

By Senator Hargrett

21-1490A-00

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to computer access; creating a  
3           community computer-access grant program, to be  
4           known as the Community High-Technology  
5           Investment Partnership, or CHIP, program;  
6           providing legislative intent; providing  
7           purposes of the program; providing for grants  
8           to be awarded to eligible neighborhood  
9           facilities; providing for the Division of  
10          Libraries and Information Services of the  
11          Department of State to administer the grant  
12          program; providing requirements for grant  
13          applications; prescribing the maximum amount of  
14          a grant; requiring a grant agreement between  
15          the division and the recipient facility;  
16          providing for establishing minimum  
17          specifications of computers purchased under the  
18          program; providing for an evaluation and a  
19          report; providing an effective date.

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21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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23           Section 1. Community computer access grant program.--  
24           (1) The Legislature finds that there is a growing  
25 "digital divide" in the state, manifested in the fact that  
26 many youths from distressed urban communities do not possess  
27 the degree and ease of access to computers and information  
28 technologies which youths in other communities in the state  
29 possess. This disparity in access to rapidly changing and  
30 commercially significant technologies has a negative impact on  
31 the educational, workforce development, and employment

1 competitiveness of these needy youths and, thereby, impedes  
2 the economic development of the distressed urban communities  
3 in which these youths reside. Although many public libraries  
4 offer users access to computers and increasingly are making  
5 library materials available to the public through electronic  
6 means, many youths from distressed urban communities do not  
7 live near a library that has such technology and do not have  
8 computers to access Internet-based virtual libraries.  
9 Neighborhood organizations, such as churches, are more likely,  
10 however, to be located in closer proximity to the homes of  
11 these youths than are educational institutions or libraries,  
12 and these youths are more likely to gain the desirable  
13 computer access at church-related or other neighborhood  
14 facilities than at other institutions. The Legislature  
15 therefore finds that a public purpose is served in enhancing  
16 the ability of youths from these communities to have access to  
17 computers and the Internet within the neighborhoods in which  
18 they reside.

19 (2) Subject to legislative appropriation, the Division  
20 of Library and Information Services of the Department of  
21 State, in consultation with the State Technology Office and  
22 the state's Chief Information Officer, shall establish a  
23 Community High-Technology Investment Partnership (CHIP)  
24 program to assist distressed urban communities in securing  
25 computers for access by youths between the ages of 5 years and  
26 18 years who reside in these communities.

27 (3)(a) Under this program, neighborhood facilities,  
28 through their governing bodies, may apply to the division for  
29 grants to purchase computers that will be available for use by  
30 eligible youths who reside in the immediate vicinity of the  
31 neighborhood facility. For purposes of this program, eligible

1 neighborhood facilities include, but are not limited to,  
2 facilities operated by:  
3 1. Units of local government, including school  
4 districts;  
5 2. Not-for-profit, faith-based organizations,  
6 including neighborhood churches;  
7 3. Not-for-profit civic associations or homeowners'  
8 associations; and  
9 4. Not-for-profit organizations the missions of which  
10 include improving conditions for residents of distressed urban  
11 communities.  
12 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility of the  
13 organizations identified in paragraph (a), the division shall  
14 give priority consideration for funding under this program to  
15 applications submitted by neighborhood churches or by  
16 neighborhood-based not-for-profit organizations that have as a  
17 principal part of their missions improving conditions for  
18 residents of the same neighborhoods in which the organizations  
19 are located. The division also shall give priority  
20 consideration to organizations that can demonstrate that they  
21 have not been awarded community enhancement or similar  
22 community support grants from state or local government on a  
23 regular basis in the past. The division shall develop weighted  
24 criteria to be used in evaluating applications from such  
25 churches or organizations.  
26 (4) The division shall develop guidelines governing  
27 the administration of this program and shall establish  
28 criteria to be used in evaluating an application for funding.  
29 At a minimum, the division must find that:  
30 (a) The neighborhood that is to be served by the grant  
31 suffers from general economic distress;

1           (b) Eligible youths who reside in the vicinity of the  
2 neighborhood facility have difficulty obtaining access to a  
3 library or schools that have sufficient computers; and

4           (c) The neighborhood facility has developed a detailed  
5 plan, as required under subsection (5), for:

6           1. Providing youths who reside in the vicinity of the  
7 facility with access to any computer purchased with grant  
8 funds, including evening and weekend access when libraries and  
9 schools are closed; and

10           2. Promoting the maximum participation of neighborhood  
11 youths in use of any computers purchased with grant funds.

12           (5) As part of an application for funding, the  
13 neighborhood facility must submit a plan that demonstrates:

14           (a) The manner in which eligible youths who reside in  
15 the immediate vicinity of the facility will be provided with  
16 access to any computer purchased with grant funds, including  
17 access during hours when libraries and schools are closed;

18           (b) The existence of safeguards to ensure that any  
19 computer purchased with grant funds is reserved for the  
20 educational use of eligible youths who reside in the immediate  
21 vicinity of the facility and is not used to support the  
22 business operations of the neighborhood facility or its  
23 governing body; and

24           (c) The existence, in the neighborhood facility, of  
25 telecommunications infrastructure necessary to guarantee  
26 access to the Internet through any computer purchased with  
27 grant funds.

28           (6) The maximum amount of a grant which may be awarded  
29 to any single neighborhood facility under this program is  
30 \$2,500.

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1           (7) Before the division may allocate funds for a grant  
2 under this program, the division and the eligible neighborhood  
3 facility must execute a grant agreement that governs the terms  
4 and conditions of the grant.

5           (8) The division, based upon guidance from the State  
6 Technology Office and the state's Chief Information Officer,  
7 shall establish minimum requirements governing the  
8 specifications and capabilities of any computers purchased  
9 with funds awarded under this grant program.

10           (9) Before the 2002 Regular Session of the  
11 Legislature, the division shall evaluate the outcomes of this  
12 program and report the results of the evaluation to the  
13 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
14 House of Representatives. At a minimum, the evaluation must  
15 assess the extent to which the program has improved access to  
16 computers for youths who reside in distressed urban  
17 communities. As part of this report, the division shall  
18 identify any impediments to the effective implementation and  
19 utilization of the program and shall make recommendations on  
20 methods to eliminate any such impediments. In addition, the  
21 division shall make recommendations as to whether it would be  
22 sound public policy to continue the program; whether the  
23 program should be expanded to address additional target  
24 populations, including, but not limited to, youths in  
25 distressed rural communities and adults in distressed urban or  
26 rural communities; and whether the list of neighborhood  
27 facilities eligible to participate in the program should be  
28 revised or whether priority consideration for funding should  
29 be revised to emphasize a particular type of neighborhood  
30 facility. The report required under this subsection shall be  
31 submitted by January 1, 2002.

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Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

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SENATE SUMMARY

Creates the Community High-Technology Investment Partnership (CHIP) program, which is to be administered by the Division of Library and Information Services of the Department of State. Provides legislative intent. Provides that the purpose of the program is to provide computer access to individuals who live in distressed urban and rural communities and who neither own computers nor can readily reach a library that provides computer access. Provides for grants to be awarded to eligible neighborhood facilities so that they may purchase computers and make them available to neighborhood residents. Provides requirements for grant applications. Limits the maximum amount of a grant to \$2,500. Requires that a grant agreement be executed between the division and the recipient facility. Provides for the division to establish minimum specifications of computers purchased under the program. Requires the division to conduct an evaluation of the program and to submit a report to the Governor and to the chief legislative officers by January 1, 2002.