

# Empowering at-risk youth and adults with devices, connectivity and dignity

**Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC) partners with Verizon public sector to enhance its services.**



**Portland Opportunities Industrial Center and Rosemary Anderson High School (POIC + RAHS) has a long name, but a simple, powerful mission: helping at-risk youth and adults be safe and successful. This thriving non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon provides a diverse range of much-needed services, including alternative education, public safety and violence intervention, and job training and placement. In all, it serves more than 3,000 students, families and other participants in underserved communities every year. Meeting the needs of this many clients requires reliable communication and fast connectivity – lots of it.**

- Portland Opportunities Industrial Center and Rosemary Anderson High School (POIC + RAHS) is an innovative non-profit committed to the success of at-risk youth and adults in underserved communities in the Portland, Oregon area.
- Hundreds of low-cost smartphones, subsidized cell plans, Verizon Jetpack Mobile Hotspot devices, and Verizon Internet Gateway Home Routers enable POIC participants to communicate, learn, apply for jobs and more.
- Verizon Fixed Wireless Access provides critical backup connectivity that keeps POIC staff members in touch with families and others in at-risk situations.
- The significant savings on communication devices and plans offered by Verizon via the MiCTA digital inclusion program enable POIC to reallocate funds to serve more clients and support new efforts.

## Reducing the digital divide

In early 2023, POIC began partnering with Verizon as part of a major digital inclusion effort established by the Michigan Collegiate Telecommunications Association (MiCTA). As a member of this innovative telecommunications purchasing consortium, POIC gains access to a broad range of Verizon technology services at attractive prices – all to encourage digital equity.

Today, POIC relies on Verizon for an ever-expanding portfolio of solutions, including hundreds of smartphones, mobile hotspots, routers and other hardware. Verizon's low-cost monthly plans help POIC bring reliable, affordable connectivity to more participants – from high-school students to the recently incarcerated. And Verizon field personnel provide expertise and assistance that help the organization get the most impact and value from Verizon technology.

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## A chance to help more people in need

“Our program managers are extremely excited about this program because they get to assist more people in new ways,” says Jason Clanton, POIC's chief information officer. “They get to say yes more often to someone who really needs a device.”

Reliable communication and fast internet access can be critical to the people that POIC serves. It connects families in transition, enables students to learn from anywhere, helps jobseekers apply for work, and allows the recently incarcerated to reintegrate into everyday life.

Thanks to MiCTA and Verizon's commitment to reduce the digital divide, these capabilities are now in the hands of hundreds of POIC participants who may not have been able to afford them on their own.

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## Empowering clients with dignity

The smartphones POIC provides to its clients effectively become their personal property, a powerful aspect of the program. “Because of the reduced pricing model that Verizon offers, we can say here, this phone is yours,” says Clanton. “Usually, there's a boatload of conditions that come with getting any device. But now we can just set our clients up with a phone and let them get on with their lives.”



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**Having a phone does more than give our people a valuable tool, it gives them the dignity of ownership.**

**Nicole Erickson, Director of Communications and Strategic Partnerships, POIC**

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## Putting communication to work in diverse ways

Verizon connectivity lets staff members stay in touch with more people, more often – and enhance its diverse programs. “We have a wide range of uses for the Verizon solutions because we have so many types of clients,” says John Stilwell, POIC's former board chair and current facilities manager.

Verizon connectivity enables community safety staff to stay in touch with clients, including relocated, rehabilitated gang members. In Rosemary Anderson Schools, expanded access to reliable internet service allows students to participate in distance learning and other online assignments. And within the work placement area, it enables jobseekers to apply for jobs, follow up on potential opportunities, and actively participate in the job market.



## Providing connectivity wherever it's needed

Verizon Jetpack Mobile Hotspot devices and Verizon Internet Gateway Home Routers give POIC connectivity options that go beyond giving smartphones to individuals. For example, they serve as a simple solution for families in transition, relocated gang members, and other groups who need connectivity in a consistent setting. Once the equipment is no longer needed, POIC can pass it along to the next group. Verizon Internet Gateways and Mobile Hotspots will also fill a need at POIC's facilities, which need reliable, available (and redundant) internet access.

According to POIC, these Verizon solutions will also fill an important role at events, where there may not be internet service. "We often go to events, or host events, where we want to enable people to sign up for services," says Clanton. "Frequently, there's no internet service, or it may be unreliable. Now we can go to events and know that people there can get dependable, fast access to the internet, sign up for services, and apply for jobs—quickly and easily."

## Helping ensure continuity of services

The services that POIC provides to its clients are vital—and often time-sensitive. To ensure constant access to its services, resources and people, POIC will be implementing Verizon Fixed Wireless Access routers in its key locations to provide reliable backup connectivity. The result? Services will be available, communication will continue uninterrupted—and clients and POIC staff members can stay connected.

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## Cost savings help expand services.

The affordable Verizon hardware and contracts available via MiCTA have a bottom-line benefit that goes beyond cost savings. "For years, we paid phone bills, Internet Service Provider bills and other bills," recalls Clanton. "I remember seeing one cell plan that was charging a client \$500 a month. The low-cost Verizon plans offered through MiCTA definitely let us save money. And now we can take that money and reinvest it elsewhere, expanding the people we can serve via our programs."

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## A chance to inspire other non-profit organizations

POIC leaders are helping inspire non-profit agencies and education institutions to participate in the MiCTA program—and bring Verizon connectivity to their organizations and the people they serve. "We're strategic thinkers and strategic planners," says Erickson. "But we also recognize an opportunity, and these opportunities with Verizon have been tremendous. For us, it was all just too good to pass up—and for others, too."



**The Verizon solutions from MiCTA are making a real difference in our three main areas—community safety, schools and work training.**

**Jason Clanton, Chief Information Officer, POIC**

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## Learn more

To learn more about how your non-profit or educational institution can benefit from Verizon Public Sector solutions visit us at:

[verizon.com/publicsector](https://www.verizon.com/publicsector)