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COMCAST

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, COMCAST ANNOUNCE THAT CHICAGO'S INTERNET ESSENTIALS
ENROLLMENT DOUBLES TO 14,000, MORE THAN IN ANY OTHER CITY IN THE NATION**

*Establishing "Internet Essentials Learning Zones" to Bring Community Based Partners Together to
Eliminate the Digital Divide*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Comcast Executive Vice President David L. Cohen and United Way of Metropolitan Chicago President and CEO Wendy DuBoe, along with civic and community leaders, today kicked off the third year of the Comcast [Internet Essentials](#) program. Through this program, the number of low-income Chicago families who now have broadband connection at home doubled to 14,000 as part of the nation's largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption initiative for low-income families. The partnership also established "Internet Essentials Learning Zones," which brings community based organizations together to eliminate the digital divide.

"Last August, I challenged Comcast to double the number of families enrolled in Internet Essentials in the city," said Mayor Emanuel. "I'm proud to say that working together with Chicago Public Schools, libraries, numerous community- and faith-based organizations and others, we have reached our set goal. I am committed to closing the digital divide and improving digital literacy of Chicago's workforce and youth."

This year, the City of Chicago and Comcast, in partnership with the United Way and more than a dozen leading community-based organizations, will launch the first "Internet Essentials Learning Zones" in the nation. The zones will incorporate neighborhoods with large concentrations of Internet Essentials-eligible families surrounding five newly-designated Chicago Public Schools "welcoming" schools (Bronzeville/Mayo Elementary; Englewood and West Englewood/Bass Elementary and Nicholson Elementary; and North Lawndale/Hughes Elementary and Johnson Elementary).

Internet Essentials helps close the digital divide by providing eligible families low-cost broadband service for \$9.95 a month. Families also can purchase an Internet-ready computer for less than \$150 and access digital literacy training sessions and materials online, in print and in person.

The momentum of Internet Essentials continues to increase. In the first 22 months of the program, Internet Essentials enrolled upwards of 50,000 new families every six months. In the first six months of 2013, 70,000 new families signed up. In addition, Comcast has distributed more than 18,000 subsidized computers; trained nearly 20,000 people; publicized the program in more than 4,000 school districts and more than 30,000 schools; broadcast nearly 2 million public service announcements and partnered with nearly 7,000 community based organizations, agencies, and officials – about 1,900 alone here in Comcast’s Greater Chicago Region – to help spread the word about the program.

“Thanks to the leadership of Mayor Emanuel, the United Way and our many other community partners, thousands of families now have the opportunity to use the power of the Internet at home to get ahead in work, education and life, just by doing things online that many of us take for granted, such as applying for a job, researching a health condition, paying a bill or completing homework,” said Comcast Executive Vice President David L. Cohen. “Together, with cities like Chicago, we’re making real and significant progress in closing the digital divide in America.”

The city is investing in the success of these welcoming schools in many ways, including in technology enhancements. Students in these schools will have access to computers and mobile devices, which will provide electronic access to textbooks and information, and they’ll be able to take notes and complete their school work on the devices. The zones will help bridge the digital divide and extend learning beyond the school day by connecting the dots between Comcast, the United Way, the Smart Chicago Collaborative, participating community organizations and school-based leaders, all of which will work in partnership to enhance access to broadband and provide technology training beyond school walls.

“Under Mayor Emanuel’s leadership and our partnership with Comcast, more low-income families throughout the City of Chicago will have greater access to Internet,” said Wendy DuBoe, United Way of Metropolitan Chicago President and CEO. “We are proud to work with our community partners to expand the necessary resources for our children to improve their digital literacy.”

Comcast also announced updates to Internet Essentials for 2013. Comcast has more than tripled the download speeds for Internet Essentials customers since the program’s launch and further streamlined the enrollment process. Community partners are now able to help connect low-income families to the Internet by purchasing Opportunity Cards that can be used toward the cost of paying for Internet Essentials service and a new online application tool on InternetEssentials.com and InternetBasico.com makes it is now easier and faster for a family to apply for Internet Essentials. Program eligibility criteria also expanded for the second time, to include parochial, private,

cyberschool, and homeschooled students. Now, nearly 2.6 million families nationwide are eligible for Internet Essentials.

For more information about Internet Essentials visit InternetEssentials.com for English and InternetBasico.com for Spanish. Educators or third-parties interested in helping to spread the word can find more information at InternetEssentials.com/partner. Parents looking to enroll in the program can call 1-855-846-8376 or, for Spanish, 1-855-765-6995.

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