FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Fordham University Partners with Westchester County Association to Provide Broadband Access to Yonkers Residents

New York, NY - The Fordham Graduate School of Education (GSE) is one of six organizations partnering with the Westchester County Association (WCA) to assist with the implementation of Project OVERCOME. Conceived and funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), Project OVERCOME is a $2.7 million effort designed to deliver broadband services to underserved communities across the United States. WCA is one of seven communities selected to participate in the program.

As part of Project OVERCOME, the WCA will spearhead a 12-month pilot program in Yonkers for which they have been granted $450,000 in funding. The Yonkers Zone (Y-Zone) as it's known, is designed to pilot a digital equity solution in the community of downtown Yonkers, New York, exploring novel approaches to connectivity.

Fordham's GSE faculty and students will help evaluate the Y-Zone pilot project by facilitating Youth Participatory Action Research (Y-PAR). In Y-PAR, the participants will identify issues and possible solutions, and engage in actions to solve the problems. "The team has already begun meeting with youth in the community and looking forward to having young people take the lead and make the project a success," stated Jane Bolgatz, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Fordham Graduate School of Education, who is facilitating the project's evaluation. Fordham GSE will be working with the following partners on the initiative for WCA: Yonkers Partners in Education (YPIE), STEM Alliance, City of Yonkers, and Westhab.

More on Y-Zone

Y-Zone is a digital opportunity zone (DOZ) that will provide free or affordable internet access to at least 250 need-based households, up to 1,000 people, in downtown Yonkers for up to two years by utilizing Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) spectrum. Y-Zone is more than an affordable new connectivity solution and incorporates three core principles: 1) Establishing digital connectivity ecosystem driven by a coalition of committed local stakeholders, including local residents and program youth; 2) Achieving widespread adoption through community input and engagement; 3) Advancing digital fluency by providing device ownership and tech education as well as connectivity.

For more information on Project OVERCOME, please visit:

https://www.us-ignite.org/program/overcome