



IMPACT REPORT
2021-2022

The Miami Connected initiative launched in the spring of 2021 with the goal of **making Miami the most technologically inclusive community in the United States**. The idea was born in the midst of COVID-19 when hundreds of thousands of children across our community were expected to attend school online in the midst of the greatest health, social, and economic crisis of our lifetimes. While the digital divide was nothing new, the urgency was clear: those without access were literally left behind.

Our initial data estimated approximately **100,000 students without high quality internet at home**. We knew we needed to act, but in order to truly address a problem at this scale we knew we needed to mobilize businesses, government, and philanthropy to stand together as a united front. With bold seed funding from Ken Griffin, The Children's Trust, TD Bank, The Miami HEAT, The Miami Foundation, and in partnership with Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor Frances X. Suarez, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools, we launched Miami-Connected as a bold cross sector partnership.

During our first year, Miami Connected prioritized getting disconnected individuals signed up for broadband internet. When we first began, we offered to pay for internet service for all disconnected low-income students and their families for two years. When the Federal Government followed suit, we quickly pivoted to heavily promoting their offering, providing significant customer support to help families successfully sign up and get access, and providing bridge support for those unable to benefit from existing free offerings. We also invested in digital literacy to help newly connected families to benefit as much as possible from the new technology at their fingertips.

We're incredibly proud to share that since inception, more than 100,000 students have indeed been connected to the internet, and the numbers continue to rise. For 34% of families connected, this is the first time they've had internet at home. Together, we've drawn down more than **\$39.7 million in federal funds** to strengthen digital connectivity in our community. Next up, we're working on the strategic plan for all of Miami-Dade County.

These results are a team effort, made possible through deep collaboration, profound generosity, and relentless solution orientation from all involved. We know we're just getting started, and that the road ahead will require many more solutions on top of internet connectivity alone.

As Miami's star continues to rise, we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensure that all benefit. That is the world class city we envision, and together with you, we know it is attainable.

REBECCA FISHMAN LIPSEY

President & CEO
The Miami Foundation

LESLIE MILLER SAIONTZ

Founder & President
Achieve Miami

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WHY DIGITAL EQUITY MATTERS

Digital equity is more important than ever today - it impacts every aspect of our community as educational, employment, civic and social opportunities become increasingly reliant on technology. Connection to the internet at home is an essential need, just like electricity or running water. Increasing the prevalence of broadband internet and digital skills paves the way for more Miami-Dade residents pursuing careers in technology, which present some of the best opportunities for upward mobility.



**"TALENT IS
EQUALLY
DISTRIBUTED, BUT
OPPORTUNITIES
AND RESOURCES
ARE NOT."**

- Leslie Cornfeld, Harvard Law Graduate And Founder Of The National Education Equity Lab

APPROACH & IMPACT

Miami Connected launched in the spring of 2021 as a three-year initiative with the goal of supporting 60,000 families to bridge the digital divide. Our approach to addressing the divide is holistic, beginning with a focus on internet connectivity and progressing all the way to careers in technology. Over the past year, we have learned that the need for individualized support and trusting relationships underpins success in all of these - and this has shaped our approach.

To date, we have supported 79,941 families along the journey of digital inclusion across all of our program areas:

- **Internet Connectivity** We helped 75,023 families get connected with at-home broadband internet service.¹
- **Digital Navigation** We provided hands-on support to help 4,590 families navigate how to get connected with internet service and devices, as well as awarded grant funding to expand services.
- **Digital Literacy** We awarded \$450,000 in grant funding to 12 partners to provide digital literacy services to families.
- **Careers in Technology** We have been learning from partners and community members to inform our strategy in the coming year.
- **Systems Change** We embarked on the development of a countywide broadband plan alongside Miami-Dade County to draw down and deploy federal funding.

**79,941
CONNECTED
FAMILIES**

319,764 residents
159,882 students

¹ Includes countywide Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) enrollment through September 2022 and enrollment in our sponsorship option through December 2022. [ACP data](#).

IMPACT

79,941
FAMILIES

319,764 RESIDENTS

159,882 STUDENTS



TIMELINE

SUMMER 2021

- Scaled program to include countywide eligibility
- Increased outreach efforts in priority neighborhoods of Overtown, South Dade, Liberty City, Little Haiti

WINTER 2021

- Federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) launched and was incorporated as an option for families
- Launched countywide ad campaign

SUMMER 2022

- Awarded \$1.2 million in grant funding to 15 organizations for programming in the areas of Digital Literacy & Digital Navigation

SPRING 2021

- Launched program at first school in Overtown

FALL 2021

- Launched digital literacy pilot program

SPRING 2022

- Launched collaboration with Miami-Dade County on countywide broadband plan to draw down and leverage federal funding

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

To meet the immediate need of the 33% of Miami-Dade families without at-home broadband internet, and that of additional families burdened by its high cost, we have worked to connect eligible families with no-cost or low-cost internet service options.²

Miami Connected launched with the strategy of sponsoring broadband internet service for families through Comcast Internet Essentials. Initial eligibility extended to families with a student receiving free or reduced lunch or attending a Title I school.

On January 1, 2022, the federal government launched its Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which offers families a \$30 monthly discount toward internet service with the

provider of their choice. Eligibility for this program extends to families participating in any of several federal assistance programs or those with household incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level.

Within a week of its launch, we adopted the ACP offering as an option for families and began raising awareness and providing support for it. This allowed families to access higher quality internet service with a provider of their choice, and allowed us to leverage federal funding for connectivity and reallocate our funding to other areas. We continue offering families the choice between the ACP and our own sponsorship of Comcast Internet Essentials.

"I am no longer concerned that we will have to give up our internet service due to its high cost. I have been able to apply for jobs and other opportunities as well as use the internet with my kids for their schoolwork and projects. I'm just happy to be a part of this program."

- KINGSHINIKA, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

"Thanks to having internet service again, I have been able to re-enroll in online classes as well as start an online business that I can run from home. These opportunities for additional income go a long way for a single parent like myself."

- MAKEIDA, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

² ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2020.

IMPACT

75,023

FAMILIES SUPPORTED IN GETTING CONNECTED³

\$39.7 MILLION

DRAWN DOWN IN ACP FUNDS FOR INTERNET SERVICE AND DEVICES⁴

34%

FAMILIES PREVIOUSLY DID NOT HAVE INTERNET SERVICE⁵

91%

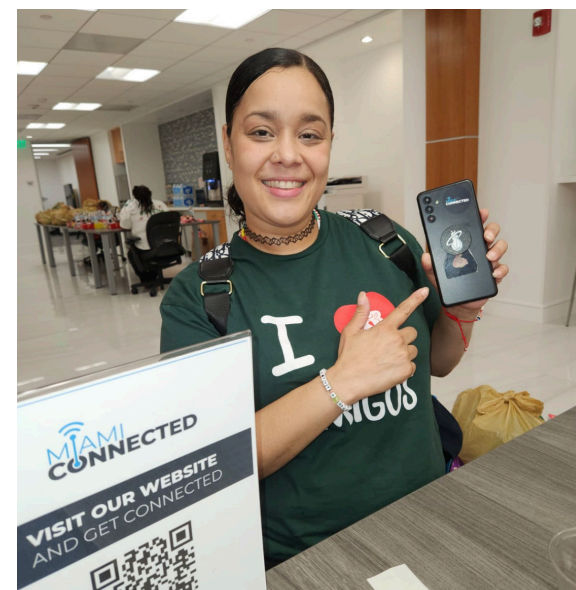
FAMILIES REPORT THEIR INTERNET SERVICE IS NOW FASTER AND MORE RELIABLE⁶

89%

FAMILIES REPORT ACCESSING MORE EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES⁷

Looking ahead, we will continue raising awareness about these broadband opportunities for families through robust outreach efforts and partnerships.

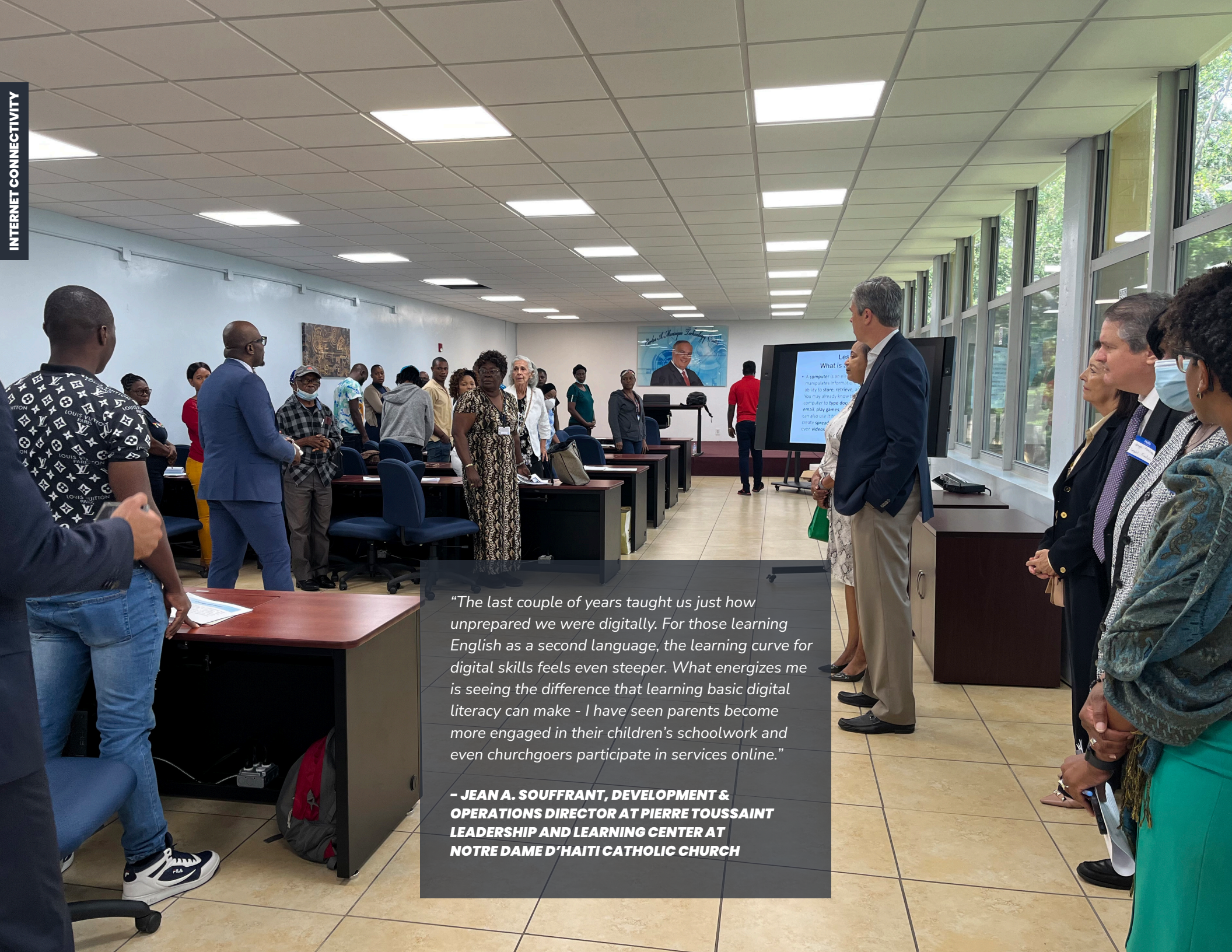
We will continue working to be the go-to source of information and support for families who can benefit from these opportunities.



³ Includes countywide Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) enrollment through December 2022 and enrollment in our own sponsorship option through December 2022. [ACP data](#).

⁴ Countywide Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) disbursements through December 2022. [ACP data](#).

^{5, 6, 7} Miami Connected Survey 2022.



"The last couple of years taught us just how unprepared we were digitally. For those learning English as a second language, the learning curve for digital skills feels even steeper. What energizes me is seeing the difference that learning basic digital literacy can make - I have seen parents become more engaged in their children's schoolwork and even churchgoers participate in services online."

- JEAN A. SOUFFRANT, DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS DIRECTOR AT PIERRE TOUSSAINT LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING CENTER AT NOTRE DAME D'HAITI CATHOLIC CHURCH

DIGITAL NAVIGATION

Digital navigators are trusted and trained individuals in the community that provide hands-on support to families looking to access opportunities related to internet access, technological devices, and digital literacy. Families surveyed cited the complexity of the signing up process for internet service as the second biggest barrier to obtaining it, with only high cost presenting a bigger challenge.⁸

We knew that providing this support to families was key to their successful connection to internet service, but we learned over time that the need was greater than we had initially realized. So much

so that this aspect of the program grew into its own program pillar, as opposed to merely playing a supporting role for Internet Connectivity.

In line with our own experience, a recent study highlighted that 65% of people who interacted with a digital navigator reported that they obtained internet service as a result of it.⁹ We continuously grew our digital navigation services and reallocated significant funding to provide grants. These grants allowed us to further increase the availability of the services delivered by trusted partners across Miami-Dade.



"I'm very happy with the support I received from the Miami Connected team. Beyond getting my account set up for free internet services, they also helped me get the technical assistance I needed to get my new internet modem set up at home."

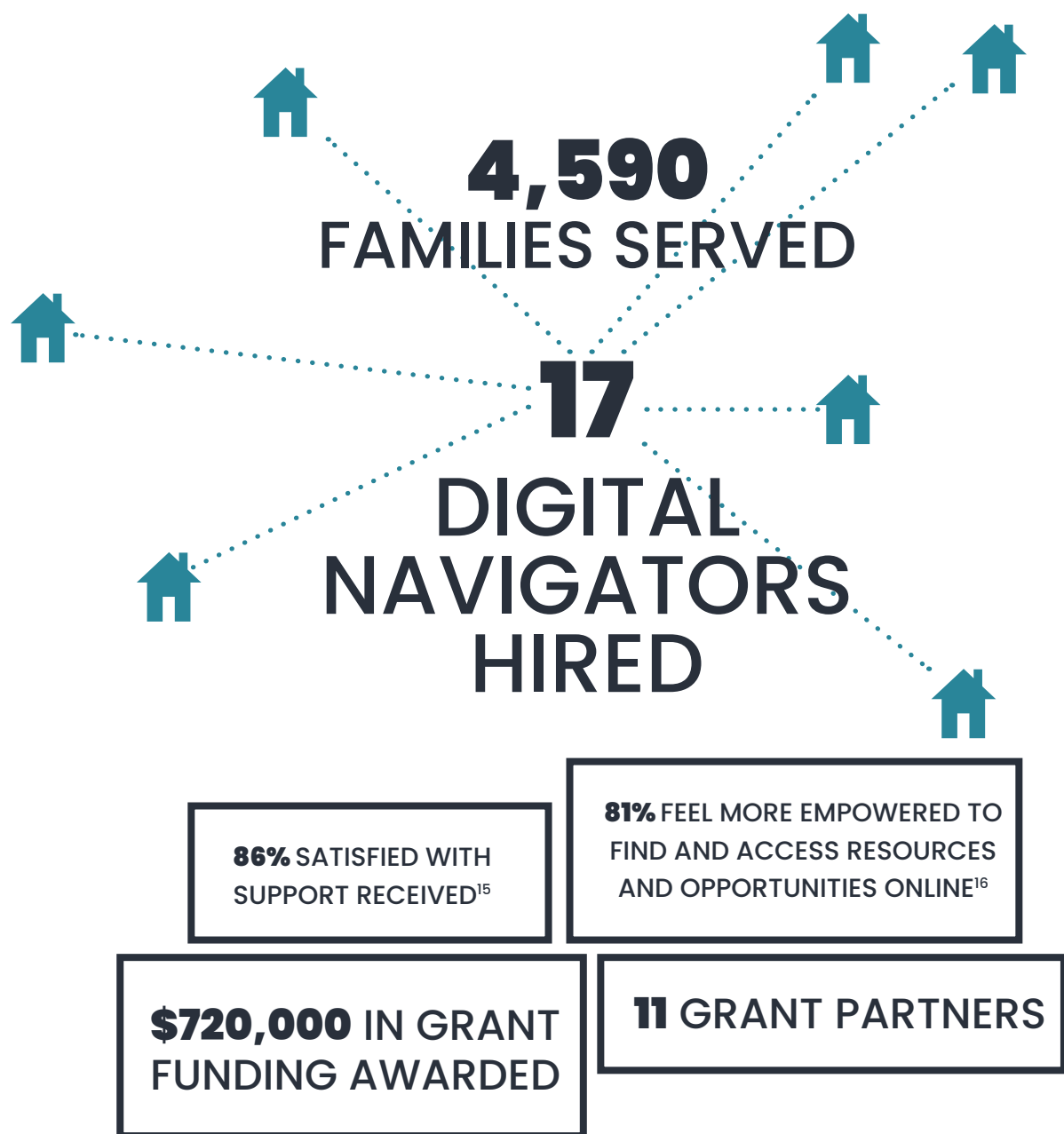
- EFRAIN, PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

"We learned that Mairé did not have internet service because a tree limb stood between her house and the necessary internet cable. We coordinated with her, a landscaping company, and the internet provider to get the tree trimmed and cable connected - then her internet service was ready to go. It was great to support her determination and she was extremely grateful that we did."

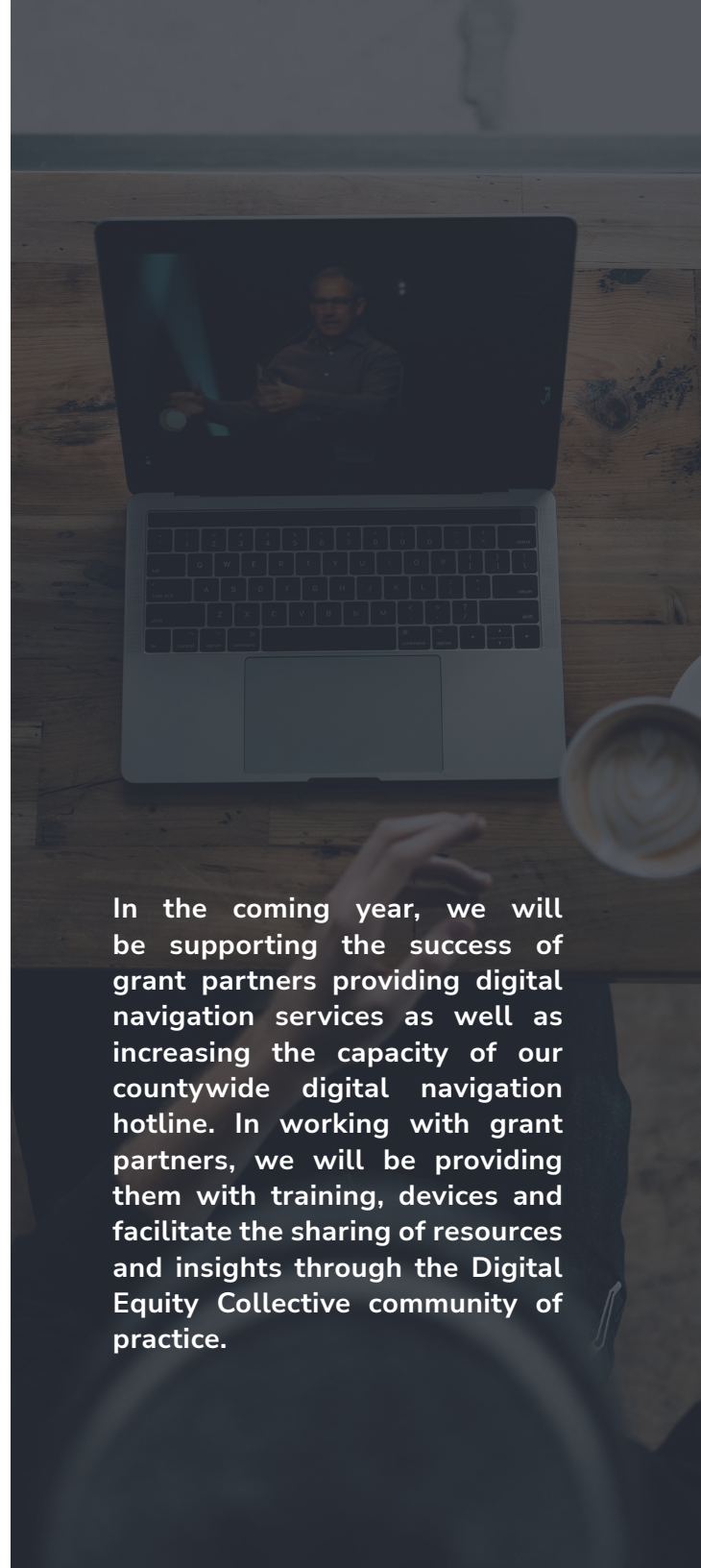
- FRANCK, DIGITAL NAVIGATOR

⁸ Miami Connected Survey 2022

⁹ BCG



^{10, 11} Miami Connected Survey 2022



In the coming year, we will be supporting the success of grant partners providing digital navigation services as well as increasing the capacity of our countywide digital navigation hotline. In working with grant partners, we will be providing them with training, devices and facilitate the sharing of resources and insights through the Digital Equity Collective community of practice.

DIGITAL LITERACY

People's ability to use technology in their daily lives is key to their success in our increasingly digital world. There is a growing shift to look at digital literacy more holistically and include topics such as data privacy and online ethics in addition to skills related to interactions with hardware, software and information. A recent study showed that 33% of workers lacked basic skills in these areas.¹²

Conversations with stakeholders in the digital literacy ecosystem highlighted a need for programming aimed at basic skills and comfort using technology, and cited a greater availability of programming geared

toward intermediate and advanced skills. This feedback informed the development of our pilot program and the results of the pilot further validated the demand in those areas.

Driven by this demand, we increased our allocation of grant funding for organizations to deliver digital literacy programming in their communities. We also partnered with NorthStar Digital Literacy, a leading nonprofit curriculum and learning platform, to increase access to instructor-led curricula for organizations as well as self-guided learning for community members covering skills ranging from basic computer and internet usage to career search skills.

"I have applied the skills I learned on a daily basis across different areas of my life. I now video conference for work, with family, and even for telehealth visits with my doctor. I'm so grateful to the instructors who were patient and went the extra mile to teach us. I loved this program and look forward to future courses."

- CLARISBELL, PILOT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

"Beyond the skills that I learned, the course also helped me build up my confidence, and that allowed me to step up at work and teach an online class for youth. I appreciate the patience and support from the instructors as they shared valuable knowledge with us."

- BEATRIZ, PILOT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

¹² [National Skills Coalition](#)

\$450,000 IN GRANT
FUNDING AWARDED

12 GRANT PARTNERS

In the coming year, we will be focusing on supporting grant partners as they launch or expand digital literacy programming that is responsive to their communities' language, cultural, geographic, and learning preferences. We will be providing them with curricula, training, devices, and facilitate the sharing of resources and insights through the Digital Equity Collective community of practice.

86%

REPORTED INCREASED
CONFIDENCE IN
DIGITAL SKILLS¹⁹

81%

OF PARTICIPANTS CHOSE
BASIC COMPUTER AND
INTERNET BASIC TRAINING²⁰

82%

WERE SATISFIED WITH
THE PROGRAM¹⁸

328

FAMILIES PARTICIPATED IN PERSON AND
ONLINE FOR DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING

^{13, 14, 15} Miami Connected Survey 2022

CAREERS IN TECHNOLOGY

Jobs in Miami's tech sector nearly doubled in the decade leading up to 2020¹⁶, and growth has further accelerated with the rise of the #MiamiTech movement. This represents economic opportunity for Miamians, but work remains to be done to ensure broader participation and diverse representation. While 65% of Miami residents identify as Black or Latino, these groups only represent a combined 39% of the tech workforce.¹⁷

We have been in learning mode as we have engaged an array of stakeholders to better understand the current landscape and identify gaps we can help to address. An emerging theme is the need for a closer look at how to connect residents with tech jobs beyond the high-skill, high-earning ones that first come to mind. One high-

profile tech company underscored this by sharing that while they will be hiring a handful of software engineers and data scientists, they will be hiring tens of help desk representatives.

We are working to finalize our strategy in this program area, as the last stop in our focus from connectivity through career, and will begin implementing it in the coming months.

39%
OF THE TECH
WORKFORCE IS MADE
UP OF BLACK AND
LATINO RESIDENTS

65%
OF MIAMI'S
RESIDENTS ARE
BLACK AND LATINO



¹⁶ Beacon Council, Make it Miami, March 2022

¹⁷ [Miami Herald](#)

SYSTEMS CHANGE

At its core, Miami Connected is a collective impact initiative - a coalition of diverse stakeholders from across the community working to bring about lasting, systems-level change through a shared vision, aligned activities and measurement, and continuous collaboration. We have been working toward this long-term impact in parallel to the work we have been doing to meet the community's immediate needs.

Broadband & Digital Equity Plan: We have joined forces with Miami-Dade County and national experts to develop a plan to draw down and effectively deploy state and federal funding to increase the number of Miami-Dade residents with high-quality, affordable broadband internet service. The plan is being developed in partnership with stakeholders from all sectors of the community, and informed by close collaboration with Florida's

Office of Broadband.

Digital Equity Collective: The inaugural group of Digital Equity Grant partners, which are leading digital navigation and digital literacy efforts across Miami-Dade, will also help launch the Digital Equity Collective. This coalition of organizations will come together to enhance collaboration, share resources and share their unique community-based insights to drive systems-level change and inform policy decisions.

We are also participating in other collaborative efforts, including the Tech Equity Miami funding consortium and STEAM Coalition, as we work to further support systems-level change across Miami-Dade's digital equity landscape through collaboration and increased funding.

"We're living in a digital world and many in our community still do not have access to technology or digital skills. This reality is even harsher for older people, people with disabilities, especially people who are blind or visually impaired who need accessible technology to participate fully. The Miami Lighthouse is excited to be a part of this Collective and support our partners in making technology truly accessible to all throughout Miami-Dade."

VIRGINIA JACKO, PRESIDENT AND CEO AT
MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND
VISUALLY IMPAIRED

PARTNERS

Miami Connected is powered by a diverse set of partners building a future-facing Miami-Dade. Our partners in the public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors have been integral to the impact we have made thus far and are invested in growing that impact in the coming year and beyond.

We have immense gratitude for all our partners and would like to highlight philanthropist and Citadel CEO Ken Griffin and his \$5 million leadership gift that helped bring this initiative to life.

We are always looking for additional partners to support growing the initiative’s impact across Miami-Dade.

SIGNATURE PARTNERS:



FUNDING PARTNERS:



COMMUNITY PARTNERS:



LOOKING AHEAD

As we look ahead to a second year, we are excited to increase the impact of our work with a focus on deepening the roots we have established in community and effecting systems-level change. This three-year initiative is intended to be a catalyst for lasting change. We have spent our first year laying a foundation and learning more deeply, and we look forward to building on that.

This collective of partners remains committed to ensuring that all families in Miami-Dade are empowered with access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive in our increasingly digital world.



“Connectivity is a lifeline to opportunity—it improves outcomes and gives students and their families critical resources they need to succeed. It is inspiring to see the Miami community come together to address this important issue, and I look forward to continued progress in bridging the digital divide.”

**– KEN GRIFFIN, FOUNDER
AND CEO AT CITADEL**

“Bridging the digital divide is a critical part of teaching and learning in the 21st century. Thanks to Miami Connected, we continue to ensure all students and their families are connected beyond the school day and continue to develop the digital skills they need to succeed.”


**– LUISA SANTOS, MIAMI-
DADE SCHOOL BOARD
MEMBER, DISTRICT 9**

Connectivity is essential for all Miami-Dade County residents, including school children, and small businesses. Through Miami Connected, we’re working to make internet as accessible as water and electricity. This groundbreaking initiative ensures inclusive and equitable access to broadband access, closing the digital divide and leveling the playing field, bringing Miami-Dade one step closer to becoming a 21st century Smart Community.

**– DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA, MAYOR
OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**

“We have emerged from the last two years a city positioned to embrace its enormous potential – Miami Connected facilitates what we always knew – that when provided with the resources it deserves, Miami shines brighter, and with more stunning diversity than any other.”

**– TRINA HARRIS, CEO AT
TOUCHING MIAMI WITH LOVE**

A photograph of a classroom or computer lab. In the foreground, several students are seated at desks, viewed from behind. They are using laptops. One student in the center has a pink floral bag on her desk. In the background, a female teacher stands at a podium, smiling. The room has a modern, educational feel with blue and grey tones.

"High-speed and reliable broadband should be accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status. Many of our biggest challenges with regard to digital equity are symptoms of this core necessity. By addressing this need and convening multiple stakeholders tackling the digital divide, Miami Connected has served as a catalyst for systems-level change never before seen in Miami. We stand united in their vision and look forward to continuing the work."

**- CARLOS VAZQUEZ, PRESIDENT
& CEO AT MIAMI EDTECH**



SPECIAL THANKS

We recognize and appreciate the efforts of all Miami-Dade families that are invested in creating a better future for themselves and a better community for all. It is their investment of time, talent, and trust in this initiative and in all its partners that makes our shared impact possible. They inspire us and teach us every day, and we look forward to continuing to support their success with the resources and opportunities they seek in order to thrive.



ABOUT THE MIAMI FOUNDATION AND ACHIEVE MIAMI

Miami Connected is a collective effort comprised of many partners, and **The Miami Foundation** and **Achieve Miami** are honored to serve as co-leads for this initiative among such amazing partners.

THE MIAMI FOUNDATION

The Miami Foundation builds the philanthropic, civic, and leadership backbone for Greater Miami. Since 1967, the Foundation has invested \$485 million to strengthen our community with partnerships and contributions from more than 1,000 fundholders and 35,000 donors. The Miami Foundation, which currently manages over \$450 million in assets, mobilizes donors, nonprofits, leaders, and locals to set a bold vision for our community's future and to invest in a stronger, more equitable, more resilient Greater Miami.

ACHIEVE MIAMI

Achieve Miami seeks to close opportunity gaps for students throughout Miami-Dade by providing meaningful educational and enrichment programs that demonstrate the power of students learning with and from each other. Achieve Miami was launched in 2015 with the purpose of increasing educational opportunities and outcomes for low-income youth and connecting diverse students from all parts of Miami in service of this common mission.

**THIS REPORT WAS
POWERED BY**

Radical
PARTNERS



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www.miamiconnected.org