

Day 16 - Digital Equity and Education

"The Internet is not a luxury; it is a necessity." -President Barack Obama

A new study reported by a local news outlet, the [Capital Community News - Hill Rag](#), shows that DC has the second highest gap nationally for high-speed internet access between white students and students of color. The analysis also showed that 27% of Black students and 25% of Latinx students in the District are cut off from home internet, compared to just 5% of white students. This is not only unique to DC, but across our entire region.

So, what is digital equity? The [National Digital Inclusion Alliance](#) defines digital equity as a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning and access to essential services.

According to a study conducted by SmartAsset, which surveyed 35 tech hubs nationwide, the District comes in as the second highest city for Black technologists specifically, making up 19% of DC's tech workforce.

Did you know?

- Blacks in STEM are about four times as likely as whites in STEM to say their workplace doesn't pay enough attention to increasing racial and ethnic diversity.
- About half of STEM workers believe limited access to quality education is a major reason why Blacks and the Latinx population are underrepresented in STEM jobs.

Source: Pew Research Center Report: [Blacks in STEM jobs are especially concerned about diversity and discrimination in the workplace](#)

Today's Challenge

OPTION 1: Read [this article](#) on how structural discrimination in housing, banking and other sectors exacerbates internet inequality. (3 minutes)

OPTION 2: Watch [this video](#) about a study demonstrating how some students were discouraged from entering the STEM field based on race. (2 minutes)

OPTION 3: Think back to your own education experiences. Reflect on your schools' and teachers' expectations about race, gender and STEM. Ask yourself the following questions: Whether or not they were aware of it, how did they create inequities in expectations around science, technology and math? Which students were either advantaged or disadvantaged because of it? (3 minutes)

OPTION 4: [Contact United Way NCA](#) to volunteer as a STEM virtual Guest Speaker for middle school students at a United Way NCA Community School in DC, Maryland or Virginia. (2 minutes)

To go deeper on the topic of digital equity, watch the documentary ["Without A Net: The Digital Divide In America."](#) (56 minutes)