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Chattanooga and Hamilton County named as a 2020 Digital Inclusion Trailblazer

The City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County together have been named as a national leader in digital inclusion work. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) has [recognized 14 municipalities](#) for promoting digital literacy and broadband access for underserved residents. Chattanooga and Hamilton County were named alongside much larger cities, including New York, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.

“Internet connection and digital literacy are no longer seen as a luxury; they are a necessity to participate in modern life,” said Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke. “In Chattanooga, we believe everyone should have access to those resources.”

Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger also sees digital inclusion as an important component in economic mobility in the region.

“So much of modern life happens online, which is why Hamilton County has put such an emphasis on working to ensure everyone has the means to fully participate. We believe this is a principal reason why Hamilton County has seen such unparalleled economic development over the last decade,” said Mayor Coppinger.

One key factor in Chattanooga and Hamilton County's selection was the presence of EPB, the municipally-owned utility that makes up to 10 Gig internet speeds accessible to the 170,000 homes and businesses in its service area.

“At EPB, our goal is to give the people in our community the power to do more whether they’re earning, learning, innovating, or relaxing,” said David Wade, president & CEO. “Chattanooga’s fiber-to-the-home network is a platform for helping people realize their full potential both educationally and economically.”

The City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County partner with The Enterprise Center and its program Tech Goes Home on many digital inclusion efforts in the region. Tech Goes Home works with schools, churches, and other organizations to help residents learn digital literacy skills, get a subsidized computer, and learn about low-cost internet options. Since the COVID-19 crisis began, The Enterprise Center has helped increase internet access for residents, helped small business owners and faith leaders reach customers and members online, and provided training and devices (hotspots, computers, tablets) to nonprofits to better serve clients.

“Chattanooga and Hamilton County have made so much progress in addressing the digital divide over the years, but COVID-19 has underscored that there’s still much work to be done,” said Deb Socia, the president of The Enterprise Center.

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The Enterprise Center, a non-profit economic development partner to the City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County region, unites people, organizations and technology to build an advanced and inclusive future for our community, with a focus on equity, collaboration, economic mobility, and Smart City innovation.

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