



Guidance to Districts on Providing Internet to Students

(512) 463-9000

disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov

tea.texas.gov/coronavirus

The Texas Cable Association released information on free broadband and internet services [here](#), describing steps to enable and expand access to broadband. All four Texas Cable Association members have pledged to not cut off broadband or telephone service to any customers, even those unable to pay their bills; waive late fees incurred because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and open their Wi-Fi hotspots to all.

Additionally, Cable providers have made the following commitments:

Altice USA, which provides Suddenlink services

For households with K-12 and/or college students who may be displaced due to school closures and who do not currently have home internet access, Altice USA is offering its Altice Advantage 30 Mbps broadband solution for free for 60 days to new customer households within our footprint. Eligible households interested in this solution can call 888-633-0030 to enroll in the Suddenlink region, which includes Texas

[Altice USA Brings Free Broadband to K-12 and College Students During Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

Charter Communications, which provides Spectrum services

Charter will offer free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription and at any service level up to 100 Mbps. To enroll call 1-844-488-8395. Installation fees will be waived for new student households.

Charter will partner with school districts to ensure local communities are aware of these tools to help students learn remotely. Charter will continue to offer Spectrum Internet Assist, high speed broadband program to eligible low-income households delivering speeds of 30 Mbps.

[Charter to Offer Free Access to Spectrum Broadband and Wi-Fi For 60 Days For New K-12 and College Student Households and More](#)

Comcast, which provides Xfinity services

Comcast is pausing its data plans for 60 days, giving all customers unlimited data for no additional charge.

Comcast has made it even easier for low-income families who live in a Comcast service area to sign-up for Internet Essentials, the nation's largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program. New customers will receive 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. Additionally, for all new and existing Internet Essentials customers, the speed of the program's Internet service was increased to 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. That increase will go into effect for no additional fee and it will become the new base speed for the program going forward.

[Comcast Announces Comprehensive COVID-19 Response to Help Keep Americans Connected to the Internet](#)

Sparklight, formerly Cable One

Sparklight has made unlimited data available on all internet services for the next 30 days.

[Sparklight Makes Unlimited Data Available on All Internet Plans For 30 Days, Waives Late Fees For 60 Days During Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Crisis](#)

AT&T

Announced that they were suspending broadband usage caps for our home internet customers. [Letter from AT&T Communications CEO on COVID-19 Actions](#)

Additional, certain wireless providers have announced changes for COVID-19

T-Mobile

All current T-Mobile plans with data will be granted free unlimited data for the next 60 days, excluding roaming. T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile customers will be given an additional 20GB of mobile hotspot and tethering services for the next 60 days. Lifeline customers will be given an extra 5GB of data per month for the next two months.

“We do not have an offer available for 60 days of free service and encourage consumers to be cautious of social media posts that may include fraudulent numbers,” T-Mobile [added](#).

Verizon

Verizon will waive late fees and keep residential and small business customers connected if negatively impacted by the global crisis, the [company said](#) on March 13. It is also upgrading the data plan on its Verizon Innovative Learning program for Title 1 middle schools from 10GB/month to 30GB/month for the next two months, effective March 16. There are no data caps on Verizon home Internet subscribers, a company representative said.

Additional Funding Streams for School Districts to Provide Devices

Many school systems around the state are also working to expand wireless hotspot locations in communities where free commercial Internet services are not otherwise available.

Please document all costs associated with these expenditures, in anticipation that additional funding streams will become available as Congress continues to authorize financial support for COVID-19. In the meantime, there are many sources of funds currently available to be redeployed for this purpose:

Potential Funding Streams: ESSA, Title I, Part A served Schoolwide campuses may use their Title I, Part A funds to provide internet hot spots as long as it is identified in the campus comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) as a need.

Note: As long as the LEA has the required supplement, not supplant methodology documented an implemented, there is not a supplanting issue.

Note: The campus may update their CNA to include new needs identified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ESSA, Title IV, Part A may also be a potential federal fund source. However, Title IV has the traditional rules of supplant so it is only allowable if the LEA has not previously spent state or local funds for internet hot spots this year or in the prior year.

Other state or local funds may also be used for internet hot spots, but keep in mind it may cause a supplant issue for the use of ESSA, Title IV, Part A funds as described above.