

## **About the Award**

Around **15 percent of US households**—or approximately 50 million Americans—don't have internet in their homes. Families affected by the digital divide, many of whom are from lower income neighborhoods, are at a disadvantage when it comes to doing homework, applying for jobs, or staying in touch with loved ones. Whether cities are leading or partnering on programs, city leaders have a major role to play in getting residents the digital access and resources they need. We want to celebrate the cities that are leading programs or empowering community-based organizations to tackle barriers to Internet adoption. At the same time we hope to encourage leaders in the public sector to get involved in digital inclusion by sharing best practices.

City governments across the country are collaborating with nonprofits and private sector partners to help bridge the digital divide and get more Americans online. In order to celebrate outstanding leadership and encourage innovative approaches to bridging the digital divide, we've launched the Digital Inclusion Leadership Awards Program. The awards program includes:

- *Leader in Digital Inclusion Best Practices*: for existing programs with over a year of work in addressing the digital divide.
- *Most Promising New Plan*: for particularly promising new programs for ensuring digital inclusion in a community.

Two winners in each category will be chosen on the basis of a program's ability to provide training, access, and hardware to a diverse range of participants, at low cost, with proven results and community engagement. In addition, one program in each category will be recognized for a particularly innovative approach.

Learn about our judges [here](#).

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Which communities have won in the past?**

The 2015 winners include Philadelphia, PA, Seattle, WA, Davidson, NC, Austin, TX, Chattanooga, TN and Washington, DC. You can learn more about previous winners and their projects [here](#).

**Do I need to be a city government or represent a city government to apply?**

We will only accept applications from city employees. To be considered the program or plan must involve the city as a prominent player or partner.

**Can I apply for both awards?**

Yes! You can apply to both awards if you have programs or plans that fit the criteria.

**Can I reapply if my community has already won?**

Previous winners can re-apply, but must do so using different projects. Communities that submit projects which were already part of a winning application will be not be considered.

**Can I reapply if my project didn't win last year?**

Yes, we encourage all interested communities to apply.

**Do I have to be a member of Next Century Cities or a Google Fiber city to apply?**

No, all cities and counties in the United States are eligible and welcome to apply.

**When and where will awards be presented?**

Awards will be announced in the spring of 2017. More details will be announced closer to the award presentation.

**What will the award include, exactly?**

This is a recognition award that celebrates leadership and innovative thinking in addressing digital equity. Each award-winning city will receive two paid flights and hotel rooms for the award presentation in early spring.

**Where can I find more information about digital inclusion?**

There are some great resources to learn more about digital inclusion. Here are a few:

- [Recommended actions for city governments](#)
- [The state of the digital divide in the US](#)
- [A surprising number of Americans still don't have internet access](#)

- [Building Digital Communities: A Framework for Action](#)
- [Opportunity for All? Technology and Learning in Lower Income Families](#)
- [2015 Pew Broadband Report](#)
- [Pew: Limits of smartphones in closing the digital divide](#)
- [Pew: Might “digital readiness” be a better way think about the digital divide.](#)

### **Can a county apply?**

Yes, a city or a county is eligible.

### **Who is on the panel of judges?**

We will have nine total judges. Next Century Cities and Google Fiber will both provide digital inclusion or broadband adoption experts. Find a full list of judges [here](#).