

INVESTMENT CONNECTION

Community Development Investment & Lending Partnership

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Investment Connection Online Proposal

This proposal is one of numerous submissions housed in the applicant portal.
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Digital Inclusion Initiative for Baltimore

Primary Contact	Kelly Hodge-Williams
Title	Director of PCs for People Baltimore
Email Address	khodgew@pcsforpeople.com
Phone	410-207-7455
Name of organization	PCs for People
Mission statement	Through electronic reuse PCs for People provides the opportunity for all low-income individuals and nonprofits to benefit from the life changing impact of computers and mobile internet.
Overview of organization	<p>In recent decades, technology and broadband has transformed our personal lives, how we do business and the economy at large. Access to a computer and broadband has become essential to make progress in all areas of community and economic development education, workforce development, health, housing, small-business development and access to financial services. Yet computer ownership and broadband access continue to lag behind for low-income communities. This gap in ownership is referred to as the digital divide which is leading to further economic, social and political disparities for low-income populations.</p> <p>Founded in 1998 in St. Paul, MN, PCs for People has been leading efforts to close the digital divide by providing low-cost computers, affordable wireless internet, and digital literacy education to low-income families. All of our customers are people living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, who have a disability, or who are currently enrolled in a government assistance program. While having a computer and internet access is a necessity for pursuing education, job opportunities, and otherwise connecting in today's digital world, the cost of technology as well as physical barriers such as lack of broadband in the home prevents economically and geographically marginalized individuals and communities from fully connecting. Simply providing computers and Internet access for those who currently lack these tools removes significant barriers to economic and social mobility.</p> <p>PCs for People's model is a self-sustainable social enterprise. We provide our affordable technology through on location events, an online sales platform, and physical retail locations. Prices start at \$30 for desktops and \$50 for laptops. While these price points are affordable for many low-income</p>

Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

Investment Connection Online Proposal

	<p>individuals, we are able to provide free desktop computers for those who cannot afford them through subsidized voucher programs supported by contributions from foundations, individuals and corporations. As an organization we operate on about 90% earned income and 10% from contributions. Since our inception we have distributed more than 85,000 computers that support 300,000 people, subscribed 38,000+ families to low cost internet, provided digital literacy training to thousands, and recycled 4+ million pounds of electronics.</p>
Website	www.pcsforpeople.org
State where proposal is located	Maryland
Proposal title	Digital Inclusion Initiative for Baltimore
Support request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment/Grant
Requested amount	\$150,000
Other significant partners in the proposal	<p>Significant partners include Robert W. Deutsch Foundation, Baltimore City Public Schools and Baltimore Housing Authority. In addition we will be working with Byte Back, Media Democracy Fund, BUILD's TurnAround Tuesday program, Digital Harbor Foundation and Libraries without Borders on workforce development and digital literacy training. And we are continuing to build partnerships that will strengthen our capacity and allow us to serve the most people.</p>
Proposal narrative	<p>Over the last twenty years, PCs for People has created a self-sustaining social enterprise focused on digital inclusion with services for low-income individuals. Demand for our unique services has been growing every year since our founding and starting in 2015 we embarked on a plan to scale the organization, establishing new organizations in Denver and Cleveland. In an effort to have an even greater impact, in 2020 PCs for People is planning to establish operations in Baltimore, a city that the National Digital Inclusion Alliance ranked as the 24th worst connected city in America (24th out of 191 cities) and where it's estimated that more than 25% of households don't have a computer or Internet access.</p> <p>PCs for People Baltimore is seeking Community Reinvestment Act investments through the Federal Reserve Bank of Baltimore's Investment Connection platform to allow us to build operations and scale the self-sustainable engine that supports our strategic efforts to close the digital divide and open new economic opportunities for thousands of low-income individuals and families in the Baltimore area.</p> <p>An investment of \$150,000 would provide PCs for People necessary funding to 1) support the establishment of a new, ultimately self-sustaining, Community Technology Hub in Baltimore City and 2) fund services and computer distribution events for targeted low-income communities through schools and workforce development programs (targeted groups would be determined by the grant making organization). The new Community Technology Hub will be located in a facility with 15 to 20,000 square feet of space and include the following:</p>

Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

Investment Connection Online Proposal

	<p>Warehouse & Refurbishing Center: including a Computer staging area for staff technicians to prepare high-quality refurbished computers with Windows 10 and other software for sale, a Computer repair/upgrade work station areas to allow for multiple repairs and upgrades to occur simultaneously and a Recycling and testing workspace to process recycled electronics and allow for up to 15 interns at one time to gain work experience and technology skills.</p> <p>Community Training Room: with a capacity for more than 20 individuals to attend technology training classes conducted by PCs for People staff and other partner organizations.</p> <p>Retail Store: with shopping/purchasing area open six days a week for qualifying community members to purchase refurbished desktop computers, laptops, mobile Internet hotspots, and a wide range of low-cost accessories.</p>
Issues addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asset Building / Financial Access, Capability and Empowerment ▪ Broadband Services / Digital Inclusion ▪ Workforce Development / Economic Development ▪ Education support: helping to close the homework gap for low income students ▪ Community environmental stewardship: through recycling e-waste of solid electronic material
Geographic impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State-wide
Population served	<p>Our programs and services support low income people who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, have a disability, or are currently enrolled in a government assistance program. PCs for people will also serve families at schools with more than 75% of children receiving reduced or free lunches and other nonprofit organizations who serve low income people.</p>
Population income	<p>PCs for People serves families with incomes between 0%-60% of the local AMI and 100% of the people we serve are considered underserved.</p>
Anticipated outcomes/impact	<p>PCs for People currently operates in St. Paul, Denver & Cleveland and in 2018 some of their collective reported impact included: 1,047,842 lbs of technology recycled (vs. put into a landfill), 18,132 computers repaired and refurbished for reuse, 15,344 computers distributed to low-income people, and 11,068 new homes connected to the internet. In addition, they found that the average household income for a family increase by 15% after 1 year with a new computer and internet access.</p> <p>In 2020 we will launch PCs for People Baltimore. Based on the track record and outcomes in other cities, we anticipate the following outcomes in our first year of operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2,000 computers distributed to low-income people ▪ 1,000 people connected to the internet ▪ 10 Baltimore City Schools receive computers for the school and all their students ▪ Rehab 4 Public Housing technology centers ▪ 12 digital literacy trainings conducted

Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

Investment Connection Online Proposal

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 50 Recycling partners - and a significant amount of technology equipment diverted from landfills
Evaluation methods used to measure success	<p>PCs for People currently uses a cloud-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) program that tracks the following success measures in real time across our store locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Computers distributed▪ Internet Hotspot subscriptions▪ Computers refurbished▪ Computers repaired and/or upgraded▪ Number of adults and children in households receiving computers and/or mobile hotspot▪ Income level of families receiving computers and/or mobile hotspots▪ Number of people attending digital literacy training▪ Change in income levels at households receiving computers and internet service▪ Recycling Partners▪ Amount of technology equipment diverted from landfills by unit and weight
Project timeframe. Is your request for an existing or new program?	New Program