

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1-22

ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIGITAL EQUITY POLICY

WHEREAS, digital equity means that all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in society, democracy and the economy;

WHEREAS, Philadelphia residents in historically underserved communities have unequal access to computers, broadband internet, and the digital skills required for work and life;

WHEREAS, Black and Hispanic households are less likely to have access to home broadband or a working device;

WHEREAS, as of July 2021, 16% of all Philadelphia households lack high-speed, broadband internet service, 19% of Philadelphia households lack a working desktop, laptop, or tablet, and nearly one-third of Philadelphia workers have limited or no digital skills;

WHEREAS, students without home internet access and those who rely solely on a mobile device for internet spend more time on their homework, have lower grade point averages, and have weaker digital skills;

WHEREAS, digital equity in cities has become a critical priority for local government to ensure residents can participate in their education, healthcare, and the workforce;

WHEREAS, digital equity can be advanced through the strategic deployment of resources, initiatives, and public policy;

WHEREAS, Philadelphia should establish and formalize its capacity within the Office of Innovation & Technology for addressing and advancing digital equity;

WHEREAS, Philadelphia will release a comprehensive Digital Equity Plan to be managed and coordinated by the Office of Innovation & Technology; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, James Kenney, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, by the powers vested in me by the Home Rule Charter, do hereby ORDER as follows:

SECTION 1. DIGITAL EQUITY POLICY

All City departments and agencies shall, in connection with digital access and literacy initiatives:

A. Utilize City assets and infrastructure to develop accessible and reliable digital solutions for Philadelphia residents;

B. Leverage public, private, philanthropic, and community interests and resources to coordinate public access to computers, broadband internet, and digital literacy programming; and

C. Prioritize addressing inequities in digital access and literacy, with a focus on the resource needs of residents of color and high-poverty neighborhoods.

Efforts to advance these goals, as set forth in the Digital Equity Plan for Philadelphia, shall be considered the City's "Digital Equity Policy."

SECTION 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL EQUITY POLICY

All City departments and agencies shall make the Digital Equity Policy an integral part of their planning and programming wherever practical. Examples of how the Digital Equity Policy may be implemented include, but are not limited to:

A. Supporting existing digital equity initiatives, including the Digital Literacy Alliance and PHLConnectED.

B. Expanding digital opportunities for Philadelphia residents through existing departmental programs, including the public computing centers and digital literacy programs administered by the Office of Children and Families, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and Parks and Recreation.

C. Collaborating with City departments and offices, local institutions, and other stakeholders on nascent initiatives and programs to promote digital access and literacy in pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary institutions, public computing centers, and Philadelphia households.

D. Working to identify potential funding and/or policy opportunities (local, state, federal) to support Philadelphia's digital equity needs.

E. Utilizing City infrastructure to incentivize the growth of commercial and non-profit entities and services that make high-quality broadband, computing devices and digital literacy programs available to the public at low or no cost.

F. Advancing elements of the Digital Equity Plan by coordinating and partnering with the Digital Equity Team within the Office of Innovation & Technology, which currently consists of a Deputy Chief Information Officer, a Digital Inclusion Manager, and a PHLConnectED Program Manager.

SECTION 3. COOPERATION

A. The Digital Equity Team within the Office of Innovation & Technology shall provide guidance to all City departments and agencies regarding compliance with Section 2 of this Order and shall facilitate collaboration with local institutions and other stakeholders to guide the City's digital equity work.

B. All City departments, agencies, boards, and commissions shall coordinate with the Office of Innovation & Technology on implementation of, and collaboration on, strategy related to the City's Digital Equity Policy. All City departments, agencies, boards, and commissions shall also provide the Office of Innovation & Technology any information and/or assistance it may require with respect to the operations and infrastructure of City government. The provision of such information shall not lead to disclosure of any confidential information concerning individuals by the City, the disclosure of which is protected by local, state, federal, or foreign law and regulations.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This order shall take effect immediately.

2-9-2022
Date

James F. Kenney
James F. Kenney, Mayor