

EveryoneOn Partnered with Microsoft Airband Initiative in 8 Under-resourced Communities Nationwide, Connecting Over 50,000 Households to Affordable Internet and Delivering Digital Skills Trainings



Digital skills training participant (left) and EveryoneOn digital skills instructor (right)



EveryoneOn partnered with Microsoft to support digital skills trainings and enrollment in low-cost internet through the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program.

A deepened digital divide

In 2020 the U.S. faced a racial reckoning with the death of George Floyd, widespread police violence, and the devastation of a global pandemic. These events highlighted and exacerbated the digital divide – systemic discrimination that has created a lack of connectivity and digital literacy disproportionately impacting low-income communities comprised mostly of Black and Brown people.

As communities and industries responded to the challenges of COVID-19, Microsoft Airband Initiative, a Microsoft broadband connectivity program launched in 2017, issued a mandate as part of the company's larger efforts to address disparities in a way that ensured

I loved the digital skills training. It was wonderful. All these seniors have come out tonight to learn.

It's marvelous!

LESLIE

Digital Skills Training Participant

communities of color were connected online and had the digital skills to benefit from the opportunities of the digital age. In order to create meaningful change, Microsoft Airband Initiative's General Manager, Vickie Robinson, was drawn to the idea of partnering with a national nonprofit that could deliver the three pillars of digital opportunity: 1) connectivity 2) devices and 3) digital

skills trainings. With Vickie's background working at the Federal Communications Commission, she knew an organization with a long history of doing this work on the ground: EveryoneOn.



Norma Fernandez, CEO, EveryoneOn (left) and Vickie Robinson, General Manager, Microsoft Airband Initiative (right)

EveryoneOn is an important partner for us to enable meaningful connectivity for all – unlocking opportunities for families and individuals to learn, earn an income, use telemedicine, stay connected and transform communities.

— **Vickie Robinson, General Manager, Microsoft Airband Initiative**

A holistic community-based approach

The partnership between EveryoneOn and Microsoft blossomed into a two-year program aimed at enrolling communities in affordable high-speed internet, distributing devices, conducting digital skills trainings, providing capacity building trainings to organizations, and launching EveryoneOn's internet Enrollment Assistance Hotline.

The initiative focused on eight cities where the digital divide was significant and the tools, resources and partnerships were available to address it. Cities included Atlanta, GA; Brooklyn, NY; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; El Paso, TX; Memphis, TN; Milwaukee, WI; and Los Angeles, CA. This meant collaborating with

Our partnership with EveryoneOn is powerful. They're helping us build a community well equipped to engage in our technology-driven era.

ARMANDO SALAIS
El Paso Public Libraries

community-based organizations like the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and internet service providers like Starry to connect residents in affordable housing units to the internet. It also meant working with local organizations that have established trust with diverse communities: public libraries, such as El Paso Public Libraries, school districts, workforce development agencies, including Employ

Milwaukee and other partners that work with populations affected by the digital divide. EveryoneOn employed a community-based approach to build out partnerships with the local partners and center equity when designing activities.

Creating long-term connections

The two-year initiative was a success, with 51,874 households connected to the internet via EveryoneOn's National Offer Locator Tool and in-person enrollment events, 493 adults who participated in digital skills trainings, and 244 organizations that participated in EveryoneOn's capacity-building trainings to advance digital inclusion in their communities.

These activities provided crucial investments that enabled residents to navigate the rapidly-changing digital world and access meaningful employment opportunities. Addressing the barriers underlying the digital divide like broadband affordability and connecting individuals and families to low-cost and high-speed internet, devices and training has created a pathway to social and economic opportunities across eight cities. As a result, Microsoft has re-invested in EveryoneOn in order to continue connecting individuals and families to the power of the internet.

If you would like to learn more about EveryoneOn and investing in digital inclusion in under-resourced communities, visit www.EveryoneOn.org or contact us at support@EveryoneOn.org.