

# COMCAST AND EL CENTRO DE LA RAZA LAUNCH NEW DIGITAL LEARNING LAB AND WIFI-CONNECTED LIFT ZONE IN SEATTLE



Comcast Investments will Help El Centro de la Raza Provide  
Online Access to Learning, Social Services and Employment  
Opportunities to Thousands of Local Families Impacted by COVID



## NEWS RELEASE BY COMCAST WEST DIVISION

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Comcast Washington and **El Centro de la Raza** announced today the launch of a WiFi-connected Lift Zone and opening of a new lab that will support online learning for students, families and community groups. The new *Roberto Maestas Digital Learning Lab* and upgraded WiFi coverage will help El Centro ensure support for hundreds of local families.

The Comcast Lift Zone gives El Centro robust Wi-Fi coverage to support programs, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) and immigration services, housing and economic support, distance learning, youth curriculum, emergency services, and adult education classes. Comcast's Lift Zones include free hotspot connectivity and access to hundreds of hours of educational and digital skills content while bringing the community El Centro serves needed WiFi connectivity.

The *Roberto Maestas Digital Learning Lab* offers a safe, welcoming multi-use space and technology center that supports distance learning and community based virtual programming. The lab is furnished with \$50,000 in new technology from Comcast for recording, streaming and remote instruction, which enables El Centro to run their programming virtually until it is safe to return to in-person instruction. Through this new virtual programming, El Centro is able to connect with even more households than ever before, allowing people from across the state to remotely attend classes from the safety of their home. In the future, the lab will be open to other local nonprofits for use, as well.

"The Roberto Maestas Digital Learning Lab and expanded WiFi connectivity will play a vital part in supporting the people we serve throughout our local and virtual community. The lab will provide access to resources that empower our youth to participate in their education and actively learn in a digital environment. We will be able to provide technology training to help adults secure living wage jobs and support retraining efforts for those in industries impacted by the pandemic. We look forward to creating new

programming that will better the lives of families in our community during the pandemic and beyond,” said Estela Ortega, Executive Director of El Centro de la Raza (The Center for People of All Races).

When the pandemic hit, El Centro made the commitment to continue its operations and serve the diverse community that relies on its support, as well as provide a safe and secure place for families and youth. Without this commitment, many families, immigrants and first-generation Americans would not have access to important services they need.

Comcast announced a multiyear program in fall of 2020 to equip different locations in Washington with these WiFi-connected “Lift Zones.” Working with its network of nonprofit partners, Comcast is providing robust WiFi hotspots at safe spaces in King, Snohomish and Spokane Counties that are expected to help tens of thousands of students and families. Additional Lift Zones sites are currently under consideration across Comcast’s footprint statewide, with the goal of having 40 installed in the first part of 2021. The Lift Zone initiative provides free connectivity inside partner community centers for the next three years.

“The pandemic has put students and families at risk of being left behind. There is a need in our community for more programs that utilize technology and internet resources that families of all races and backgrounds can benefit from at this time, regardless of their personal or economic status,” said Rodrigo Lopez, Regional Senior Vice President of Comcast Washington. “We are proud to be able to help this important organization that we’ve partnered with for more than a decade serve people remotely and offer needed internet resources. This new lab and WiFi connectivity will help El Centro continue its important work, at a time when it is needed most.”

Lift Zones are a part of Comcast’s ongoing commitment to help connect at risk families to the Internet so they can fully participate in educational opportunities and the digital economy. The program complements Comcast Internet Essentials, which is a comprehensive, affordable Internet adoption program. Since 2011, more than 85,000 households in Washington state have been connected to high-speed Internet in their home thanks to the program. Internet Essentials offers access to free digital literacy training resources, the option to purchase an Internet-ready computer for less than \$150; and low-cost, high-speed Internet service for \$9.95 a month plus tax. The program is structured as a partnership between Comcast and tens of thousands of school districts, libraries, elected officials, and nonprofit community partners nationwide. For more information, or to apply for the program in seven different languages, please visit [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com) or call 1-855-846-8376. Spanish-only speakers can also call 1-855-765-6995.

## **About El Centro de la Raza**

As an organization grounded in the Latino community of Washington State, it is the mission of El Centro de la Raza (The Center for People of All Races) to build the Beloved Community through unifying all racial and economic sectors; to organize, empower, and defend the basic human rights of our most vulnerable and marginalized populations; and to bring critical consciousness, justice, dignity, and equity to all the peoples of the world. We envision a world free of oppression based on poverty, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, and discrimination of any kind that limits equal access to the resources that ensure a healthy and productive life in peace, love and harmony for all peoples and our future generations. Learn more at [www.elcentrodelaraza.org](http://www.elcentrodelaraza.org).

### **About Comcast Corporation**

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