

DIGITAL EQUITY UPDATES AND NEWS

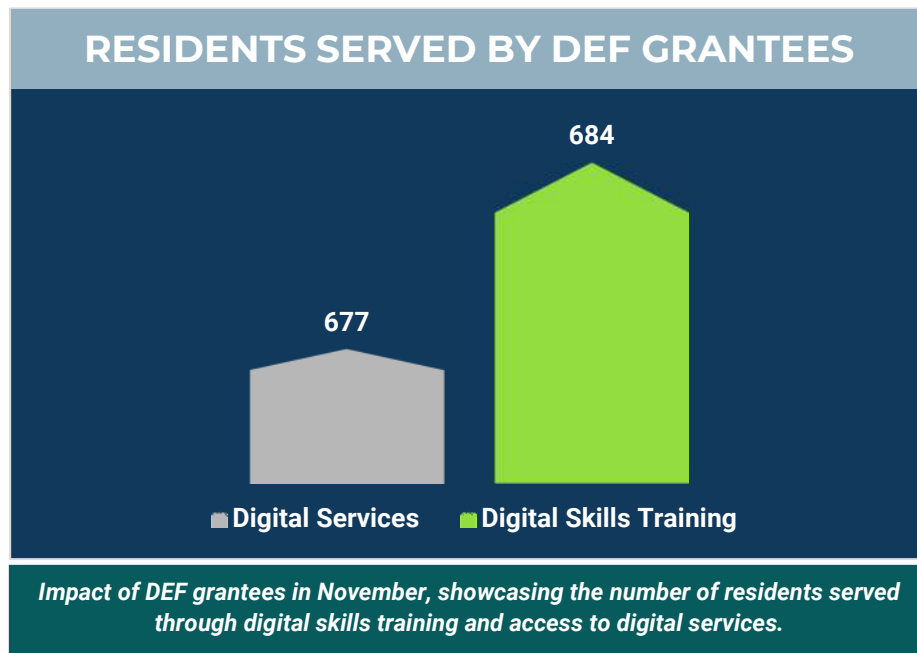


Stay current on what's happening in digital equity in Baltimore City—from programs and initiatives to events. This is the latest information from the Office of Broadband and Digital Equity (BDE), a division of the Baltimore City Office of Information and Technology (BCiT).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Digital Equity Fund: Cycle One Updates

In November, Digital Equity Fund (DEF) grantees contributed significantly to the digital empowerment of Baltimore City residents. Twenty-one DEF grantees collectively provided digital services (access to Wi-Fi and tech devices) and digital skills training to more than 1,300 residents. To learn more about the fund and the grantees, visit [Digital Equity Fund](#).



Digital Literacy Training in Full Swing at Senior Centers

Through a partnership with Enoch Pratt Free library and the Baltimore City Health Department's Division of Aging, digital literacy classes have successfully launched at eight senior centers around Baltimore. Example of digital literacy training topics offered include:

- Introduction to the Internet
- Computer Basics

DIGITAL EQUITY UPDATES AND NEWS

- Cell Phone Basics
- Social Media
- Chromebook and Keyboard Basics
- Staying Safe Online
- Introduction to Google Calendar
- Introduction to Google Docs

Schedule and location details are below.

Senior Center	Schedule	Address	Contact Number
Forest Park Senior Center	Monthly/3 rd Thursdays 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	4801 Liberty Heights Avenue Baltimore, MD 21207	(410) 466-2124
Greenmount Senior Center	Weekly/Tuesdays 12:30 – 2 p.m.	425 E. Federal Street Baltimore, MD 21201	(410) 528-1552
Hatton Senior Center	Monthly/4 th Thursdays 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	2825 Fait Avenue Baltimore, MD 21224	(410) 396-9025
Harford Senior Center	Monthly/2 nd Thursdays 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	4920 Harford Road Baltimore, MD 21224	(410) 426-4009
Oliver Senior Center	Monthly/1 st & 3 rd Mondays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.	1700 N. Gay Street Baltimore, MD 21213	(410) 396-3861
Sandtown-Winchester	Monthly/1 st & 2 nd Thursdays 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.	1600 Baker Street Baltimore, MD 21217	(410) 396-7998
Senior Network of Baltimore	Monthly/4 th Thursdays 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	5828 York Road Baltimore, MD 21212	(410) 323-7131
Zeta Center for Healthy and Active Aging	Monthly/4 th Mondays 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.	4501 Reisterstown Road Baltimore, MD 21215	(410) 396-3535

Have You Checked Out Baltimore City's Digital Inclusion Strategy?

Released December 13, 2023, Baltimore City's Digital Inclusion Strategy aims to further develop Baltimore's digital infrastructure and help residents and businesses harness the power of technology for their benefit and the betterment of Baltimore.

Four actionable goals anchor the strategy and help guide the city's activities and investments in the digital ecosystem.

- **Reliable High-Speed Internet:** Starting with the most underserved communities, Baltimore City residents will have access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet based on investments in future-proof fiber optic networks.
- **Technology and Devices:** Baltimore City residents will be able to get a modern computing device.
- **Digital Skills Training:** Baltimore City residents will have access to digital skills training, helping them use computing devices and safely navigate the internet.

DIGITAL EQUITY UPDATES AND NEWS

- **Technical Support:** Baltimore City residents will receive technical support – in multiple languages – to master internet access and devices.

[Read the full Digital Inclusion Strategy.](#)

INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Affordable Connectivity Program Enters Wind Down

Last month, the Federal Communications Commission announced plans to begin winding down the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) due to the federal government’s uncertainty on continuing ACP funding. The acceptance of new applications and enrollments ended Wednesday, February 7, and the program is expected to last through April 2024.

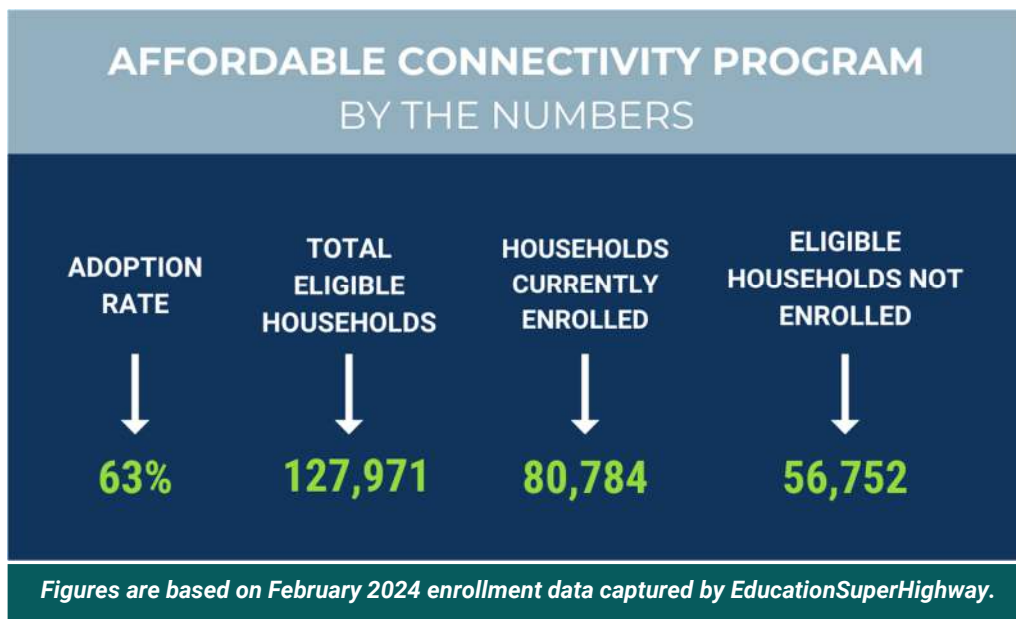
ACP Wind-Down Resources:

- [ACP Wind-Down Fact Sheet](#) | [Hoja informativa sobre el fin del programa ACP](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#) | [Preguntas frecuentes sobre el fin del programa ACP](#)
- [ACP and Lifeline Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- ACP Wind-Down Webinar Slides: [PowerPoint](#) | [PDF](#) (January 18, 2024)

Advocate for ACP Funding

More than 80,000 households in Baltimore City rely on ACP for affordable home internet services. If Congress doesn’t act soon, these household are at risk of losing this very important benefit when funding runs out April 2024. [Find out how you can help save ACP.](#)

ACP By the Numbers in Baltimore City



DIGITAL EQUITY UPDATES AND NEWS

Digital Navigators Coming to a Tech Hub Near You

BCIT partnered with University of Maryland Extension, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP), and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) to provide Digital Navigator Training to 16 BCRP employees. BCRP employees trained as Digital Navigators will have the skills necessary to assist visitors with connecting to the city's free public Wi-Fi network FreeBmoreWiFi, using on-site devices, and taking advantage of digital skills training opportunities.



What's a tech hub?

Tech hubs are community locations (recreation centers and senior centers) with connectivity, devices available for public use, and digital skills training opportunities (accessible in person and online).

[Learn more about tech hubs in our December 2023 issue.](#)

BDE Makes a Splash at Net Inclusion 2024



Earlier this month, members of BCIT's Office of Broadband and Digital Equity (BDE) participated in [Net Inclusion](#)—an annual conference sponsored by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. During a special ceremony at the conference, BDE formally accepted the Visionary Digital Inclusion Trailblazer award on behalf of Baltimore City. The award recognizes municipalities and regional governments for innovative approaches toward closing the digital divide.

BDE also delivered a presentation to conference attendees on the impact of Baltimore City's Digital Equity Fund, and how empowering community-based organizations is vital to narrowing the digital divide. The fund supports the creation of community-led digital inclusion plans and provides funding for communities to bring those plans to life. The fund currently supports 22 Baltimore-based organizations with over 27 digital inclusion projects.



DIGITAL EQUITY UPDATES AND NEWS

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



A Baltimore-based nonprofit, Next One Up (NOU), launched their long-term mentoring program to provide hands-on STEM and digital literacy enrichment courses for 100 young men aged 12-17 in the Baltimore area. Participants engage in a digital literacy curriculum designed to enhance foundational digital literacy skills, as well as instill higher-level coding and digital design knowledge related to 3D printing. Lessons also incorporate discussions on workforce pathways and careers in related fields.

NOU's STEM, Robotics and Digital Literacy Curriculum courses are offered in the evenings, Monday through Thursday, at their Base Camp facility in Belvedere Square.

Additionally, NOU's Base Camp facility is providing high speed and secure Wi-Fi to the NOU community (190 young men) and their family members (up to 600 Baltimore City residents). Young alumni are accessing the space to use Wi-Fi for telework, completing job and college applications, and much more.

For more information about the NOU's mentoring program and how to apply, visit <https://www.nextoneup.org/our-program>. Make sure to connect with NOU on Instagram [@nextoneuporg](https://www.instagram.com/nextoneuporg).

Next One Up is a recipient of a grant from Baltimore City's Digital Equity Fund. The fund supports the creation of community-led digital inclusion plans and provides funding for communities to bring those plans to life. The fund currently supports 22 Baltimore-based organizations with over 27 digital inclusion projects. [Learn more about the Digital Equity Fund grantees.](#)

BROADBAND UPDATES

Baltimore City's free, public Wi-Fi network FreeBmoreWiFi is currently active at Solo Gibbs Recreation Center, Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center, Baltimore Rowing & Water Resource Center, Shake & Bake Family Fun Center, DeWees Recreation Center, and in West Baltimore's Upton neighborhood.

FreeBmoreWiFi at Recreation Centers

By the end of March, FreeBmoreWiFi will go live at the following Baltimore City Recreation and Parks locations. BCIT will announce go-live dates for additional locations in the coming months.

Bentalou Recreation Center	James McHenry Recreation Center
Carrie Murray Nature Center	Lakeland Recreation Center
Cecil Kirk Recreation Center	Madison Square Recreation Center
Curtis Bay Recreation Center	Morell Park Recreation Center
Edgewood-Lyndhurst Recreation Center	William J. Myers Pavilion
Greenmount Recreation Center	

DIGITAL EQUITY UPDATES AND NEWS

FreeBmoreWiFi in the Community

By the end of April, FreeBmoreWiFi will go-live in the following Baltimore neighborhoods. BCIT will announce go-live dates for additional neighborhoods in the coming months.

Belair-Edison (Main Street)	Cherry Hill
Brooklyn	East Baltimore (Neighborhood TBD)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Digital Inclusion Community Meeting (Virtual)

Tuesday, March 12, 2024, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Residents can join members of the BDE team for important updates on programs and resources designed to help residents overcome the digital divide. Topics covered include Baltimore City's Chromebook Distribution Program, the Affordable Connectivity Program, digital skills training opportunities, and much more. [Register now](#).

CONNECT WITH US

Make sure you sign up to receive the bi-monthly update and other digital equity and inclusion news from the Office of Broadband and Digital Equity. [Sign up now](#).

Follow BCIT on these social media platforms:

