



Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership Helps Bring Digital Transformation to Black and Latinx Small Businesses in Eight Cities with Verizon Small Business Digital Ready

The online curriculum will provide resources and in-depth support—including coaching, networking and incentives—to businesses in communities of color

Newark, NJ, September 17, 2021—Today, the [Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership](https://www.weareifel.org) (IFEL) announced its plan to help bring a new online curriculum to small businesses across eight cities: [Verizon Small Business Digital Ready](#). In partnership with Next Street and LISC, the Verizon Small Business Digital Ready online curriculum is designed to give small businesses the tools they need to thrive in today's digital economy, including access to personalized learning plans, coaching from experts and networking opportunities with diverse, industry-specific businesses.

More than 100,000 small businesses closed due to the pandemic, with a disproportionate impact on Black and Latinx-owned small businesses. Verizon Small Business Digital Ready offers businesses support, aiming to enable digital readiness and drive digital transformation through a customized curriculum that accounts for industry, size and interests. IFEL is proud to be working with Verizon in eight (8) cities—Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Houston, San Francisco, Los Angeles—to reach those businesses most in need of support.

“The majority of small businesses are ill-equipped to sustain through a crisis the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic. Government aid and small dollar grants are not enough,” states IFEL CEO Jill Johnson. “We are excited to partner with Verizon in this effort to coalesce a vast network of resources to help community-based businesses recover and grow.”

Developed by small businesses, Verizon Small Business Digital Ready provides a personalized experience - providing resources, networking and coaching tailored to a small business's specific needs. The program can help small businesses move forward in four ways:

- **Personalized Learning** - Content presented by small businesses through brief, information-packed lessons small businesses can use right away.
- **Expert coaching** - Guidance from business experts across marketing, business planning, legal, and more.



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- **Peer Networking** - Connections to other small businesses to build their networks.
- **Incentives** - A marketplace of tools, solutions, products and services that can help small businesses. Participants will also be eligible to apply for grant funding exclusive to users of Verizon Small Business Digital Ready.¹

To register and access, visit verizon.com/smallbusinessdigitalready.

This initiative is one part of Verizon's commitment to providing one million small businesses with digital tools and resources by 2030 and is central to Verizon's responsible business plan, Citizen Verizon, for economic, environmental and social advancement. Launched in 2020 to move the world forward for all, Citizen Verizon leverages technology, innovation and resources to address the world's most pressing issues across digital inclusion, climate protection and human prosperity. As part of Citizen Verizon, Verizon plans to exceed \$3 billion in its responsible business investment from 2020-2025 to continue helping vulnerable communities bridge the digital divide and prepare for the digital economy of the future.

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ABOUT VERIZON

Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE, Nasdaq: VZ) was formed on June 30, 2000 and is one of the world's leading providers of technology, communications, information and entertainment products and services. Headquartered in New York City and with a presence around the world, Verizon generated revenues of \$128.3 billion in 2020. The company offers data, video and voice services and solutions on its award-winning networks and platforms, delivering on customers' demand for mobility, reliable network connectivity, security and control.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP

Founded in 2002, the [Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership](https://www.weareifel.org) (IFEL) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that supports economic development through entrepreneurship. They are experts in creating and implementing small business programming in support of larger economic development objectives. Their mission is to eradicate the systemic barriers that prevent entrepreneurs of color from being able to access the knowledge, networks, and capital required for business success. Learn more at <https://www.weareifel.org>.

¹ Participants who register for Verizon Small Business Digital Ready and complete two courses or mentoring events will be eligible to apply for a \$10,000 grant.