

## Comcast Partners with the American Association of People with Disabilities to Help Close the Digital Divide

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### *Company Announces Grant to Fund Creation and Delivery of Specialized Digital Literacy Training Program Materials and Classes for the Disability Community*

*Since 2011, Comcast's Internet Essentials Program Has Connected More than 8 Million Low-Income Americans to the Internet, Including Nearly 210,000 Individuals in the Greater Washington, D.C. Metro Area*

At the Newseum today, Comcast announced a series of initiatives designed to help address the digital divide for low-income Americans with disabilities through the [Internet Essentials](#) program, the nation's largest and most comprehensive Internet adoption program for low-income households. The largest of these was a grant from the Company to the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). The Comcast grant will help fund the creation and delivery of digital literacy training programs specifically designed to address the needs of low-income people in the disability community. Once developed, the programs will be delivered at 10 AAPD affiliates across the country, as well as shared online for anyone to access.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190910005251/en/>



Comcast partners with the American Association of People with Disabilities to help close the digital divide. (Photo: Business Wire)

According to Pew Research Center, 23 percent of people with disabilities say they never go online and 57 percent say they do not have a home broadband subscription.

The grant follows last month's announcement that, since 2011, the Internet Essentials program has connected more than eight million low-income Americans to the Internet at home, including nearly 210,000 in the greater Washington, D.C. metro area, 90 percent of whom were not

connected to the Internet at home until they signed up through Internet Essentials. In addition, the company made the most significant eligibility change in the program's history, expanding eligibility to all low-income households residing in the Comcast service area, including all low-income seniors, adults, and people with disabilities.

"The Internet is an incredible resource so long as you have the skills and the tools to use it," said David L. Cohen, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at Comcast Corporation. "By partnering with AAPD and working with the disability community, we want to address and break down the barriers to broadband adoption that are unique to this population. The first step is to address digital literacy issues and facilitate digital skills development. So, we're going to create relevant training programs and then fund their delivery at locations across the country."

“Having an Internet connection at home is absolutely vital for low-income people living with disabilities,” said Maria Town, President and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities. “I commend Comcast for extending its Internet Essentials program to people with disabilities because it will help us advance our mission to provide equal access, integration, and full inclusion for Americans with disabilities.”

In addition, Comcast held events across the Washington, DC area to raise awareness of the digital divide with special guests Paralympic Gold Medalist and Purple Heart Recipient Rico Roman, and Olympic Gold Medalists from the U.S. Women’s Hockey Team Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson and Monique Lamoureux-Morando.

As part of the day’s events, the Company held a digital literacy assembly at Walker Jones Elementary, where Cohen surprised 50 sixth graders with free laptops and six months of complimentary Internet Essentials service. The company also hosted a digital inclusion event at the Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center where 100 seniors were given free laptops to help them stay connected to family and friends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century way of life. Lastly, Comcast held a Youth Hockey Clinic with Roman, Lamoureux-Davidson, and Lamoureux-Morando, where the Company surprised 25 students from Cornerstone Schools in Ward 7 with free laptops to help further their education. In partnership with Dell Technologies, the companies provided new equipment to Friends of Fort Dupont Ice Arena for its computer lab.

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.

To apply for the program, 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](http://www.internetessentials.com). The website can be read in seven different languages and there is also a dedicated phone number 1-855-846-8376. Spanish-only speakers can call 1-855-765-6995.

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