



## The Y-Zone: A Digital Opportunity Zone Offering Free Internet Access

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Located along the Hudson River, Yonkers is the gateway between New York City and the Hudson Valley. Through Project OVERCOME, the leaders of the digital opportunity zone known as Yonkers Zone, or Y-Zone, will provide free Internet access to approximately 250-350 households in downtown Yonkers using spectrum in the Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) frequency band. The team is comprised of leaders from the Westchester County Association, City of Yonkers, STEM Alliance, Yonkers Partnership in Education (YPIE), Fordham University and Westhab.

Three core principles guide the Yonkers team:

1. Establishing a digital equity ecosystem driven by a coalition of committed local stakeholders that includes residents and youth;
2. Achieving widespread adoption through community engagement;
3. Advancing digital fluency by providing device ownership and tech education with connectivity.

The Y-Zone is identifying and eliminating barriers to digital adoption, including service cost, device ownership, lack of tech education, and lack of necessary tech support. Using the shared Federal Communications Commission (FCC) spectrum in the CBRS 3.5 GHz band, Yonkers is deploying wide-area private Long-Term Evolution (LTE) wireless networks, facilitating community-based, private network services.

The Y-Zone initiative pairs technology and “grassroots” implementation with a goal to achieve broad community benefits. Collaborating with community partners such as YMCA, Neighbors Links, Yonkers Partner in Education (YPIE), Westhab, and local schools, the team can deliver training, and distribute devices to the community. Moreover, Y-Zone’s relationships with municipal, business and nonprofit leaders are helping to drive community engagement and participation to ensure the sustainability of the digital opportunity zone.

The team is deploying the Y-PAR model (youth participatory action research) to evaluate the impact of connecting the unconnected through Project OVERCOME.



Partners on this Yonkers-based project hope to replicate and expand the Y-Zone model in other parts of Westchester County, and the team has already formed a broad-based stakeholder group to work on the sustainability and expansion efforts of the project.

**For more information:**

- [US Ignite Selects Westchester County Association to Lead a Community Broadband Pilot in Yonkers as Part of Project OVERCOME](#)

**More in this series:**

- [Project OVERCOME Overview](#)