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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY AWARDED GRANT FOR WI-FI
HOTSPOT LENDING**

*Knight Foundation Grants \$400,000 to "Internet to Go" Program
Allows CPL Patrons To Check Out Wi-Fi Hotspot Devices For Up To Three Weeks At A Time
Beginning First In Six Neighborhood Branches*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today at the 2014 NEXT Library Conference that the Chicago Public Library was awarded a grant of \$400,000 by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation today for the Library's "Internet to Go" program. Chicago Public Library is one of 19 winners out of 700 Cities that applied to the Knight News Challenge; the challenge sought breakthrough ideas that strengthen the Internet for freedom of expression and innovation.

Chicago Public Library is already the largest provider of free Internet access through its 80 locations in Chicago communities. The Internet to Go program will now help to further bridge the digital divide by providing take home Internet access and digital training for people in digitally-underserved areas of the city.

"From day one we have worked to increase internet connectivity and knowledge for our residents, because today's digital skills are 21st century workforce skills," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "I thank the Knight Foundation for their support, because with this funding the Chicago Public Library will now be able provide free, easy-to-take home, high-speed Internet access that will serve as a game-changer for children and adults across Chicago, but especially in communities that have traditionally been underserved."

The \$400,000 grant made through the Chicago Public Library Foundation will allow Library patrons to check out Wi-Fi hotspot devices for up to three weeks at a time, beginning first in six neighborhood branches where digital access is particularly low. The Library will also offer digital literacy and skills coaching as a part of the Internet to Go program. For those without computers, Library will experiment with a laptop lending program.

The importance of Internet access and digital literacy skills in today's economy is clear. A 2011 study revealed that in-home broadband use in many of Chicago's lowest-income neighborhoods

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barely hits the 50 percent mark and is significantly lower in the lowest-income areas of the city. Preliminary data from the City's computer access centers indicate that Chicago residents who have received technology training from those centers in targeted neighborhoods are 13 percent more likely to obtain employment or increase their net income. The Internet to Go program will lower the barrier to accessing the benefits of engaging online.

The City and Chicago Public Library strive to make every community a 'smart community' in which everyone is able to fully participate in the digital economy, by increasing the number of digitally-connected and technologically-savvy students, residents and businesses yields increased job placement, business growth opportunities and educational skills for the 21st century.

"The digital divide is solvable now, and the solution requires collective will and bold action. We are committed to increasing the number of digitally-connected children and adults in Chicago, and are so grateful to the Knight Foundation for supporting our vision through the Internet to Go program," said Library Commissioner Brian Bannon.

"Chicago Public Library is breaking down the digital divides that keep people out of the Internet. That's a great service. But there's more: by creating access and digital literacy for everyone, they're also allowing innovators from anywhere to contribute to our future. They're enabling an ideal of democracy," said Alberto Ibarguen, Knight Foundation president.

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more, visit KnightFoundation.org.

The Knight News Challenge on strengthening the Internet is funding breakthrough ideas that strengthen the Internet for freedom of expression and innovation. More at www.newschallenge.org

Since 1873, the Chicago Public Library has encouraged lifelong learning by welcoming all people and offering equal access to information, entertainment and knowledge through innovative services and programs, as well as cutting-edge technology. Through its 80 locations, the Library provides free access to a rich collection of materials, both physical and digital, and presents the highest quality author discussions, exhibits and programs for children, teens and adults. CPL recently received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards; won a National Medal for Library Services from the Institute for Museum and Library Services and was ranked number one in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. For more information, visit www.chipublib.org or call the Chicago Public Library at (312) 747-4050.

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