

Boston Mayor Walsh And Boston Public Schools Superintendent Praise Comcast Efforts To Help Bridge The Digital Divide

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Company Announces Internet Essentials Program Has Connected More Than Eight Million Low-Income People Nationwide, Including More Than 215,000 in Massachusetts and Almost 50,000 in the City of Boston

Comcast Executive Announces Internet Essentials Program Expansions and Series of Local Investments in Boston

BOSTON, Sept. 9, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Boston Public Schools Superintendent Brenda Cassellius joined Comcast to announce the largest eligibility expansion of [Internet Essentials](#) in Massachusetts. The program, which is the nation's largest, most comprehensive, and most successful low-income broadband adoption initiative, will now have double the number of eligible low-income households and include people with disabilities and seniors.

Since August 2011, Internet Essentials has connected more than eight million low-income individuals, from two million households, 90 percent of whom were not connected to the Internet at home at the time they signed up under the program. This number includes more than 215,000 residents across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and almost 50,000 low-income people in Boston.

"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. "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 success in our modern, digital age."

"This type of public-private partnership, where a good corporate citizen helps address community needs, can bring the transformative change we need in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Walsh. "This is one of many initiatives my administration is working on to enhance equity in our city by ensuring that services and resources are available to every resident in every neighborhood."

"It is so important that all of our students have equitable access to technology and learning opportunities," said Boston Public Schools Superintendent Brenda Cassellius. "This is a great example of bringing all hands on deck to address the needs of our community. I'm so thankful to Comcast for expanding their commitment to digital literacy and equity so even more students can be assured they have the tools to succeed, as we work to finally close this digital divide."

There were several Internet Essentials events held in Boston throughout the day. Olympic Gold Medalists Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson and Monique Lamoureux-Morando, ambassadors and spokespeople for the company's corporate values initiatives, joined David L. Cohen in visiting the local community and raising awareness about the Internet Essentials program.

The first event was at Dorchester's Martin Luther King School, during which local leaders highlighted the work being done to bridge the digital divide. Comcast provided 50 laptops and six months of complimentary Internet service to students at the MLK School, so they have the tools they need to study and do their homework.

"We're proud to be partnering with Comcast to help close the digital divide here in Boston," added the Lamoureux twins. "It's crucial that we help all low-income Americans gain an internet connection at home, especially to provide access for women and their families, so everyone has a fair playing field on which to compete in sports and in life."

At the second event, Comcast joined state legislators and city councilors at Villa Victoria, an affordable housing community in the South End, which has become a model in the areas of civil rights, education, and arts programs. Comcast's Cohen participated in a discussion on digital equity with a group of residents hosted by Telemundo New England's Grace Gomez. Comcast also surprised about 30 residents with free laptop computers and six months of complimentary Internet service.

At the third event, Comcast's Cohen announced a grant to Tech Goes Home, which connects Bostonians to the promise of the Internet with training, access, and technology.

"Tech Goes Home empowers communities to access and use digital tools to overcome barriers and advance lives," said Daniel Noyes, Co-Executive Director of Tech Goes Home. "As a result of the growth and expansion of Comcast's Internet Essentials, it's easier than ever for qualified households in Boston to get online, better connect with their community, and receive free digital literacy training. Thanks to partners like Comcast, we are closer to our goal of making technology and the opportunity it provides accessible to all."

The final event was at St. Mary's Center for Women and Children, which offers innovative programs for women and children who have experienced trauma and are living in poverty. At the event, Comcast's Cohen announced a series of grants in partnership with Dell Technologies to upgrade the site's computer lab with new equipment. Comcast also provided 100 free laptops and six months of complimentary Internet service to residents.

To apply for Internet Essentials, low-income applicants simply need to show they are participating in one of more than a dozen different government assistance programs. A full list can be found at www.internetessentials.com.

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 needs, and fear of the Internet; the lack of a computer; and cost of internet service. 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 or call 1-855-846-8376. Spanish-only speakers can also call 1-855-765-6995.

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