



New program connects housing projects to Internet

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Christian Sanchez, right, and his mother, Patty Sanchez and his sister, Lisette Mares discuss the importance of having Internet access in their Estrada Courts home. (Photo by Mario Villegas)

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AT&T, California Emerging Technology Fund, Christian Sanchez, ConnectHome, digital divide, Estrada Courts, Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, Mayor Eric Garcetti, Secretary Julian Castro, Sunne Wright McPeak, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

BOYLE HEIGHTS — A major commitment from AT&T will bolster the ConnectHome initiative's drive to close the digital divide for low-income families through a low-cost broadband program.

Access from AT&T, a public-private effort, will help connect families living in public housing projects to low-cost Internet service.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and local elected officials were on hand Sept. 7 to formally announce AT&T becoming a national stakeholder at Estrada Courts, the public housing project in Boyle Heights.

ConnectHome is an initiative to extend affordable broadband access to families living in assisted housing units. Through ConnectHome, Internet service providers, nonprofits and the private sector are offering broadband access, technical training, digital literacy programs and devices for residents in assisted housing units in communities across the nation.

Castro said the Internet is not a luxury, but rather a necessity that helps youths compete.



*U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro, right, and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti were promoting ConnectHome initiative that seeks connect more families to low-cost Internet service.
(Photo by Mario Villegas)*

“By expanding access to Internet, ConnectHome is providing families the tools they need to be competitive in this 21st century global economy,” Castro said. “Through this new collaboration, HUD and AT&T are taking an important step to narrow the digital divide and ensure the opportunity for our nation’s children.”

Christian Sanchez, a student at Los Angeles Trade Technical College, lived with his parents and younger sister and brother in an Estrada Courts’ unit without Internet service for nearly a year because the family couldn’t afford it. The family is back online thanks to AT&T’s new affordable rate.

Over the next year, AT&T will host 30 events across 15 ConnectHome pilot communities located within its wireline service area. The events will help inform HUD-assisted homes about Access from AT&T.

Households that qualify for Access from AT&T will get the fastest of three speed tiers — 10Mbps, 5 Mbps or 3Mbps — available at their address. Internet speeds provided at 10Mbps and 5Mbps will cost \$10 a month,

and Internet speeds at 3MBps will cost \$5 a month. AT&T will also waive installation and Internet equipment fees for participating households. Additional taxes and fees will apply.

“We are bringing affordable service to residents who need it the most,” Garcetti said. “We need to make sure that we see the next Mark Zuckerberg coming out of Boyle Heights or South L.A.”

The California Emerging Technology Fund, a nonprofit corporation, is leading the ConnectHome California initiative in collaboration with HUD and national nonprofit partner EveryoneOn to ensure the success of the programs in California.

CETF has committed \$50,000 to the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and also has secured opportunities to utilize its existing grantees and programs.

“The California Emerging Technology Fund is very pleased to see that the housing authority and HUD are enthusiastically embracing the need for all residents in public housing to be online,” Sunne Wright McPeak, California Emerging Technology Fund chief executive officer said. “We commend their commitment and leadership. This is why CETF provided the seed capital to the housing authority and matching funds to HUD’s ConnectHome to launch this work.”