

## Continuity of Learning: Broadband Supports and Resources for Families

### Purpose

This document provides a list of resources for supervisory unions/districts (SU/SDs) to use when working with students and families who require internet access and other financial supports. This document is not an exhaustive list of resources, but rather a helpful guide to targeted programs related to internet and utilities. As new information emerges, we will add to this communication. Those needing a broader list of resources are directed to Vermont 2-1-1, a free and confidential service serving Vermonters statewide with information and resources to help maintain and improve their health and well-being. By dialing 2-1-1, callers are connected to trained representatives that provide referrals to a variety of local and statewide social services to help meet their needs. Information is also available online by visiting [Vermont 2-1-1 - Find Resources](#).

### Assistance with Internet Costs

Listed below are a variety of programs offered by broadband companies that aim to offer affordable connectivity options to schools and student households. Also listed are companies offering connection service in hard-to-reach areas of Vermont and companies working with the government [Lifeline](#) program. The list below is not an endorsement of any one vendor or program.

- **[Cloud Alliance](#)**: Cloud Alliance provides a community-based fixed wireless internet network for select communities in central and northern Washington County, where internet service may be difficult or non-existent. **Contact:** (888) 939-2568.
- **[Comcast](#)**: Internet Essentials program offers low service fees for student households eligible for public assistance programs. **Contact:** Customer service, (855) 846-8376.
- **[Consolidated Communications \(CC\)](#)**: The Lifeline program is a government benefit program. Eligible subscribers can apply a monthly Lifeline program discount to a qualifying service. After applying and receiving approval, a subscriber may contact CC to add the discount. **Contact:** USAC (800) 234-9473, CC (844) 968-7224.
- **[Kingdom Fiber](#)**: For a limited time, Kingdom Fiber is offering free or reduced-price installation through funding provided by the federal CARES Act. Installations must be completed by **Dec. 20, 2020**. The offer applies to locations from Hardwick north to Irasburg. **Contact:** Messages left at (888) 534-2377.
- **[Mobile Beacon](#)**: Bridging the Gap works to bring equal educational opportunity for all Americans through their connectivity program. The Digital Wish program provides

### Contact Information:

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donated mobile hotspots and low service fees to schools. **Contact:** Customer support, (401) 934-0500, [service@mobilebeacon.org](mailto:service@mobilebeacon.org).

- **T-Mobile:** Project 10 Million offers subsidized broadband service for student households meeting school eligibility requirements. Service is paid for by the local school. **Contact:** Ryan Lopes, Government Account Executive, (617) 564-1313, [Ryan.Lopes1@t-mobile.com](mailto:Ryan.Lopes1@t-mobile.com).
- **VTel:** The Vermont Telephone Company offers low income customers the VTel Lifeline Program. The government benefit program provides discounts on qualifying service. **Contact:** USAC (800) 234-9473, VTel, (802) 885-9000.

## Financial Support Programs

The Public Service Department has compiled a list of information and resources on the availability of telecommunication services during the COVID-19 emergency. Their connectivity resources support page includes information about what cable, telephone/DSL fiber and mobile carriers are doing to assist Vermonters in economic need. Go to [New Connectivity Resources to Support You during the COVID-19 State of Emergency in Vermont | Department of Public Service](#).

## Payment Assistance for Utility Customers

- **Vermont COVID-19 Arrearage Assistance Program:** Vermonters suffering economic hardship from COVID-19 can get help to pay their arrearages for residential and non-residential accounts. The program provides financial support to customers of regulated utilities who may face disconnection of service because of past-due balances.
- **Vermont Temporary Broadband Subsidy Program:** The program provides eligible households with a credit to assist with internet service subscriptions. Residential account holders who have suffered an economic hardship due to COVID-19 and require high-speed internet services for a qualifying need may receive a temporary credit of up to \$20 per month toward an internet service subscription. Payments under the program can be applied retroactively to March 1, for already established account, through Dec. 20, 2020.
- **Programs for Consumers with Disabilities:** Vermont offers consumers with disabilities several programs to help stay connected to the telephone system.
- **Agencies Providing Financial Assistance:** Information about state and other agencies that offer financial assistance to consumers can be found on the “Where to Get Financial Assistance” web page provided by the Public Service Department.