



Legislation Text

File #: 160936, **Version:** 0

Authorizing Council's Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to hold hearings on the feasibility of the Free Library of Philadelphia offering free mobile wi-fi hotspot access to its cardholders.

WHEREAS, High speed quality Internet broadband is becoming a necessity to be successful in today's world--whether applying for a job, completing a homework assignment or paying a bill, one needs access to the Internet. The Pew Research Center on Internet and American Life Project reported in 2013 that 30% of US households were without broadband internet access. That percentage more than doubles in some low-income communities; and

WHEREAS, Far too many Philadelphia residents do not have regular access to the Internet, and as a result find themselves excluded from a wealth of education, employment and community resources; and

WHEREAS, The role of libraries has always been the effective dissemination and circulation of knowledge and information. With the advent and widespread use of the internet, they have been expanding their methods for providing its cardholders with such information; and

WHEREAS, Library systems throughout the country are increasingly lending out mobile hotspots to allow their cardholders to access unlimited high-speed Internet service. These programs are currently underway in libraries, large and small, including, but not limited to New York (in all five boroughs), Chicago, Seattle, St. Paul, Minnesota, Denver, Colorado, Westerville, Ohio, Erie County, Pennsylvania and Chester, Pennsylvania. Typically lending periods are 21 days, but the Brooklyn Public Library, along with branches of the New York Public Library and Queens Library, will loan mobile hot spot devices to cardholders to provide free Internet for up to one year; and

WHEREAS, Loaning mobile hotspots is available to any person who has a Smartphone, tablet or other computer type but many libraries will also loan out these devices as well; and

WHEREAS, While the Philadelphia Free Library does offer free wi-fi access inside their library buildings and some annex locations in a few neighborhoods, they have not as yet developed a program for mobile wi-fi hotspot loans; and

WHEREAS, In order to overcome the increasing digital divide between those who can afford high speed broadband internet service and those who do not, it is critical that public institutions, and in particular the Free Library of Philadelphia do its part by creating access though hotspot wi-fi mobile loan programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes Council's Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to hold hearings on the feasibility of the Free Library of Philadelphia offering free mobile wi-fi hotspot access to its cardholders.