



**NLGA State Strategies in Economic Recovery**  
**Comcast: How Digital Equity Lifts the Economy**

COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on nearly every aspect of our daily lives. Comcast, NBCUniversal, and Sky are working hard to do everything we can to support our customers, employees, and communities during this unprecedented time.

As the nation and our states put plans in place for economic recovery from this pandemic, our nation's broadband network and infrastructure are key components of the recovery platform. Digital equity should be at the heart of any conversation regarding broadband as a key recovery driver to ensure that inclusivity is central in how we position our communities to build back stronger.

Comcast has long been at the forefront of addressing digital inequities in under-resourced communities. Ten years ago, Comcast embarked on an ambitious journey to help bridge the digital divide and in 2011, we launched [Internet Essentials](#), our signature digital inclusion program, to help connect as many low-income families as possible to broadband Internet at home. In that time, Internet Essentials became the largest and most comprehensive program of its kind, having connected millions of people to the Internet at home and teaching millions more critical digital literacy skills.

In response to the unprecedented COVID-19 emergency, our decade of experience with Internet Essentials provided the launching pad for Comcast to build on existing success and launch new programs focused on digital equity to meet the moment with partners, including nonprofit and community-based organizations, educational institutions and faith leaders, as well as the government and private sectors. Comcast instituted several COVID-19 response measures, including offering any new Internet Essentials customer 60 days of Internet service for free and waiving the requirement that customers not have back debt due so even more families can get connected. Most recently, for the sixth time in 10 years, we increased the speed of the Internet Essentials service to 50 Mbps downstream and 5 Mbps upstream without changing the existing price of \$9.95/month, which is the same it has been since 2011. With these speeds, families will have even more bandwidth for distance learning and remote work, as well as the ability to access healthcare information, enjoy online entertainment, and stay in touch with family and friends during the pandemic and beyond.

In addition, last year Comcast launched the Internet Essentials Partnership Program (IEPP), a new initiative that works with school districts, local governments, and philanthropic partners to get unconnected students online at home. Partners, such as schools, healthcare providers, and other community-based organizations, can sponsor Internet Essentials service for eligible members/families for \$9.95 + tax per month per household. Comcast also started another initiative, called Lift Zones, which is a cooperative effort to work with local community and government leaders to open 1,000 WiFi-connected community centers nationwide by the end of this year. These centers offer students free connectivity, digital literacy training, and support for online learning while many schools remain closed.

Finally, Comcast expanded our targeted philanthropic investments in organizations working to advance digital equity and contributing to the collective action needed to drive sustained change. We have announced new partnerships with groups that share our commitment to creating a more connected and equitable world. These organizations and investments are focused on creating greater pathways to opportunities for communities of color, particularly in media, technology, arts, and entrepreneurship.

As our work in the digital equity space continues, we want to thank the Lieutenant Governors and NLGA for being critical partners in this effort. We look forward to continuing our decade-long commitment to a more equitable and inclusive society.

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