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Los Angeles public housing residents to receive digital literacy training, low-cost computers and WiFi access

By Amy Stewart posted on August 1, 2013 in News

The California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) is investing $300,000 with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and non-profit organizations to develop a model to connect Los Angeles public housing residents to WiFi, provide bilingual digital literacy training and offer low-cost computers to residents, according to a press release.

The program, called the Smart Housing Pilot Partnership, will attempt to lower the digital divide among low-income Californians in Los Angeles public housing. Four in ten Latinos, households earning less than $40,000 per year and people with disabilities do not have broadband at home, according to the Public Policy Institute of California.

"There is ample evidence that broadband empowers people and transforms lives in compelling ways," said Sunne Wright McPeak, president and CEO of CETF in the announcement. "In 21st Century California, it's simply not acceptable that so many public housing communities still do not have broadband network, and we urge our state leaders to act to change that."

CETF and HACLA, as well as other advocates for public housing, are supporting pending legislation SB 740 and AB 1299, which have goals of providing broadband access to 98 percent of California households by Dec. 31, 2015, and to establish the Broadband Public Housing Account within the California Advanced Services Fund to allow $25 million to be available for grants and loans to public housing communities to install broadband and provide computer skills training to residents.

The Smart Housing Pilot Partnership will implement full services at two Los Angeles public housing locations: Mar Vista Gardens, a 600-unit complex which will provide free Internet access, bilingual computer skills training and low-cost computers and laptops; and Jordan Downs, which will receive computer skills training and devices.

"The way we teach our children, conduct business at work, and communicate with each other is undeniably connected with having access to the Internet," said Douglas Guthrie, President and CEO of HACLA. "We must ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to benefit from these tools."

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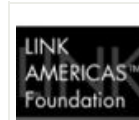
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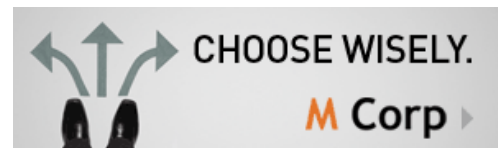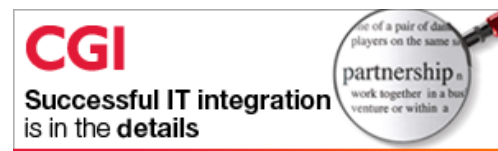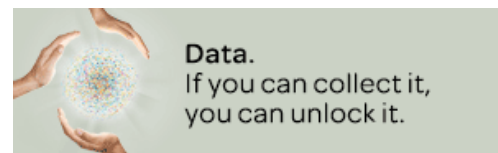AUGUST 2, 2013

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