



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing Council's Committee on Technology and Information Services to hold hearings on the feasibility of installing free and public Wi-Fi kiosks throughout the City.

WHEREAS, High-speed Internet access is widely recognized as a necessity for full participation in today's society. Employers, educators, businesses, healthcare providers, and civic institutions expect people to have access to computers and broadband connectivity; and

WHEREAS Philadelphia has the third-worst broadband penetration rate of the top 25 largest cities in the United States. As a consequence, accessible, reliable, and affordable broadband service continues to be out of reach for thousands of City residents; and

WHEREAS, This gap in access to high-speed Internet and the lack of skills needed to use broadband-enabled tools continue to exacerbate issues of income inequality and basic fairness. Left unaddressed, millions of low-income Americans lack basic digital skills that will make them unqualified for well-paying jobs; and

WHEREAS, Public computing centers, which provide free PC and internet access to the community, increase computer literacy, education and digital citizenship among people in urban communities; and

WHEREAS, In February 2016 New York City launched the LinkNYC Program, which transforms old payphones into Wi-Fi kiosks, called "Links," to create the world's largest and fastest free public Wi-Fi network. Links provide a secure and private Wi-Fi network with a 150-foot radius, free domestic calling, two USB charging ports, a tablet for accessing the internet, and a red 911 button to contact emergency services. Overall, at least at 7,500 Links-and as many as 10,000-will be installed across the five boroughs, generating more than \$500 million in ad revenue for the city; and

WHEREAS, Many of Philadelphia's existing digital inclusion programs coordinate themselves into the U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program proposals. In addition, the City has committed to continuing funding for a portion of the Philadelphia Freedom Rings Keypoints, a Citywide initiative that gives citizens access to public computer centers at over fifty different locations; and

WHEREAS, It is critical that the City continue to expand its efforts at digital inclusion and consider innovate ways to level the playing field and provide every Philadelphian with access to the most important tool of the 21st century; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, that Council's Committee on Technology and Information Services hold hearings on the feasibility of installing free and public Wi-Fi kiosks throughout the City.