

# 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

### Baltimore's Digital Equity Fund Empowers Over 800 Residents through Expanded Digital Access

The Digital Equity Fund is driving meaningful change in the City's digital inclusion ecosystem. By investing in community partners to expand digital access, the fund is helping more than 800 residents take advantage of digital services and resources.

A major success of the fund is its ability to reach residents who are disconnected or only marginally connected to the digital world. Through the efforts of grantees, residents are gaining access to high-speed internet, learning how to navigate online platforms, and receiving devices that enable them to participate fully in today's digital world. This expanded access is opening doors to new opportunities for education, employment, and civic engagement—fostering greater equity and inclusion across Baltimore.



A resident engages with a Digital Equity Fund grantee to learn how to operate a Chromebook. (Photo Credit: BCIT, 2023)

The impact of expanded access is evident in the stories of individuals benefiting from programs supported by the fund. From seniors learning to safely navigate the internet to job seekers gaining the digital skills necessary for today's workforce, the fund is making a tangible difference in the lives of Baltimore residents. By continuing to support and invest in community-driven efforts, the Digital Equity Fund is ensuring Baltimore's digital future is one where everyone can succeed.

In May 2024, [Mayor Brandon M. Scott announced a second round of funding](#). For this second round of funding, Mayor Scott will announce grant recipients this October.

*Launched April 2023, the Digital Equity 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*

## INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

### City’s Chromebook Distribution Program Completes First Round with 30K+ Devices Distributed



Baltimore residents receive a free Chromebook. (Photo Credit: Pratt Library, 2023)

The Baltimore Chromebook Distribution Program successfully completed its first round of distribution, reaching a significant milestone in the City’s efforts to ensure digital access for all residents. In partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library and a host of community partners, 35,000 Chromebooks have been distributed to low-income Baltimore households as of August 2024.

With the first round now complete, the program moves into its second phase of distributing an additional 15,000 devices for a total distribution of 50,000. The Baltimore Chromebook Distribution Program is a crucial component of the City's broader strategy to expand digital access and equity. By

providing residents with the necessary tools to connect to the internet, engage in online learning, apply for jobs, and access essential services, the program is helping to build a more inclusive and connected Baltimore.

Baltimore residents in need a of device, can visit [prattlibrary.org/getadevice](http://prattlibrary.org/getadevice) to learn more about eligibility and qualification requirements and make an appointment at the nearest pickup location.

Residents can get assistance with making an appointment by contacting Marylanders Online at (301) 405-9810.

*In partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore City is distributing 50,000 Chromebooks to eligible households in need of devices. We secured the Chromebooks through a grant from the State of Maryland’s [Connected Devices program](#).*

### Recreation Centers Provide Residents with the Option to Borrow a Device

During operating hours, residents can stop by the following recreation centers to use a Chromebook on site for free. In addition to Chromebooks, tablets are also available for public use.

Recreation Center	Chromebooks Available for Public Use	Address	Contact Number
Bentalou	15	222 N. Bentalou Street Baltimore, MD 21223	(410) 396-0105
Cahill	20	4001 Clifton Avenue Baltimore, MD 21216	(410) 396-0259
Carroll F. Cook	15	5061 E. Eager Street Baltimore, MD 21205	(410) 396-9089
Cecil Kirk	15	909 E. 22 <sup>nd</sup> Street Baltimore, MD	(410) 396-6750
Coldstream	10	1401 Fillmore Street Baltimore, MD 21218	(410) 396-6746
Curtis Bay	20	1630 Filbert Street Baltimore, MD 21226	(410) 396-1811

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Edgewood-Lyndhurst	20	835 Allendale Street Baltimore, MD 21229	(443) 984-3105
Ella Bailey	20	100 E. Heath Street Baltimore, MD 21230	(410) 396-4634
Farring-Baybrook	15	4501 Farring Court Brooklyn, MD 21225	(410) 396-2595
Fred B. Leidig	15	301 S. Beechfield Avenue Baltimore, MD 21229	(410) 396-0073
Greenmount	10	2304 Greenmount Avenue Baltimore, MD 21218	(410) 396-6708
Harlem Park	10	700 N. Calhoun Street Baltimore, MD 21217	(443) 984-1293
Herring Run	10	5001 Sinclair Lane Baltimore, MD 21206	(410) 396-3060
James McHenry	10	911 Hollins Street Baltimore, MD 21223	(410) 396-5016
Locust Point	20	1627 E. Fort Avenue Baltimore, MD 21230	(410) 837-4423
Madison Square	20	1400 E. Biddle Street Baltimore, MD 21213	(410) 396-9284
Medfield	10	1501 Wood Heights Avenue Baltimore, MD 21211	(443) 690-2698
Middle Branch	20	201 Reedbird Avenue Baltimore, MD 21225	(410) 396-9527
Mora Crossman	15	701 Rappolla Street Baltimore, MD 21224	(410) 396-9222
Mount Royal	20	120 W. Mosher Street Baltimore, MD 21217	(410) 396-0374
Northwood	20	1517 Winford Road Baltimore, MD 21239	(410) 396-6696
Rita Church	20	2101 St. Lo Drive Baltimore, MD 21213	(410) 396-8958
Robert C. Marshall	20	1201 Pennsylvania Avenue Baltimore, MD 21202	(410) 396-8490
Roosevelt	15	1221 W. 36 <sup>th</sup> Street Baltimore, MD 21211	(410) 396-6050
Samuel F.B. Morse	10	424 S. Pulaski Street Baltimore, MD 21223	(410) 396-3717
Solo Gibbs	10	1044 Leadenhall Street Baltimore, MD 21230	(410) 837-8172
Towanda	15	4100 Towanda Avenue Baltimore, MD 21215	(443) 984-9763
Upton Boxing Center	10	1901 Pennsylvania Avenue Baltimore, MD 21217	(443) 984-2588
Woodhome	20	7310 Moyer Avenue Baltimore, MD 21234	(410) 396-6703

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*What's the process for borrowing a device at a recreation center?*

- 1. Visit the Front Desk:** Speak with staff at the front desk to start the borrowing process. A valid ID is required, and borrowers must be 12 years or older. Borrowed devices must remain on site.
- 2. Complete Rental Form:** Complete a rental form by submitting name, address, phone number, and email address.
- 3. Review Terms:** Read and accept the rental terms:
  - Each resident can borrow one device for a 2-hour period.
  - Extensions may be possible upon request, depending on availability.
- 4. Receive Device:** Once the rental form is complete, staff will provide residents with a device, charger, and instruction manual.
- 5. Use Device:** Handle the device with care and report any issues to staff immediately. Residents cannot install outside software without prior approval from recreation center staff.
- 6. Return Device:** After the rental session ends, return the device, charger, and instruction manual to the front desk. Staff will inspect the device for damages and issue a receipt to confirm the return.

By borrowing a device, residents agree to comply with all terms and conditions set by Baltimore City Recreation and Parks. Non-compliance may result in penalties or restricted access to future rentals.

## Baltimore City Employees Take Advantage of Digital Skills Program

The City of Baltimore's Department of Human Resources (DHR), in collaboration with the Baltimore City Office of Information and Technology, successfully implemented the City of Baltimore Digital Skills Program. The program equips Baltimore City employees with the foundational computer skills and digital knowledge necessary to thrive both professionally and personally.

The program began as a pilot in June 2023, with a full citywide rollout in October 2023. Since its launch, over 200 Baltimore City employees completed the program. Key Baltimore City agencies, such as the Department of Public Works, the Department of General Services, and Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, received specialized training

To ensure ongoing development, DHR holds training sessions on the fourth Wednesday of every month at the DHR Lab, located at 7 E. Redwood Street, Floor 15. DHR tailors sessions to provide employees with the essential tools and knowledge to navigate the increasingly digital landscape of their work environment.



**Need a Device?**  
**Follow These Easy Steps**

Residents are welcome to borrow a device while visiting a recreation center. Use rented devices to complete homework, search for jobs, access online learning resources, stay connected with family and friends, and more.

- 1. Visit the Front Desk**  
Speak with staff to begin the rental process and present your ID. You must be 12 years or older to borrow a device. Borrowed devices must remain on site.
- 2. Complete Rental Form**  
Enter your information into the kiosk: Name, Address, Phone Number, and Email. Make sure all information is accurate and complete.
- 3. Review Terms**
  - Time Period: 2-hour limit; 1 device per visitor
  - Extension: Possible upon request and subject to availability
- 4. Receive Your Device**  
Devices are issued to visitors by recreation center staff. You'll receive:
  - A device
  - Charger
  - Instruction manual
- 5. Use Your Device**  
Handle your device with care. Software installations are not permitted without prior approval. If you encounter an issue, report it to staff immediately.
- 6. Return Your Device**  
After the allotted time period, return your device, charger, and instruction manual. Staff will inspect the device for damages, confirm return, and issue a receipt for your records.

By borrowing a device, you agree to comply with all terms and conditions set forth by Baltimore City Recreation and Parks. Failure to comply with these terms and conditions may result in penalties or restricted access to future rentals.

 

Residents can reference "Need a Device" posters at recreation centers to begin the rental process.



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## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



This past July, Rebuild Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization (RJSNO) held the grand opening of the Johnston Square Community Computer Lab. A significant project supported by Baltimore City’s Digital Equity Fund, the lab provides residents with access to essential technology and digital literacy programs.

In the presence of Baltimore City leadership, supporters, partners and residents, RJSNO celebrated the opening of the computer lab with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Johnston Square’s Mount Sinai Baptist Church (where the computer lab is located), marking another victory to close Baltimore’s digital divide.

Founded in 2013, RJSNO’s mission is to revitalize Baltimore’s Johnston Square neighborhood by organizing community-driven initiatives focused on cleaning, greening, recreation, education, and public safety.



RJSNO and Mount Sinai Baptist Church staff unveil the Johnston Square Community Computer Lab (Photo Credit: BCIT, 2024)

*Connect with Rebuild Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization*

For more information about RJSNO, visit [rebuildjohnstonsquare.com/events](https://rebuildjohnstonsquare.com/events). Make sure to connect with RJSNO on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

*Rebuild Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization is a recipient of a grant from Baltimore City’s Digital Equity Fund. The fund currently supports 22 Baltimore-based organizations with over 27 digital inclusion projects. [Learn more about the grantees.](#)*

## BROADBAND UPDATES

### Major Milestone Reached with Deployment of FreeBmoreWiFi at Recreation Centers

The Office of Broadband and Digital Equity recently completed deploying free indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi to all currently operational Baltimore City recreation centers. This initiative, part of the City’s efforts to expand its public-facing Wi-Fi network, FreeBmoreWiFi, ensures residents across Baltimore can access reliable internet service. This effort reflects the City’s ongoing commitment to closing the digital divide and fostering equitable neighborhood development.

Baltimore Rowing and Water Resource Center	Lakeland
Bentalou	Locust Point
C.C. Jackson	Madison Square
Cahill	Medfield Park
Carrie Murray Nature Center	Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center

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Carroll F. Cook	Mora Crossman at Joseph Lee
Cecil Kirk	Morrell Park
Coldstream	Mount Royal
Collington Square	Mt. Pleasant Ice Arena
Curtis Bay	Northwood
Cylburn Greenhouse	Patterson Park Community Pool
Cylburn Mansion	Rawlings Conservatory
Cylburn Vollmer Center	Rita Church at Clifton Park
DeWees	Robert C. Marshall
Druid Hill Park Community Pool	Roosevelt
Edgewood-Lyndhurst	Samuel F.B. Morse
Ella Bailey	Shake and Bake Family Fun Center
Farring-Baybrook	Solo Gibbs
Fred B. Leidig	Towanda
Greenmount Rec Center	Upton Boxing Center
Harlem Park	Virginia S. Baker at Patterson Park
Herring Run	William J. Myers Pavilion
James McHenry	Woodhome

*The Casino Building at Patterson Park and the Chick Webb, James D. Gross, and Mary E. Rodman recreation centers are currently undergoing renovations. Free indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi will be available at these locations once renovations are complete.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Digital Inclusion Community Meeting (Virtual)

Tuesday, September 10, 2024, 6 – 7 p.m.

Join members of the BDE team for important updates on programs and resources designed to help residents overcome the digital divide. Topics covered include access to devices, digital skills training opportunities, and much more. [Register now.](#)

### Digital Inclusion Week 2024 (October 7 – 11) Events Hosted by BDE

- **Digital Equity Forum**

Tuesday, October 8, 2024 | 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

J. Millard Tawes Center, Coppin State University, 2500 W. North Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21216

Join us to explore strategies and best practices for achieving digital equity in Baltimore and beyond. Don't miss the chance to engage with Community leaders, policymakers, educators, and technology experts. [Register now.](#)

- **Digital Equity Public Meeting**

Wednesday, October 9, 2024 | 6 – 7 p.m.

Cherry Hill Homes Community Center  
2700 Spelman Road, Baltimore, MD 21225

We invite Baltimore City residents to attend this meeting to discuss challenges navigating the digital divide, share ideas, and learn about resources and programs aimed at improving access

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to technology, internet services, and digital skills training. This meeting is held in partnership with HABC. Registration is not required for this event.

- **Digital Equity Resource Fair**

Friday, October 11, 2024 | 3 – 7 p.m.

Pleasant View Gardens Community Center

201 Aisquith Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

We invite Baltimore City residents and their families to get essential information on how to access free or low-cost internet services, devices, digital skills training, technical support, and more. Registration is not required for this event.

### *What is Digital Inclusion Week?*

Created by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), Digital Inclusion Week is an annual week of awareness, recognition, and celebration. Across the country, organizations and individuals host events and initiatives to showcase the benefits of digital equity and why it matters. To learn more about Digital Inclusion Week, [visit NDIA's website](#).

### **About the Office of Broadband and Digital Equity**

BCIT's Office of Broadband and Digital Equity (BDE), leads the City's efforts to close the digital divide permanently and serves as Baltimore City government's primary liaison with internal and external stakeholders in digital equity. BDE envisions Baltimore as a city where residents can fully participate in the digital ecosystem and have access to devices, technical assistance, digital education, and affordable and reliable internet in the home. For more information about the City's BDE programs and initiatives, email [bde@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:bde@baltimorecity.gov), or call (443) 984-9740.

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