Addressing the Digital Divide

NMAC is giving away 100 Apple iPads and Verizon internet hotspots with three months of internet access. Help us identify people in need!

September 15, 2020 By Paul Kawata

COVID has magnified the digital divide in America, and NMAC wants to help. Thanks to our sponsor Gilead, NMAC is giving away 100 Apple iPads and Verizon internet hotspots with three months of internet access. While this year's United States Conference on HIV/AIDS (USCHA) is virtual and free for community, there are many people who don't have the needed technology to participate. This effort prioritizes people without that access—especially people living with HIV, people working on the frontlines of the epidemic and people on PrEP—and it aims to give them access to the virtual USCHA on October 19-21. The application form is here.

There is a very short turn-around time. Online applications are due September 25. Like USCHA scholarships, there will probably be many more applications than iPads. Unfortunately, most people will be turned down. Here are the 2020 priorities:

- Priority is given to people without access to technology, and
- NMAC uses a racial justice lens to make decisions.

There is an inherent contradiction of using technology to ask people without access to technology to go online and apply for support. We need your help to identify qualified staff, clients, or other people in the HIV community who need hardware and access to the internet. Can you help them apply? NMAC needs your help to identify people in need.

Submissions will be reviewed by NMAC's Constituent Advisory Panels. Decisions will be based on need and not an individual's value to the movement. People who receive iPads are required to attend all three days of USCHA and to fully participate as a member of the community.

Thank you for your help to identify people who could benefit from this program. The hardware will be mailed the week of October 12. A webinar will be held on October 15 to train USCHA attendees on the conference's platform. Questions should be addressed to Kim Ferrell and not the conference staff. Conference staff is busy working to make this a great meeting. However, it is important to understand that virtual will never fully replace meeting in person. Close to 5,000 people have registered. The 2020 meeting will have four plenaries, 85 workshops and institutes, and our HIV family. During these difficult and challenging times, it is the family reunion I need and

miss right now. Thank you Gilead for your support. We will get together again…

Yours in the struggle,

Paul Kawata

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