



Philadelphia Development Partnership

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEN LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS AWARDED TECHNOLOGY GRANTS FROM COVAD COMMUNICATIONS

CHESTER, PA (November 9) – In an effort to bridge the digital divide that exists between urban neighborhood entrepreneurs and corporate America, Covad Communications, a growing national telecommunications company, is stepping up to the plate and awarding ten local business owners free broadband installation and service for one year and a \$500 cash grant. This is the second year of this new national initiative, called the Covad Broadband Entrepreneur Program (CBEP), which is designed to bring broadband access to low-income and disadvantaged entrepreneurs, and the first year of a partnership between Covad and the Philadelphia Development Partnership (PDP), the region's leading provider of micro-loans and business development services to small business owners and self-employed individuals. To date, XXX entrepreneurs from across the U.S. have received awards through the CBEP. This year, PDP was chosen as one of 16 organizations nationwide to select eligible grant recipients and to help administer the awards.

Among the local entrepreneurs to receive awards this year are a caterer, a clothing

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retailer, a gift basket designer, a home remodeler and two restaurateurs. The grant awardees have already installed the broadband service in their home office or place of business and are scheduled to receive their \$500 grants at an event scheduled for the evening of Thursday, November 11, at Junior Achievement in downtown Chester, PA. The awards ceremony will immediately follow a technology workshop, sponsored by PDP and its affiliate Chester Microenterprise Partnership. Covad representatives will be on hand to deliver the grants and also offer expertise during the workshop.

Lynne Robinson, owner of Progressive Healy, a massage, Reiki and reflexology service, and a CBEP grant recipient said, "After years of using dial-up Internet service, I really appreciate the ways that Covad's high-speed Internet service has helped my business—giving me faster access to my customers and the ability to send out flyers more quickly and efficiently. I look forward to receiving the \$500, too, and will probably use it to develop and purchase more marketing collateral to promote my business."

By combining the gift of technology and cash, Covad is providing entrepreneurs with the tools to improve and strengthen their businesses by making it easier for them access information through the Internet and expand their capacity to conduct research, communicate with their customers and perform business transactions. Leslie Benoiel, Executive Director of PDP, remarked, "We are now able to offer a broader and more complete array of business services to our clients and give them access to technology services that most could not afford on their own."

PDP, an affiliate of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, provides micro-loans, business training, market opportunities and other business development services to more than 400 individuals annually in the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area.

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