




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	May 26, 2023
SUBJECT:	Internet & Digital Equity Resources on hamilton.ca (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Cyrus Tehrani, Chief Digital Officer & Director of Innovation City Manager's Office
SIGNATURE:	

Internet/Broadband access, programs to support digital literacy, and access to free public Wi-Fi is important to our community.

The purpose of this Communication Update is to provide Council with an update on a new hamilton.ca/internet web page has been developed to provide residents and businesses with one location to find the following information:

- The location of free Wireless/Wi-fi Networks in Hamilton
- The ability for the user to [test their internet speed performance](#)
- Data visualization of historical [internet performance across Hamilton](#) by Forward Sortation Areas (i.e. the first three digits of the postal code)
- Internet connectivity, device and digital skills [support/incentive programs](#)
- A list of [Internet Service Providers](#) in Hamilton
- Information about [Digital Equity / Broadband related grant programs](#)
- A link to [Provincially Funded High-Speed Projects](#) that can be searched for Hamilton

Details on each is expanded below for reference.

Free Wireless/Wi-fi Network Locations and Public Computer Access

The City of Hamilton recognizes that the Internet is an essential service and an invaluable informational, educational, and economic tool that should be accessible to all Hamiltonians. The City of Hamilton offers a free wireless/wi-fi network, which is open to

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all users free of charge. Users can explore an interactive map illustrating where free public Wi-Fi is located in Hamilton and learn about public access use computers.

Internet Performance

This new web page allows residents and businesses to [test their own internet performance](#) and compare it with other individual tests, data by ward, neighbourhoods, census tract, and urban and rural boundaries to see average internet download and upload speeds across Hamilton. The speed test tool is hosted by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA).

Residents and businesses can also view an [interactive map and dashboard](#) illustrating internet download speeds, upload speeds, and latency performance in Hamilton over the last three years and also search for information via the first three letters of their postal code.

Both free wireless/wi-fi locations and historical internet performance are open data sets available on the City of Hamilton's open data portal (open.hamilton.ca).

Device, Connectivity and Digital Training Support Programs

Several public and private internet support programs have been launched across Canada and Hamilton in recent years. The overall goal is to provide low-cost internet options, as well as devices for individuals, families, students, schools, school boards, First Nation Bands, charities, not-for-profits, and libraries. This new web page provides residents with links to [various programs](#) facilitated by the federal/provincial government and internet service providers including:

- Rogers Connected for Success
- Federal Connecting Families Initiative
- Hamilton Public Library's online computer classes and individual virtual appointments to learn basic technical skills
- Hamilton Literacy Council's free courses to learn basic computer skills
- Renewed Computer Technology provides refurbished computers and other devices to schools, First Nation bands, charities, non-profits, individuals, and families living with limited income in Ontario at reasonable prices
- ReBOOT Canada provides computer equipment, training, and technical support to charities, non-profits, and people with limited access to technology
- ReSTART Program provides refurbished workstations for eligible applicants who receive financial support from programs like ODSP, OSAP, OW, OAS, EI, and WSIB etc.

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Digital Equity Grants

[Funding opportunities](#) are available for organizations that provide access to events and activities supporting efforts to achieve digital equity, promote digital inclusion, and spur greater adoption of broadband among underserved populations. Digital Equity Grants listed on the new web page include:

- City Enrichment Fund – new pilot Digital Equity Stream
- CIRA Community Investment Program Grants

Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

The new web page lists ISPs servicing the Hamilton region. Residents can also check the Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)'s [National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map](#) to search their address and see what providers service their area or can visit the [CRTC Broadband Internet Coverage Map](#).

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED - None