DC Department of Human Services
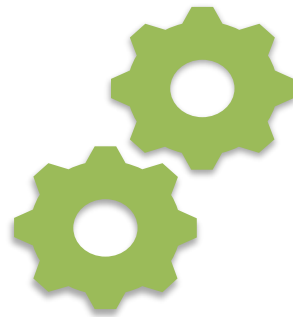
The Push Initiative

Bridging the Digital Divide
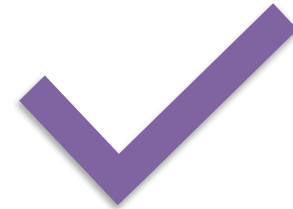
WHAT WE'RE LOOKING TO SOLVE?

Mitigate

- Mitigate the digital divide and help customers access technology

Leverage

- leverage technology to support Agency systems and processes

Keep

- keep customers engaged remotely

DC'S TWO-GENERATION (2GEN) APPROACH

The two-generation approaches help all generations make progress together. When the parent succeeds, the child learns that they can succeed as well; one helps motivate the other. The customer and assigned case manager will develop a Detailed Individual Responsibility Plan that establishes a set of goals and activities that addresses the needs of both the child and parent/care giver.

- Modifying the incentives' structure to encourage continuous education and credentialing;

- Incentivizing getting and keeping a job, receiving a promotion, and exiting TANF; and

- Pivoting away from a work-first model to a 2Gen approach that includes case plans focused on the needs of the whole family.

Where we're revisiting our approach

Motivation vehicle for engaged customers	Recruitment strategy for unengaged customers	Customers experiencing housing instability can use to manage their plans

Note: N = 138

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THE PUSH INITIATIVE

- The initiative is targeted to our DC TANF employment and education program customers
- Provide social and economic opportunities to TEP customers by offering affordable computers, Internet services, and digital skills training period in an era of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a greater need for TEP customers to have access to computer technology to perform certain tasks.

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM OFFER?

FREE COMPUTERS

FREE BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS TRAINING

FREE INTERNET SERVICE

- complete educational and training assignments
- attend virtual workshops, interviews, job fairs etc. complete employment and training applications
- this program offers free computers, basic computer skills training and Internet service

Laptop Loaner Program (SNAP E&T)

- The **SNAP E&T program has partnered with Byte Back** to provide loaner laptops to SNAP E&T participants that need them to participate in the program. Byte Back is maintaining an inventory of over 150 laptops dedicated to the program that can serve over 300 participants throughout FY 2021 overall. This initiative was supported through additional one-time funding from USDA.

- The **loaner laptop initiative allows anyone that is engaged in at least 40 hours of program activities per month to check out a laptop for up to 4 months as needed**, with the options for extensions based on program progress and availability. Participants working with SNAP E&T staff or any one of our providers are eligible to participate.

- **Byte Back is handling laptop loaner logistics and technical support** and has a dedicated staff member to support the initiative.

- **Free internet access is currently available to individuals that have grade PK3-12 children in public schools through the District's Internet for All initiative.** This does not cover most SNAP E&T participants, who often do not have dependent children. USDA just awarded the District over $21,000 to support additional internet access provision last week, and we are currently finalizing options to begin using these funds to support participants in need.

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Getting Families Connected

- With the Education & Employment Program, providers can use customers discreet work-related expenses (DWRE) to purchase laptops for customers; DWRE are capped at $250 per customer per 12-month period.

- The laptop purchase program offers the following :
  - laptops only
  - Internet only or
  - as a bundle package
  - with Internet service through
    - Comcast
    - OCTO (Office of the Chief Technology Officer)
    - CDI

TANF Employment and Education Program (TEP)

Our Challenges...

Motivation vehicle for engaged customers	Recruitment strategy for unengaged customers	Customers experiencing housing instability can use to manage their plans
• How do we continue to strengthen family's ability to balance home, work & self care?	• How do we best approach customers who have become disconnected?	• What resources would be valuable to strengthen?