

## Comcast Announces Largest Ever Expansion of Its Internet Essentials Program to Reach All Low-income Americans

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*California Leads Nation, with More than One Million California Households Newly Eligible, Including Those with Disabilities and Previously Uncovered Seniors*

*In Eight Years, Internet Essentials Has Now Connected More Than One Million Californians from 260,000 Households to the Internet at Home*

Comcast announced today it will significantly expand eligibility for [Internet Essentials](#), which is the nation's largest, most comprehensive, and most successful broadband adoption program in America, to include all qualified low-income households in its service area. The Company estimates that more than one million low-income households in California, including MediCal recipients, households with people with disabilities and previously uncovered seniors, are now eligible to apply. In addition, the company announced that, since 2011, Internet Essentials has connected more than one million Californians from 260,000 households to the Internet, most for the first time in their lives.

As a result, California once again leads the nation in closing the digital divide with Internet Essentials, and with this new expansion, has the potential to address critical healthcare access needs for MediCal recipients.

This latest expansion, the most significant change in the program's history, could benefit more than three million additional low-income households nationally. It estimates a total of nearly seven million households now have access to low-cost Internet service, which literally doubles the total number of previously eligible households. In addition, the company announced that, since August 2011, Internet Essentials has connected more than eight million low-income individuals, from two million households in the U.S., to the power of the Internet at home. Today's announcement follows 11 prior eligibility expansions, including last year's extension of the program to low-income veterans.

"This expansion is the culmination of an audacious goal we set eight years ago, which was to meaningfully and significantly close the digital divide for low-income Americans," said David L. Cohen, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer of Comcast NBCUniversal. "The Internet is arguably the most important technological innovation in history, and it is unacceptable that we live in a country where millions of families and individuals are missing out on this life-changing resource. Whether the Internet is used for students to do their homework, adults to look for and apply for new jobs, seniors to keep in touch with friends and family, or veterans to access their well-deserved benefits, it is absolutely essential to be connected in our modern, digital age."

To be eligible to apply to the program, low-income applicants simply need to show they are participating in one of more than a dozen different government assistance programs. These include: Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). A full list of these programs can be found at [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com). The Company already accepts applications from households that have a student eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program, live in public housing or receive HUD Housing Assistance, including Section 8 vouchers, or participate in the Veterans Pension Program, as well as low-income seniors and community college students in select pilot markets.

"Having an Internet connection at home is absolutely vital for seniors, other low-income individuals and those living with disabilities," said Anni Chung, President and CEO of [Self-Help for the Elderly](#). "I commend Comcast for expanding its Internet Essentials program so broadly because it will help us advance our mission to provide assistance and support to seniors in San Francisco and beyond."

According to Comcast's analysis of the U.S. Census 2017 American Community Survey, in California's capitol city of Sacramento, households living in neighborhoods with the highest poverty rates are up to 15 times more likely than those in neighborhoods with the lowest poverty rates *not to* have fixed broadband at home. For example, in neighborhoods like Empire Ranch and Village 7 in Sacramento – where poverty rates are very low – only about five percent of households **do not** have a broadband Internet subscription.

However, in Richards and Noralto neighborhoods – where poverty rates are way above the national average – up to 81 percent of households **do not** have fixed broadband at home.

Internet Essentials has an integrated, wrap-around design that addresses each of the three major barriers to broadband adoption that research has identified. These include: a lack of digital literacy skills, lack of awareness of the relevance of the Internet to everyday life and fear of the Internet, the lack of a computer, and the cost of Internet service. As a result, the program includes: multiple options to access free digital literacy training in print, online, and in person, the option to purchase an Internet-ready computer for less than \$150; and low-cost, high-speed Internet service for \$9.95 a month plus tax. The program is structured as a partnership between Comcast and tens of thousands of school districts, libraries, elected officials, and nonprofit community partners. For more information, or to apply for the program in seven different languages, please visit [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com) or call 1-855-846-8376. Spanish-only speakers can also call 1-855-765-6995.

The most significant barrier to broadband adoption in low-income communities remains a basket of digital literacy deficits, lack of digital awareness, and fear of the Internet. To help address this barrier, since 2011, Comcast has invested more than \$650 million to support digital literacy training and awareness, reaching more than 9.5 million low-income Americans. In addition, the company has either sold or donated more than 100,000 discounted and heavily subsidized computers to families and veterans that need one.

### **About Comcast Corporation**

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