the creation of a municipal network in historically underserved areas.