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This Westchester Community Is Getting Free Internet Access

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Y-Zone's much-anticipated pilot program has just launched, bringing free and affordable internet to hundreds of Yonkers households.

[The Westchester County Association](#) (WCA) has officially launched a project more than a year in the making, starting this October. One of seven organizations selected to participate in Project OVERCOME back in March, the Yonkers Zone or **Y-Zone**, is designed to speed up the delivery of broadband services to underserved communities across the United States.

"Not even one year ago, the Y-Zone was something that we had just started to conceptualize as part of a National Science Foundation/[US Ignite](#) grant proposal by the WCA and its partners," says Christopher Fisher, Managing Partner at Cuddy & Feder and Digital Committee Chair for The WCA. "It's amazing to see us less than one year later launch CBRS services and implement a plan to introduce digital equity to hundreds of households through an extraordinary array of partners."

Designed to help foster digital equity in rural and urban communities, the pilot program, which will last for 12 months, will supply affordable or completely free internet access to between 250 and 400 need-based Yonkers households to start, providing internet to upwards of 1,000 residents. An "Access Plus" package even includes an additional 15 hours of digital skills training and a free Google Chromebook.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly shed more light on the effects of a long-standing digital divide in our region. Those without broadband and wireless communications were left in real hardship," WCA President & CEO Michael Romita told us back in March.

Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano echoes these sentiments as the project launches. "Now, more than ever, there is a growing need to bridge the digital divide that exists in communities across the country. I am so proud Yonkers families will be given an equitable solution to technology that supports the education of our students. Many thanks to our Y-Zone partners, led by WCA and US Ignite, for recognizing that affordable connectivity is vital to the success and future of the city."

"Leading with our new partners to develop the Y-Zone and build a sustainable community-based solution is truly ground-breaking," remarks Christopher Fisher, managing partner of White Plains-based law firm, Cuddy & Feder and Chair of WCA's Digital Connectivity Committee.

"When we launched Project OVERCOME, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew that the projects would offer great insights on innovative connection methods," says Lee Davenport, Director of Community Development at US Ignite. "This CBRS pilot in Yonkers advances an understanding of the intricacies of deploying this novel technology and highlights the strength among a community organization's ability to find collaborative solutions to connect the unconnected."

The WCA has additionally partnered with the City of Yonkers, [STEM Alliance](#), [Yonkers Partners in Education](#), [Fordham University](#), and [Westhab](#) to bring a variety of resources to the project. Should the Y-

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Zone area prove successful, broadband access can expand to thousands more underserved households nationwide.

The Y-Zone coverage area spans from Glenn Park in the north down to Hill Ave, and from Downtown to as far west as Nodine Hill. Those interested in joining to program can email help@yzone.info or complete [an application](#) online.