

# National non-profit partners with California organizations to increase broadband adoption and digital literacy in Los Angeles

By Amy Stewart posted on April 29, 2013 in News

Washington D.C. based non-profit organization Connect2Compete is partnering with the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) and the Youth Policy Institute (YPI) to increase broadband adoption and digital literacy in California, the three organizations jointly announced today.

"The Digital Divide is solvable, but no one organization can do it alone," said Zach Leverenz, CEO of Connect2Compete in a press release. "It takes local partners who have built trust and personal relationships within the community to help make the value of being online real for people."

CETF estimates that 880,000 households in California lack broadband access, which is approximately three million people. According to CETF, California broadband adoption has increased from 55 percent to 73 percent, particularly among households earning less than \$40,000, Latino families and people with disabilities, though their averages are still lower than the state average.

Connect2Compete is a national nonprofit organization that secures discounted high-speed Internet and lower-cost computers for the 100 million Americans who are unconnected to the Internet. To drive awareness, the group has launched a three year Ad Council campaign on digital inclusion, the first of its kind at EveryoneOn.org. Connect2Compete was launched as a program of the Federal Communications Commission in 2011, but is now an independent, non-profit organization as of mid-2012. Three key partners have funded the group: The Knight Foundation, Carlos Slim Foundation, and the Wasserman Foundation. Other national partners include Comcast, Cox, FreedomPop, Microsoft and Arrow Electronics, Inc. The group offers low cost computers, discounted high speed access from partner broadband providers for low income persons, and free digital literacy training.

Founded by the California Public Utilities Commission in 2006 with \$60 million donated by AT&T and Verizon relating to merger activity, CETF is a non-profit organization based in San Francisco that works statewide to speed deployment and adoption of broadband to unserved and underserved communities. CETF has been particularly active in digital literacy and broadband adoption programs for rural, low income, non-English speaking and people with disabilities. CETF has received Broadband American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants, in addition to making grants from its funds to community programs where broadband adoption is low.

"Today's announcement recognizes the importance and value of engaging partners who are actively working to inform public policy and leverage more resources to close the Digital Divide in California and the nation," said CETF President and CEO Sunne Wright McPeak in a statement. "Together, we intend to ensure that all Californians have the necessary skills and affordable tools to get connected and succeed."

A prior grantee of CETF funds for broadband adoption program, YPI is a California non-profit organization that operates 80 computer centers in Los Angeles and provides digital literacy training in schools, community centers and public housing centers. More than 20,000 clients use YPI computer centers every week, with 100,000 clients served over the year.

"In Los Angeles, we want to reach 750,000 people who do not have broadband at home," said YPI Executive Director Dixon Slingerland. "YPI is excited about this partnership, which will allow us to expand our reach within Los Angeles."

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