

Celebrating the first Gigabit Center to launch in New York City:

SILICON HARLEM



LinkNYC

The evolution of technology infrastructure in major cities has skyrocketed in recent years. However, in most major metropolitan cities, some areas have advanced more rapidly than others, for various reasons. According to the [New York City Internet Master Plan](#), approximately 40% of New York City households lack the combination of home and mobile broadband internet connectivity. Among that group, 18% of residents, accounting for over 1.5 million people, currently lack both in their neighborhoods. One avenue to bridging this gap is the utilization of private-public partnerships, to develop the infrastructure needed to level the playing field.

LinkNYC — the world's largest and fastest free public Wi-Fi network — represents one such private-public partnership. In addition to rolling out kiosks with free public Wi-Fi across New York City, in February 2022, LinkNYC, ZenFi Networks, and Silicon Harlem partnered with the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation to launch the [Silicon Harlem Innovation Space for People](#). The first of five gigabit centers set to open across the city, these facilities will help bridge the digital divide by providing high-speed internet, digital literacy training, free access to laptops and workstations, and small

business development powered by the free LinkNYC public Wi-Fi network.

The implementation of these new Gigabit Centers comes as LinkNYC begins to roll out its next-generation Link5G kiosks, which provide the same benefits of original kiosks — free high-speed public Wi-Fi, free national phone calls, and access to city services — along with better and more reliable 5G mobile broadband.



THE PROBLEM:

According to a survey done in 2015, 40% of NYC households don't have reliable internet access. At that time in 2015, LinkNYC Kiosks were designed to be outdoor networks. Clayton Banks went to the Mayor at the time and made the point that outdoor networks were a good start, but weren't enough to provide the necessary connectivity and that one building per borough should have high-speed internet. This initially kicked off the gigabit center movement.

SOLUTION:

The Silicon Harlem Gigabit Center was Created

Fast forward to 2022, Silicon Harlem has launched its first Gigabit Center, with the parties involved having worked diligently over the past 7 years to achieve that vision. In the end, what drove the development of these centers over the top ended up being the COVID-19 pandemic. With the entire population transitioning to work from home, education from home, medical care from home, etc., the blaring connectivity needs couldn't be neglected any longer.

In February of 2022, the [Silicon Harlem Innovation Space for People](#) celebrated being the first Gigabit Center to launch in New York City. This facility provides free public Wi-Fi access via the LinkNYC network, along with digital literacy training, free access to laptops and workstations, and other services to further help bridge the digital divide.



5G is where ZenFi and Silicon Harlem come together. Our mission is to get everyone connected in upper Manhattan. We're grateful for the City of New York investing time and effort to ensure that people are getting the infrastructure needed, both indoor and outdoor. Broadband as a resource (BAR) is as essential as water and electricity.

Clayton Banks, Silicon Harlem CEO

OUR PARTNER:

Silicon Harlem was founded in 2013 with one simple yet revolutionary goal: To transform Harlem and other urban markets into technology and innovation hubs that fully engage in the digital economy. Since then, Silicon Harlem has been working and partnering with the private sector, academia, nonprofits, and the community to build the next generation of technological infrastructure to meet the challenges that urban centers face today and will face tomorrow. Through their digital literacy programs, broadband design and deployment, and cutting-edge research projects along with scholarly conferences, educational workshops, and community outreach initiatives, Silicon Harlem reaches a multi-generational audience with our technology expertise.

We have a motto: ‘everyone needs a connection.’ How do we help move people forward without enough access and exposure? We’ve seen firsthand that when you give them that access and exposure, they can, and will finally start to explore their horizons.

Clayton Banks, Silicon Harlem CEO



PROGRAMS AND OFFERINGS:

- Gigabit Center serves as an “Innovation Space” for youth and senior citizens
- Open office hours, computer setup, and gaming that they can use
- Because of the reliable internet speed, allows for a lot more activity - video, VR, meta verse, etc
- After school programs for high school and middle school
- Senior Citizens hours
- All services are free
- Operates as another space for people to come in and experience advanced technology

Silicon Harlem believes in applying the “parking ticket model,” to many other everyday applications. Today, the quickest, most efficient way to pay a parking ticket is online. However, with the majority of the population now doing this, it also means that those without internet access have the ability to access what they need. These types of infrastructure hubs help level the playing field tremendously for people that simply don’t have reliable internet access at home. Moving forward, Silicon Harlem wants to see more gig center locations in each borough, continuing to drive forward the mission of providing internet to low-income citizens & educating the community on broadband and connectivity. The City of New York, LinkNYC, ZenFi Networks, and its partnering organizations are continuing to advance their plans for the development of additional gigabit centers across New York City.

Interested in learning how you can elevate your connectivity? Please visit [ZenFi.com](https://zenfi.com).

