



# Nashville Digital Inclusion Fund

A community-wide effort is required so that thousands of Nashvillians can realize the full potential of the digital broadband Age, and obtain this benefit through an efficient and well-run program respectful of user dignity and public/private resources. Together hardware and connectivity is the “great equalizer of our time,” as our society’s increasing dependence on the rapid exchange of information makes this essential for the average American to access education, employment opportunities, improved health care, civic engagement, communication and a host of other services. Making access more affordable and available for our community’s citizens is a fundamental tool in the fight to break the cycle of poverty.

## HOW MANY NASHVILLIANS LACK ACCESS?

- 1) According to MNPS in 2012, 44% of Metro School Students do not have access to computers or connectivity at home;
- 2) Connected Nation reports that “for the Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), 54,495 households need assistance to enter the digital age.”

## Serving this population requires access to four things:

hardware, connectivity, training (understanding how to find and use online tools relevant to the specific user) and support. And it must be done respectfully and efficiently by leveraging new technology as well as long-term communal stakeholders including local nonprofits, religious institutions, schools, and governmental entities.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- This fills in the cracks of the “IT” city for those who believe they aren’t getting “IT.”
- This is the next logical extension of Economic Development: creating a workforce trained and equipped for today’s jobs and tomorrow’s rather than importing talent.
- Few things can re-engage a young person who has been disengaged from school or dropped out. The influence of a great teacher willing and able to invest time in that kid is one. The other is technology’s ability to light a spark, broaden options, and extend someone’s view of an attainable future.
- The positive implications for Public Education and for Public Safety are staggering.
- Just as our parents needed sewers, roads, and electricity, our kids need an infrastructure redefined to include connectivity.

## The populations we seek to reach include:

**Children:** from cradle to career

**Youth:** giving those who may have dropped out or underperformed a second chance

**New Americans:** giving them the tools to navigate and to succeed

**Unemployed and Underemployed Nashvillians:** helping them access job skills, job training and employment

**Seniors:** helping to diminish isolation, strengthen family ties, broaden horizons, access help and access opportunities to help

**Medically fragile:** giving them access to records and improved communication with medical support/services

**Incarcerated individuals:** helping them prepare to re-enter the workforce with access to job skills such as coding, logistics management, etc.