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**National
Telecommunications &
Information
Administration**

**COMMERCE DEPARTMENT'S NTIA ANNOUNCES RECOVERY ACT INVESTMENT TO
EXPAND BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN
ILLINOIS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON – The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announced a nearly \$9 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act investment to help bridge the technological divide and increase economic opportunities in Illinois. The investment will expand and upgrade public computer centers in locations throughout Chicago and provide technology and job assistance training to residents, with a focus on at-risk youth, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and the unemployed.

The investment will allow the City of Chicago to add or upgrade over 3,300 computer workstations at more than 150 locations, including city libraries, workforce centers, public housing sites, and all seven city colleges, as well as expand hours of operation. As a result, the centers will be able to accommodate an estimated 200,000 additional weekly users and train up to 20,000 residents over the two-year life of the project.

"Technology skills and Internet access are increasingly necessary to finding a job, but many people don't have the resources to go online," said Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator Lawrence E. Strickling. "This investment will expand computer and broadband access for Chicagoans most in need, helping to make them full participants in today's digital economy and creating new opportunities for success—both on and offline."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided a total of \$7.2 billion to NTIA and the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service to fund projects that will expand access to and adoption of broadband services. NTIA is utilizing \$4.7 billion of that funding for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), which provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

Today's announcement is part of the second round of BTOP grant awards, which will continue on a rolling basis. NTIA will make all BTOP awards by September 30, 2010, and has thus far announced 113 BTOP grants to benefit communities nationwide.

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