

# The Gift of Connectivity: Latino Foundations Rally To Close the Digital Divide This Season and Beyond

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(Photo : Latino Community Foundation)

For some in the Latino community in California, all they want for Christmas is the ability to access the internet. Though the digital divide is slowly closing, many low-income Latinos are being left out, which is why a couple of organizations in California are taking action this season to help close the gap.

It's well known that having a connection to the internet opens doors - among many are the doors to education, employment, vast libraries of free information about almost anything, business opportunities, computer knowhow for the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, inexpensive communication with family and friends regardless of distance, and simply the empowerment of expression and connection to communities, both local and global.

But being connected to the internet can be relatively expensive, especially if you don't own the prerequisite equipment to join the web in the first place. That's why a partnership of organizations is giving computers and connecting low-income Latino families in California's Bay Area.

The Chicana/Latina Foundation, in partnership with the Latino Community Foundation in San Francisco, has a new fundraising campaign called "Unleash Great Minds: Give the Gift of Technology - Holiday Campaign" as part of the "Get Latinos Connected" initiative this holiday

season to help bridge the digital divide for mostly Spanish-speaking, low-income Latino families in the community.

The partnership has been working since 2010, and has provided 1,443 Latino households with home-based broadband internet, as well as providing 1,076 families with a computer and training more than 7,500 uninitiated, low-income monolingual Latinos with basic computer skills.

To further expand their efforts, the groups have received a grant from the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) and are additionally hosting a crowd-funding campaign [on IndieGoGo until the end of this year](#). Each \$125 donation will provide a refurbished laptop to a low-income family, which in return, will pledge to get Internet access at home and attend computer literacy classes. If the crowd-funding campaign reaches \$15,000, the CETF will match each donation, dollar for dollar, for a total of \$30,000.

That's a lot of low-cost internet-ready computers. Indeed, the partnered foundations hope to connect more than 3,330 families to the internet by 2015.

The digital divide continues to affect many - especially in the Latino community. According to the Latino Community Foundation, the most [recent Public Policy Institute of California survey](#) says only 52 percent of Latino households have broadband at home. Since Latino children comprise more than 51 percent of kids in California's school system, one in four kids in California do not have modern internet access at home, and half of Latino children.

The statistics reflect a broader divide throughout the country, where a [Pew Internet and American Life Poll this year found](#) that only 53 percent of Hispanic families have broadband at home. And while smartphones are very popular among Latinos and may bridge the gap a little, students can't effectively do homework on a 4-inch screen.

Statistics further show that those who are lower income, foreign-born, and Spanish-speaking are more likely than others to have a home internet connection. That group - who are living with one of the most affluent, connected communities right nearby in Silicon Valley - is the precise target of the Chicana/Latina Foundation and the Latino Community Foundation. To spread Holiday cheer and help Latinos get connected, [check out the IndieGoGo Gift of Technology campaign, which expires on Dec. 31](#), and visit [the Latino Community Foundation for more information](#).