

Mayor Emanuel Joins Comcast to Announce Major Investment in CPL Branches
Friday, October 27, 2017 11:47:00 PM (GMT)

Comcast investment will includes “Experience Labs” at three neighborhood branch libraries and expansion of Internet Essentials program for qualifying Chicagoans

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Public Library (CPL) Commissioner Brian Bannon and Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) CEO Eugene Jones Jr., joined Comcast Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer David L. Cohen to announce that the company is investing \$250,000 to support “Experience Labs” powered by Internet Essentials at three CPL locations:

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:
<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20171027005892/en/>



From left to right: Chicago Housing Authority CEO Eugene Jones Jr., Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and Comcast Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer David L. Cohen, surprise Muchin College Prep 8th grade students with laptops. (Photo Credit: John Gress)

- The Carter G. Woodson Regional Library in the Washington Heights neighborhood;
- The Whitney M. Young Branch in the Chatham neighborhood; and
- The new Altgeld Branch, which will be co-located with CHA housing in Altgeld Gardens.

“I am incredibly grateful for corporate partners like Comcast that are helping to close the digital divide in Chicago by supporting vital efforts like Internet Essentials and these new Experience Labs,” said Mayor

Emanuel. “By making the right investments together, we are able to support our residents in building the digital skills necessary to participate in the 21st century economy.”

Comcast’s investment with the Chicago Public Library Foundation brings together three CPL programs into a unique Experience Lab for Chicagoans of all ages to enjoy. Current programming includes YOUmedia digital labs for teens, CyberNavigator digital skills tutoring for adults, and Maker Lab programming. Funding will support a designated space at each of the three branches for CPL, community organizations and other providers to deliver services to library patrons. Programming and services will range from workforce and digital skills training to lifelong learning programs –in an environment offering access to innovative technology and the Internet.

YOUmedia, CyberNavigator and Maker Lab programs are vital to CPL branches. The nationally recognized YOUmedia program, which will expand next year to a total of 20 free digital media labs around the city, creates links between students' academic studies, their personal passions, and opportunities to engage with skilled mentors and peers who support and share their interests. Through August of this year, over 9,500 teens participated in YOUmedia workshops, representing a 29% increase over the same period last

year. CPL's Maker Lab is an award-winning advanced manufacturing lab that brings together people of all ages to explore their creative interests and strengthen Chicago's economic competitiveness. CyberNavigators guide Chicagoans through the digital world and assist with online job search, communication and workforce readiness.

"CPL branches serve as neighborhood hubs for technology, digital skill building and lifelong learning for a record-breaking number of patrons," said CPL Commissioner Brian Bannon. "Comcast's support will allow each library to better serve the broad range of patrons who use our space to look for work, study and complete school projects, and explore a variety of interests."

Comcast today also announced Internet Essentials program enhancements will be offered to all qualifying households in Illinois for no additional cost. The company will increase the program's Internet service speeds up to 15/2 Mbps. This is the fourth increase since the program began in 2011, and is the number one requested enhancement from Internet Essentials customers. Additionally, to help family members connect to the Internet on the go and save money on their wireless bills, Internet Essentials customers will now enjoy 40 hours of free out of home WiFi access per month to the company's growing network of 18 million Xfinity WiFi hotspots. This WiFi access is offered in addition to the free in-home WiFi Internet Essentials customers currently enjoy.

"We are proud to work with dedicated elected officials, like Mayor Emanuel, CPL and other library systems, nonprofit organizations, educators, employees and advocates who all believe the Internet is essential," said Comcast Senior EVP and Chief Diversity Officer David Cohen. "Our investment in the Chicago Public Library builds on Internet Essentials and will help Chicago residents harness all that the Internet has to offer for education, jobs, healthcare, news, information and entertainment."

Comcast has been working to close the digital divide and bring the power of the Internet to low-income families in Chicago and locations across the nation for years. Internet Essentials, the nation's largest and most comprehensive high-speed Internet adoption program, is the centerpiece of Comcast's efforts. 57,000 low-income Chicago households have been connected to high-speed Internet service at home via Internet Essentials to-date. Since Comcast launched this program in May 2011, more than four million people around the country have benefitted.

Comcast has also supported CPL's CyberNavigators, or digital skills tutors, at library branches citywide through additional grants to the Chicago Public Library Foundation. Through the support of many civic-minded individuals, corporations and foundations, the Foundation provides on-going funding for collections and a range of community-responsive programs, including Teacher in the Library, CyberNavigators, YOUmedia and One Book, One Chicago.

CPL is the largest provider of free digital access in Chicago, having provided over 1.3 million people free access to library computers in 2017. Its 80 branch locations provide free library services, resources, technologies and tools that Chicagoans need to reach their goals.

Since 2011, the City of Chicago has invested over \$200 million to enhance library buildings and services. CPL announced multiple modernization and infrastructure projects at neighborhood branches, including a new branch in West Loop and major renovations to Whitney Young, Chicago Bee and Kelly branches. CPL also announced a first of its kind partnership with Chicago Housing Authority to co-locate four libraries and renovate a fifth.

For more information on Comcast Internet Essentials Programs, please visit <https://www.internetessentials.com>

About Chicago Public Library

Since 1873, CPL 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 has received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards; won a National Medal for Library Services from the Institute for Museum and Library Services; was named the first ever winner of the National Summer Learning Association's Founder's Award in recognition of its Summer Learning Challenge; 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, please call (312) 747-4050 or visit chipublib.org. To follow CPL on social media, visit us on Twitter ([@chipublib](https://twitter.com/chipublib)) or Facebook ([Chicago Public Library](https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoPublicLibrary)).

About Internet Essentials

[Internet Essentials](#) from Comcast is the nation's largest and most comprehensive high-speed Internet adoption program for low-income Americans. It provides low-cost high-speed Internet service for \$9.95 a month plus tax; the option to purchase an Internet-ready computer for under \$150; and multiple options to access free digital literacy training in print, online and in person. For more information, or to apply for the program, visit www.InternetEssentials.com or call 1-855-846-8376. Spanish-only speakers should call 1-855-765-6995.

About Comcast

Comcast Corporation (Nasdaq: CMCSA) is a global media and technology company with two primary businesses, Comcast Cable and NBCUniversal. Comcast Cable is one of the nation's largest video, high-speed Internet, and phone providers to residential customers under the XFINITY brand, and also provides these services to businesses. It also provides wireless and security and automation services to residential customers under the XFINITY brand. NBCUniversal operates news, entertainment and sports cable networks, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, television production operations, television station groups, Universal Pictures and Universal Parks and Resorts. Visit www.comcastcorporation.com for more information.

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Languages: English

Primary Identifiers: CMCSA-US

Related Identifiers: CMCSA-US

Source: Comcast

Subjects: Funding, Product/Service, Photo/Multimedia