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).

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Digital Equity Fund Round 2 – Call for Applications

Applications are now being accepted for a second round of grants through Baltimore City's Digital Equity Fund. 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.

During this second round of funding, eligible applicants are welcome to apply for funding across three grant categories:

- **Tier 1: Digital Literacy Education Training (up to $200,000)** – Grants will support initiatives under two sub-tiers: Tier 1A – digital literacy education for older adults; Tier 1B – digital literacy education for the wider community in support of tech hubs at recreation centers in underserved areas. Skill areas might include computer basics, using the internet, and digital skills for job seekers.

- **Tier 2: Advanced Digital Education and IT Fundamentals Programming (up to $200,000)** – Grants will support initiatives providing IT fundamental skills training and certification to Baltimore City residents interested in a career in IT. Programming must include opportunities for residents to earn industry-recognized IT certifications. For example, Cisco IT Essentials, including CISCO ITE certification and/or A+ certification, CompTIA IT Fundamentals (ITF+), Net+, and Security+.

- **Tier 3: Digital Creatives and Virtual Makerspaces Programming (up to $200,000)** – Grants will support initiatives providing education and programming for digital creatives and virtual makerspaces at local recreation centers throughout Baltimore City. Grantees can use this tier of funding for classes and workshops for digital creatives, and special events to help develop skills in coding, digital media creation, robotics, video editing, and 3D printing.

Eligible applicants are Baltimore-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations who serve Baltimore residents. Organizations can submit a grant proposal for each grant type. The grant application is open now through **July 14, 2024**. **Learn more and apply now**.

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Missed an Information Session?

You can view materials and video recordings from those sessions using the links below.

- **Digital Literacy and IT Fundamentals**
  May 29, 2024 | **View Slide Deck** (PDF) | **View Video Recording**
  June 11, 2024 | **View Slide Deck** (PDF) | **View Video Recording**

- **Digital Creatives and Virtual Makerspaces**
  May 30, 2024 | **View Slide Deck** (PDF)
  June 12, 2024 | **View Slide Deck** (PDF) | **View Video Recording**

Wellness and Digital Literacy Programs for Older Adults

The Wellness Program connects older adults to healthcare resources and services, ensuring senior centers can help address the digital divide in healthcare access. Currently, the Wellness Program is active at the Harford Senior Center, Oliver Senior Center, and the Enoch Pratt Free Library Central and Penn North locations. During operating hours, older adults can visit these locations on Mondays and Wednesdays for the following wellness services:

- Telehealth education
- General health assessments
- Blood pressure checks
- Medicine education
- Assistance with locating healthcare providers/Referrals for care
- Health education and promotion

Wellness Program by the Numbers

Wellness Program Location	Older Adults Served to Date	Address	Contact Number
Harford Senior Center	204	4920 Harford Road Baltimore, MD 21224	(410) 426-4009
Enoch Pratt Central Library	81	400 Cathedral Street Baltimore, MD 21201	(410) 396-5430
Enoch Pratt Pennsylvania Avenue Branch	96	1531 W. North Avenue Baltimore, MD 21217	(410) 396-0399
Oliver Senior Center	125	1700 N. Gay Street Baltimore, MD 21213	(410) 396-3861
Total	**506**	--	--

The Digital Literacy Training Program equips older adults with essential digital skills for navigating today's technology-driven world. Through patient instruction and hands-on practice, older adults can build confidence in using computers, smartphones, tablets, and the internet for everyday tasks and greater connectivity. Training topics include:

- Introduction to the Internet
- Computer Basics
- Cell Phone Basics

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

Schedule and location details for the Digital Literacy Training Program are below.

Senior Center	Schedule	Address	Contact Number
Forest Park Senior Center	Monthly/3rd Thursday 12 – 1 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/4th Thursday 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	2825 Fait Avenue Baltimore, MD 21224	(410) 396-9025
Harford Senior Center	Monthly/2nd Thursday 12 – 1:30 p.m.	4920 Harford Road Baltimore, MD 21224	(410) 426-4009
Oliver Senior Center	Monthly/1st & 3rd Mondays 10 – 11:30 a.m.	1700 N. Gay Street Baltimore, MD 21213	(410) 396-3861
Sandtown-Winchester Senior Center	Monthly/1st & 2nd Thursdays 10 – 11:30 a.m.	1600 Baker Street Baltimore, MD 21217	(410) 396-7998
Senior Network of Baltimore	Monthly/2nd & 4th Mondays 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. Digital Drop-In Clinic 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	5828 York Road Baltimore, MD 21212	(410) 323-7131
Zeta Center for Healthy and Active Aging	Monthly/2nd & 4th Mondays 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. Digital Drop-In Clinic 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	4501 Reisterstown Road Baltimore, MD 21215	(410) 396-3535

The Wellness and Digital Literacy programs are the result of a partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library and the Baltimore Health Department's Division of Aging. These programs are supported by a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration and help older adults enhance their digital skills and improve health outcomes.

INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

FreeBmoreWiFi Signage in Baltimore's Upton Neighborhood

Recently, BDE installed FreeBmoreWiFi signage in Upton, publicizing a crucial step in the expansion of the City's free public Wi-Fi network.

FreeBmoreWiFi is a cornerstone of Baltimore City's Digital Inclusion Strategy and its broader efforts to promote digital equity and inclusion citywide.

FreeBmoreWiFi signage affixed to a light pole in the Upton neighborhood. (Photo Credit: BCIT, June 2024)

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Why Upton?

The Upton neighborhood, rich in history and culture, is home to a diverse and vibrant community. However, like many of Baltimore's neighborhoods, it faces challenges related to digital access. By placing FreeBmoreWiFi signage in Upton, the city is making a visible commitment to enhancing connectivity in the area and ensuring residents have the tools they need to succeed in today's digital world.

The installation of FreeBmoreWiFi signage in Upton is one way the City is publicizing Wi-Fi availability as it expands the network. Future phases will include 50 recreation centers, some senior centers, select neighborhoods, and all **Baltimore City Main Streets** joining the growing list of connected locations.

Where Are Other Active FreeBmoreWiFi Locations?

Location	Address	Status
Baltimore Rowing & Water Resource Center	3301 Waterview Avenue Baltimore, MD 21230	Active
Bentalou Recreation Center	222 N. Bentalou Street Baltimore, MD 21223	Active
Cahill Recreation Center	4001 Clifton Avenue Baltimore, MD 21216	Active
Cecil Kirk Recreation Center	909 E. 22nd Street Baltimore, MD 21218	Active
Coldstream Recreation Center	1401 Fillmore Street Baltimore, MD 21218	Active
Collington Square Recreation Center	1409 Collington Square Baltimore, MD 21213	Active
Cylburn Arboretum/Mansion/Vollmer Center	4915 Greenspring Avenue Baltimore, MD 21209	Active
DeWees Recreation Center	5501 Ivanhoe Road Baltimore, MD 21212	Active
Druid Hill Park Pool	3002 East Drive Baltimore, MD 21217	Active
Edgewood-Lyndhurst Recreation Center	835 Allendale Street Baltimore, MD 21229	Active
Fred B. Leidig Recreation Center	301 S. Beechfield Avenue Baltimore, MD 21229	Active
Greenmount Recreation Center	2304 Greenmount Avenue Baltimore, MD 21218	Active
Harford Senior Center	4920 Harford Road Baltimore, MD 21214	Active
Harlem Park Recreation Center	700 N. Calhoun Street Baltimore, MD 21217	Active
Hatton Senior Center	2825 Fait Avenue Baltimore, MD 21224	Active
Herring Run Recreation Center	5001 Sinclair Lane Baltimore, MD 21206	Active
James McHenry Recreation Center	911 Hollins Street Baltimore, MD 21223	Active

Lakeland Recreation Center	2921 Stranden Road Baltimore, MD 21230	Active
Madison Square Recreation Center	1400 E. Biddle Street Baltimore, MD 21213	Active
Medfield Recreation Center	1501 Wood Heights Avenue Baltimore, MD 21211	Active
Middle Branch Fitness & Wellness Center	201 Reedbird Avenue Baltimore, MD 21225	Active
Mora Crossman Recreation Center	5900 E. Pratt Street Baltimore, MD 21224	Active
Morrell Park Recreation Center	2651 Tolley Street Baltimore, MD 21230	Active
Mt. Pleasant Ice Arena	6101 Hillen Road Baltimore, MD 21239	Active
Northwood Recreation Center	1517 Winford Road Baltimore, MD 21239	Active
Patterson Park Pool	148 S. Linwood Avenue Baltimore, MD 21224	Active
Samuel F.B. Morse Recreation Center	424 S. Pulaski Street Baltimore, MD 21223	Active
Shake & Bake Family Fun Center/Upton	1601 Pennsylvania Avenue Baltimore, MD 21217	Active
Solo Gibbs Recreation Center	1044 Leadenhall Street Baltimore, MD 21230	Active
Waxter Center for Senior Citizens	1000 Cathedral Street Baltimore, MD 21201	Active
William J. Myers Pavilion	4300 W. Bay Avenue Baltimore, MD 21225	Active
Woodhome Recreation Center	7310 Moyer Avenue Baltimore, MD 21234	Active

Baltimore City Chromebook Distribution Updates

To date, 26,071 Baltimore City households have received a Chromebook through the City's distribution program.

Baltimore residents in need a of device can visit **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. The Chromebooks were secured through a grant from the State of Maryland's **Connected Devices program**.*

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Voices of Digital Equity Podcast Now Airing

Launched April 2024, the *Voices of Digital Equity* podcast hosts experts, community leaders, advocates, and residents as they unravel the complexities of bridging the digital divide in Baltimore. From tackling socio-economic barriers and digital inclusion initiatives to exploring critical resources, each episode is a journey through the landscape of equity in the digital age.

The *Voices of Digital Equity* podcast is available on **Apple Podcasts**, **Spotify**, **iHeart Radio**, **Castbox**, and **Amazon Music**.

New episodes are also available on **technology.baltimorecity.gov**.

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

Released December 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. **Read the full Digital Inclusion Strategy**.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

In collaboration with Byte Back, the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC) successfully connected low-to-moderate income Baltimore residents (especially Black and Latino women) with digital resources. LEDC attributes this success to a multipronged outreach and promotional campaign.

Partnering with O'Hara Development Partners CDC

In 2023, through its Prioritizing Our Women's Economic Rise (POWER) initiative, LEDC partnered with O'Hara Development Partners CDC on its DevelopHER Baltimore Program to address the unique challenges faced by Black and Brown women in the real estate development industry.

Participants in the DevelopHER Program completed a five-month intensive training to strengthen their abilities as community-focused real estate developers and were honored for their achievements at a graduation ceremony held this past May.

Participants of the DevelopHer Program are honored during a graduation ceremony. (Photo Credit: BCIT, May 2024)

Connect with LEDC

For more information on LEDC programs and resources, visit **ledcmetro.org**. Make sure to connect with LEDC on **X/Twitter**, **Instagram**, **Facebook**, **LinkedIn**, and **YouTube**.

Latino Economic Development Center 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

BDE and HABC Partner to Expand Broadband Access to Public Housing

BDE and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) recently broke ground on expanding Baltimore's middle-mile network to HABC locations. Installation of a Fiber Active Cabinet (FAC) is nearing completion at Westport Homes—one of eight priority locations identified by BDE and HABC.

The FAC unit is designed to boost broadband capacity, improve internet speeds, and make high-speed internet more affordable for HABC residents and the surrounding community.

Installation of FAC unit underway at Westport Homes. (Photo Credit: BCIT, May 2024)

Upon installing FAC units to cover all eight priority locations, BDE and HABC will seek proposals from qualified organizations to provide broadband services to residents of those locations.

HABC Priority Locations

HABC Property	Number of Housing Units
Brooklyn Homes	482
Cherry Hill Homes	1,281
Douglass Homes	387
Gilmor Homes	415
Latrobe Homes	669
McCulloh Homes	556
Mt. Winans Homes	52
Westport Homes	200
Total Units	**4,042**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Digital Inclusion Community Meeting (Virtual)
Tuesday, July 9, 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 (October 7 – 13) Events Hosted by BDE

- **Digital Equity Forum**
  October 8, 2024 | 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
  Location TBD

  Community leaders, policymakers, educators, and technology experts will convene to discuss strategies for achieving digital equity. The forum will provide a platform for sharing insights, best practices, and innovative solutions to ensure all individuals have access to digital technologies and the skills needed to use them effectively.

- **Digital Equity Public Meeting**
  October 9, 2024 | Time TBD
  Cherry Hill Homes Community Center
  2700 Spelman Road, Baltimore, MD 21225

  Baltimore City residents are invited to attend this meeting to discuss challenges navigating the digital divide, share ideas, and learn about resources and programs aimed at improving access to technology, internet services, and digital skills training. This meeting in held in partnership with HABC.

- **Digital Equity Resource Fair**
  October 11, 2024 | 3 – 7 p.m.
  201 Aisquith Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

  Baltimore City residents and their families are invited to attend to get essential information on how to access free or low-cost internet services, devices, digital skills training, technical support, and more.

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**.

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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**, or call (443) 984-9740.

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