



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY OF CHICAGO RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE NATION'S DIGITAL INCLUSION
TRAILBLAZERS FOR THE THIRD YEAR**

Chicago is one of 34 communities awarded the prestigious Visionary Trailblazer designation

CHICAGO – The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) named the City of Chicago as a [2024 Digital Inclusion Visionary Trailblazer](#). This national program recognizes the city's efforts to close the digital divide.

Recognizing the array of interests and unique barriers of its community members, Chicago joins a record number of Digital Inclusion Trailblazers this year. NDIA awarded a total of 60 awardees representing municipal, county, and regional governments, paving the way for digitally inclusive communities across the US.

Chicago was named a Visionary Trailblazer for deeply integrating digital inclusion across city governance and leading the way in digital inclusion innovation. Chicago is one of 34 communities across the US to be given this prestigious designation.

In an increasingly connected society, digital inclusion—access to affordable high-speed internet, devices, and digital skills training—is essential not only to participate in today's world but also to finding greater opportunities to thrive using tools to navigate the internet confidently and independently.

"Reliable and affordable home internet, paired with the digital skills to use it effectively, is fundamental to ensuring all Chicagoans can thrive in today's economy," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "My administration is deeply committed to making Chicago the most connected city in the country and I am honored that our steadfast dedication to this pressing issue has resulted in our city being named a Visionary Trailblazer."

"In the past decade, we've seen local governments step into the important role of building digital inclusion ecosystems, where organizations that provide services can connect and

thrive,” said **Angela Siefer, NDIA executive director**. “NDIA’s Digital Inclusion Trailblazers celebrates these critical efforts to bring digital opportunities to all residents.”

"Home internet access is no longer a novelty—it is a necessity that drives our economy and connects every aspect of our lives," said **Christian Taylor, Director of Digital Equity**.

"NDIA’s acknowledgement of our work, for a third year in a row, confirms that we are leaders in this space. Our investments in people and community-building are helping to move the needle, directly addressing disparities in connectivity on our South and West sides”

Trailblazers provide models for other local governments to aspire to as communities build digital inclusion ecosystems. The City of Chicago achieved Visionary Trailblazer status by prioritizing digital inclusion for residents of their communities through:

- Extending the Chicago Connected program for pre-K through 12 Chicago Public Schools students, providing no-cost broadband access to over 40,000 students this academic year.
- Releasing the City of Chicago Neighborhood Broadband Request for Proposal, which will connect more households to reliable home internet while leveraging partnerships with experienced community-based organizations to deliver critical digital skills training for residents most impacted by the digital divide.
- Staffing the Chicago Digital Equity Coalition, which provides meaningful, consistent, and robust engagement with lived experts and communities impacted by the digital divide.
- Collaboration with local non-profit organizations to collect, wipe, refurbish, and distribute 2,000 laptops, desktops, and tablets to Chicagoans.

NDIA’s Digital Inclusion Trailblazers has set the national standard for excellent digital inclusion work since 2016. Each applicant’s materials are verified for accuracy, assessed for community impact, and posted in an interactive map and searchable database on NDIA’s website. By sharing materials with open sourcing, NDIA provides community advocates and local governments ways to continue learning, connect with trailblazing peers, and plan their own digital inclusion solutions.

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About National Digital Inclusion Alliance: NDIA advances digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act. Working collaboratively with more than 1,900 digital inclusion practitioners, NDIA advocates for equitable broadband access, tech devices, digital skills training, and tech support. For more information, visit digitalinclusion.org.