



Internet Access Options for Families

The School District of Philadelphia understands how critical access to the Internet is for our students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The District is committed to finding ways to support the educational needs of our students while promoting social distancing habits for the safety of our students, families, teachers and staff, and the greater Philadelphia community.

The School District is working closely with the City of Philadelphia and Internet service providers to identify Internet access options available to our students and families. Below you'll find a list of free or low-cost Internet and WiFi access options that are currently available. We will continue to update this list as we become aware of new or upgraded options. Please check www.philasd.org/technologyservices/gettingconnected regularly for updates. The City of Philadelphia's Office of Innovation and Technology has made available a similar listing of options at: <https://www.phila.gov/2020-03-25-staying-connected-during-covid-19/>

Options from Commercial Providers

Comcast

- Through April 30th, Comcast is offering two free months of Comcast Internet Essentials (<https://internetessentials.com/>) to new customers with limited means. See their website for eligibility requirements and more details: <https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19>
- Comcast has increased speeds of Internet Essentials from 15/2 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps for all customers at no charge. This will remain the base speed of Internet Essentials moving forward.
- Comcast also offers laptops for \$150 to Internet Essential customers.
- The simplest, fastest, and easiest way to apply for the program is from a mobile device at www.InternetEssentials.com. Call **1-855-8-INTERNET** (1-855-846-8376) if you are having trouble signing up or don't have access to an Internet-connected device. Note that Comcast call centers are experiencing heavy volume at this time. Please mention that you are a parent or guardian of a student in the School District.
- Xfinity WiFi Hotspots across the country will be available for free to anyone who needs them, including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers, through May 2020. For a map of Xfinity WiFi Hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi. Once connected to a Hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name from the list of available networks, and then launch a browser.
- For more information, visit <https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19>

Verizon

- Verizon will now offer low-cost Internet access through its Lifeline program to individuals who qualify. Limitations apply. For program details, visit their Lifeline webpage (<https://www.verizon.com/support/consumer/account/manage-account/lifeline-discount>).
- Verizon will waive overage charges and late fees for customers who may be financially affected by the COVID-19 crisis.
- Verizon will provide two months of waived Internet and voice service charges for current Lifeline customers.
- Verizon will add 15GB of high-speed data for wireless consumers and small business customers.
- Consumer and small business Fios and DSL broadband Internet plans will have no data caps.
- For more information, visit <https://www.verizon.com/about/news/our-response-coronavirus>

AT&T

- AT&T will not terminate the service of any wireless, home phone or broadband residential or small business customer because of their inability to pay their bill.
For more information, visit <https://www.att.com/shop/internet/access/>
- AT&T will waive wireless plan overage charges for data, voice or text. AT&T will also waive any late payment fees that any wireless, home phone or broadband residential or small business customer may incur because of economic hardship related to the coronavirus pandemic.
- AT&T will keep its public WiFi Hotspots open for anyone who needs them.
For more information on WiFi Hotspots, visit <https://www.att.com/support/article/wireless/KM1103818/>

T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile

- T-Mobile Connect is a new program offering a \$15 per month plan for unlimited talk and text plus 2GB of high-speed smartphone data. For more information on T-Mobile Connect: <https://www.t-mobile.com/news/tmobile-connect-launch>
- New and current Metro customers with any voice line can also get a free 8” tablet (via rebate redemption) with a \$15 unlimited tablet data plan (plus sales tax and activation fee. Requires new line of tablet service).
- T-Mobile has removed smartphone data caps for ALL customers for the next 60 days.
- T-Mobile has added 20GB Hotspot/tethering service for customers for the next 60 days.
- MetroSmart Hotspot devices will be 50% off, and the \$35 per month data plan will include 20GB—double the normal monthly data—for the next 60 days.
- All current T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile customers who have legacy plans without unlimited high-speed data will get unlimited smartphone data for the next 60 days.
- T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile customers on smartphone plans with Hotspot data will get an additional 10GB per bill cycle for the next 60 days for each voice line (T-Mobile Connect excluded).
- T-Mobile is working with its Lifeline partners to provide customers extra free data up to 5GB of data per month through May 13, 2020.
- For more information, visit <https://www.t-mobile.com/news/t-mobile-update-on-covid-19-response>

Sprint and Boost Mobile

- For the next 60 days, Sprint will not terminate service and will waive late fees if customers are unable to pay their Sprint bill because of the coronavirus.
- Customers with metered data plans will receive unlimited data per month for 60 days (a minimum of two bill cycles) at no extra cost.
- Sprint will provide customers with an additional 20GB of mobile Hotspot data per month for 60 days (a minimum of two bill cycles) at no extra cost.
For more information about mobile Hotspot data: <https://www.sprint.com/en/support/solutions/device/mobile-hotspot.html>
- Sprint customers with mobile hotspot-capable handsets who don't have a mobile hotspot today will now get 20GB as well per month for 60 days (a minimum of two bill cycles) at no extra cost.
- For more information from Sprint: <https://www.sprint.com/en/landings/covid-19.html>
- For more information from Boost Mobile: <https://www.boostmobile.com/about/covid-19-response.html>

Free Parking Lot WiFi

“Parking Lot” WiFi is WiFi access that is accessible around the exterior of a building such as a school or library – and generally reachable from the facility’s parking lot. Below you’ll find some free options available through the School District of Philadelphia and the Free Library of Philadelphia. Please remember to practice responsible social distancing and avoid group gatherings at these locations if you choose to use the site’s WiFi.

School District of Philadelphia Locations

WiFi access at all School District schools will remain active through the extended closure. To connect, use:

- Network: PhilaSD WiFi
- Security Key: philadelphia (all lowercase)

Once you have logged into the network,

- If you are connecting with a School District Chromebook, go to <https://www.philasd.org>, and one of the following will happen:
 - You will be able to access the internet immediately and can continue browsing from there.
OR
 - You will be directed to the District’s online portal. Please log in using your student or staff username and password. Your username is your District email address without the “@philasd.org”. You will need to check the box to agree to the terms and conditions before you can proceed.
- If you are using a personal device, you will be directed to the District’s online portal. Please log in using your student or staff username and password. Your username is your District email address without the “@philasd.org”. You will need to check the box to agree to the terms and conditions before you can proceed.

Free Library of Philadelphia Locations

WiFi access at all Free Library of Philadelphia locations will remain active while the library branches are closed. An active library card number and PIN are needed to access the location’s WiFi. For more information and instructions on how to access free WiFi at any public library branch, visit the Free Library website: <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/programs/wireless/>

Other Options for Free/Low-Cost Internet Access

- Charter Spectrum has a coverage map of WiFi hotspots searchable by address <https://www.spectrum.com/wifi-hotspots>
- The National Free WiFi map provides free WiFi hotspots at businesses and restaurants that is searchable by address. Most locations are in Northeast and Northwest Philadelphia. Many locations may be closed at this time but have active WiFi service. <https://www.wifimap.io/>
- The Federal Lifeline Program is one of the four federal Universal Service programs that lowers the monthly cost of phone or Internet for low-income households. Eligible customers can receive up to \$9.25 toward their monthly bill. <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/>

Tips for Improving Internet Access

In addition to new options from the telecommunications companies, here are helpful tips to:

- Improve your Internet access: <https://connectednation.org/helpful-tips-to-improve-your-internet/>
- Turn your mobile phone into a Hotspot to connect your computer to the Internet: <https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-turn-your-phone-into-a-wi-fi-hotspot>