



U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA): Why We Need the Digital Equity Act



“There are too many people in my district and across the country who are being left behind because they can’t afford broadband service or they lack the necessary digital skills. Not having broadband service means that it’s much harder for a veteran to successfully apply for a job, for an entrepreneur with an innovative idea to put the idea into practice, for a student to complete his or her homework, and for an elderly person who is unable to leave his or her home to use telemedicine services. We are long overdue for closing gaps in broadband adoption and digital literacy.”

Congressman Jerry McNerney
California Ninth Congressional District



“The Digital Equity Act of 2019 for the first time defines and codifies the terms “Digital Equity” and “Digital Inclusion.” AARP applauds this step. Full participation in society is increasingly dependent on new technologies and service delivery models for health care, financial services, shopping, community engagement, employment, and caregiving. In some sectors, and in rural areas, digital service delivery may supplant traditional service models. As the economy becomes increasingly digital, it is essential that all Americans have access to the necessary services, equipment, and training to take full advantage of the growing array of digital services.”

David Certner

AARP



“In the U.S., efforts to increase affordable access to the internet, devices and digital skills training are almost completely local. On the one hand this is fabulous because trusted community relationships are essential to effective digital inclusion work. On the other hand, financial support of local digital inclusion work is sorely lacking. **The Digital Equity Act** recognizes the value of local trusted institutions while allocating financial support. NDIA and our 350 affiliates in 41 states fully support the Digital Equity Act and look forward to its passage.”

Angela Siefer

Executive Director, National Digital Inclusion Alliance

Introduced in April 2019 by U.S. Senator Patty Murray (WA), the Digital Equity Act of 2019 ([S.1167](#)) proposes to authorize more than \$1 billion in Federal grant funding over the next five years to support digital inclusion programs throughout U.S. states and territories.

The Senate bill has been cosponsored by Senators Hirono (HI), King (ME), Whitehouse (RI), Klobuchar (MN), Blumenthal (CT), Smith (MN), Van Hollen (MD), Peters (MI), Reed (RI), Warren (MA), Wyden (OR), Cardin (MD), Cortez Masto (NV), Harris (CA), Durbin (IL), and Markey

(MA). It's pending in the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

A companion bill, [H.R. 4486](#), was introduced in the House of Representatives in September by Representative Jerry McNerney (CA-9), with Representatives Ben Ray Lujan (NM-3) and Yvette Clark (NY-9) as cosponsors. It has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The Digital Equity Act would create two major Federal grant programs, operated by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), to promote digital equity nationwide. The proposed funding for each program is \$125 million per year for five years — a total of up to \$1.25 billion.

One program would be carried out through state governments, with funding allocated by formula, and would incorporate state-by-state digital equity planning followed by implementation grants to qualifying programs.

The other would be an annual national competitive grant program, run by the NTIA, to support digital equity projects undertaken by individual groups, coalitions, and/or communities of interest anywhere in the U.S.

The Digital Equity Act references [definitions of "Digital Inclusion" and "Digital Equity" developed by NDIA](#).






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Home Internet by Congressional District

How big is the Digital Equity Gap in your Congressional District?

Use the chart below to see what U.S. Census' latest [American Community Survey](#) tells us about your District.

Click on any District to learn:

* What percentage of households lacked wired home broadband connections (cable, DSL or fiber optic) in 2017?

* What percentage of households had no home Internet access of any kind (including mobile, satellite or dial-up) in 2017?

* Income gap: How big was the 2017 gap in home Internet subscription between District residents with household incomes below \$20,000 a year and those with household incomes above \$50,000?

Support the Digital Equity Act

Organizations may sign up to support the Digital Equity Act.
(not for individuals)

Organization

URL

Organization Type

City

State

Contact Name

Contact Email

Receive Updates on Digital Equity Act


Receive Updates from NDIA

Submit

Never submit passwords through this form. [Report malicious form](#)

*** Age gap: How big was the 2017 gap in home Internet subscription between District residents aged 65 or older, and those aged 18 to 64?**

Byrne		
PARTY AFFILIATION	STATE	CONGRESSIONAL DISTR...
R	Alabama	Congressional Distric...
Roby		
PARTY AFFILIATION	STATE	CONGRESSIONAL DISTR...
R	Alabama	Congressional Distric...
Rogers		
PARTY AFFILIATION	STATE	CONGRESSIONAL DISTR...
R	Alabama	Congressional Distric...
Aderholt		
PARTY AFFILIATION	STATE	CONGRESSIONAL DISTR...
R	Alabama	Congressional Distric...
Brooks		
PARTY AFFILIATION	STATE	CONGRESSIONAL DISTR...
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Home Internet by State & Income

How big is your state's Digital Equity Gap?

Use the chart below to see what U.S. Census' latest [American Community Survey](#) tells us about your state.

Click on any state to learn:



*** What percentage of households lacked wired home broadband connections (cable, DSL or fiber optic) in 2017?**

*** What percentage of households had no home Internet access of any kind (including**

mobile, satellite or dial-up) in 2017?

*** Income gap: How big was the 2017 gap in home Internet subscription between households with incomes below \$20,000 a year, and households with incomes above \$50,000?**

State	PERCENTAGE...	HOUSEHOLD...	HOUSEHOLD...	GAP BETWEEN <\$20,000 AND >!
Alabama	29.10%	55.10%	13.10%	41.99%
Alaska	16.60%	47.80%	8.90%	38.89%
Arizona	20.00%	44.60%	9.10%	35.55%
Arkansas	32.60%	57.30%	17.10%	40.25%
California	16.90%	42.30%	7.60%	34.72%

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