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Bridging the Gap Partnership Distributed 200 Computers and Mobile Internet to Ohio Jobseekers

- Digital Equity: Making sure individuals and families have equal access to technology – vital tools for full participation in today's society.
- Access to technology is essential to educational success as well as workforce and community development.
- Bridging the Gap is a nonprofit-led initiative of PCs for People and Mobile Beacon that helps community anchor institutions like housing authorities, schools, libraries, and nonprofits provide affordable computers and internet access to eligible low-income individuals and families.

Ohio Means Jobs| Cleveland-Cuyahoga County (OMJ|CC) is a critical workforce development partner in the county helping individuals get on a meaningful and sustainable career path. OMJ|CC is now part of Bridging the Gap, a nonprofit-led initiative of PCs for People and Mobile Beacon that helps community anchor institutions like housing authorities, schools, libraries, and nonprofits provide affordable computers and internet access to eligible low-income individuals and families. Together, OMJ|CC, PCs for People and Mobile Beacon distributed 200 free desktop computers and mobile internet hotspots to local job seekers. This collaboration was created because of the organizations' shared vision to promote digital equity by ensuring individuals have equal access to technology to fully participate in today's digital society.

Access to technology is essential to educational success as well as workforce and community development. According to a recently released report by Jonathan Sallet for the Benton Institute, today, over 80 percent of jobs that require a high-school degree and pay a living wage require digital skills, but there are not enough Americans with the digital skills to fill these positions. OMJ|CC is using Bridging the Gap to change that by providing local job seekers with the necessary tools and support they need to secure a career in a recognized "Opportunity Occupation", which has been identified as an occupation that provides good wages with long-term career potential.

"Ohio Means Jobs connects individuals to the skills, support, and opportunities they need to gain stability and self-sufficiency. Having access to an affordable computer, internet, and digital literacy skills is key to their success in obtaining and retaining a sustainable livable wage employment." - Tina Stennes PCs for People National Director of Marketing and Communications."

"Broadband access is essential to help individuals and communities thrive. By giving job seekers access to computers and affordable, unlimited internet access, Ohioans will not only be able to apply for more jobs, but they will be developing the digital skills they need to secure them," said Katherine Messier, Executive Director, Mobile Beacon. "The partnership among Bridging the Gap and OMJCC leverages the tools and expertise from each organization to help individual job seekers and ultimately strengthen the community."

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About Mobile Beacon: Mobile Beacon leverages its Educational Broadband Service (EBS) spectrum to provide high-speed, low-cost, mobile internet access to the anchors of communities: the nonprofits, schools, libraries, and healthcare organizations that provide vital services to millions of Americans every day. Through this broadband service, organizations have an essential tool to fulfill their missions and maximize their philanthropic impact, which allows organizations to access more information, reach more people, and help more in their communities. Learn more at www.mobilebeacon.org.

About PCs for People:
Since 1998, PCs for People has been a driving force behind digital inclusion efforts across the US. We are a self-sustainable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a national reach. Self-sustainability is driven by our four-step approach - Source, Refurbish, Distribute, and Support. With strong partnerships and dedicated staff 250,000 computers have been distributed, 128,000 homes have internet access, and millions of pounds of electronics have been responsibly recycled. Our corporate services include secure IT asset disposition and AAA NAID certified data sanitization. Learn more at www.pcsforpeople.org.