



## Mapping + Bridging the Digital Divide in DC Promise Neighborhoods

Washington D.C., Cesar Chavez Parkside Middle School  
6th Grade Cultural Geography



### ISSUE

The internet is essential to post-secondary success in the 21st century, yet many individuals lack affordable access. This “digital divide,” or the disparities between individuals who have access to technology and those who do not, is spatial and socio-economic in nature. Over the past semester, 6th grade students at Cesar Chavez Parkside Middle School researched the way the “digital divide” impacts residents in the Kenilworth-Parkside neighborhood of Washington, DC. Students worked with the DC Promise Neighborhoods Initiative (DCPNI) to map internet access and surveyed over 216 residents to understand barriers and opportunities to affordable and equitable internet access. Students presented their proposals for eliminating the digital divide to a panel of stakeholders from the local internet provider, Comcast, and DCPNI.



### QUESTION

**What can be done to make sure all young people and families in the DC Promise Neighborhoods footprint have access to affordable internet and technology for success in high school, college and career?**

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: Y-PLAN TEAM

Instructor: Bernard Toomer

Students: 6th Grade Cultural Geography

Client: Brad E. Palazzo, Comcast

Community Partners: DCPNI

**The Y-PLAN method is solution-oriented. There was no point in the process where I felt like we weren't going to get to some clear recommendations and next steps. As a community organizer, that is refreshing and interesting. To be able to go to decision makers with those kinds of youth-driven ideas opens up a conversation to think about possibilities.**

*– Nicole Newman, Community Organizer, DCPNI*



## YOUTH DRIVEN DATA AND INSIGHTS

- Students surveyed 216 people of all ages in the Kenilworth-Parkside Community
- 40% of residents do not have access to internet in their homes
- 68% believe the cost of internet is too expensive
- 87% of residents believe all young people should have access to internet in their homes
- 62% of residents interested in receiving information on opportunities to receive reduced-price internet

## RECOMMENDATIONS

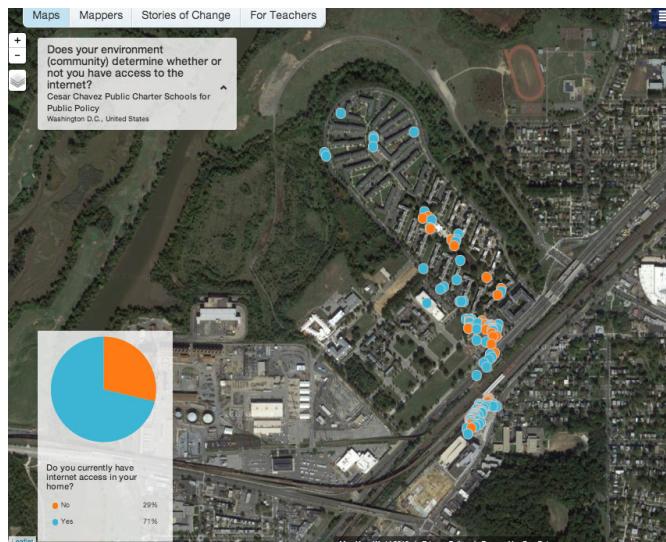
- The government should contribute revenue from the 5-cent bag tax toward providing affordable or free internet to all Washington, D.C. residents
- Comcast should extend the Internet Essentials Program to provide affordable internet to all families through graduation from Chavez
- Full-paying customers should contribute a percentage of their bill to provide internet service for those who cannot afford it
- The government should partner with Comcast to provide free internet access to the entire Kenilworth-Parkside community
- A library card should not be required to access the internet at the public library

## NEXT STEPS

This project brought together public-private initiatives in the interest of young people. Due to students' efforts, there has been an increase in applications for DCPNI's laptop computer opportunity, and Comcast has agreed to extend their affordable Internet Essentials Program to families of Chavez students through graduation.

**Through the Y-PLAN, I learned about my community and that in poor neighborhoods, not many people have access to the internet. I've changed as a learner because now I can get involved in serious issues in my community that people need to start paying attention to. It also taught me that just because I'm young, I still can make a big difference."**

*– 6th grade student, Cesar Chavez Parkside*



For more information on Y-PLAN, contact Jessie Stewart, Y-PLAN National Coordinator: [jessie.stewart@berkeley.edu](mailto:jessie.stewart@berkeley.edu)