
Immediate Wi-Fi Hot Spot Assistance for Local Communities via Schools

Purpose

This document serves as an alert to Vermont supervisory unions and districts (SU/SDs) of an opportunity to potentially gain immediate internet access assistance for the SU/SD's local community by creating additional public Wi-Fi spots. The Vermont Department of Public Service has announced that a national team of volunteer professionals will be in Vermont through mid-April. In response to the pandemic, [projectConnect](#) was created to provide free community Wi-Fi installations to connect students and families to the internet, especially those living in rural and underserved communities.

If districts are aware of additional locations for Wi-Fi spots in their community, please submit the information immediately via this [online form](#).

ITDRC and projectConnect

The [Information Technology Disaster Resource Center](#) (ITDRC) is a nationwide volunteer-driven 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides no-cost information, communications and technology resources to communities in crisis. The ITDRC team is comprised of more than 2,000 service-oriented technology professionals with experience in many disciplines throughout the country. ITDRC has deployed hundreds of sites across the United States.

In response to changes in the learning environment due to the pandemic and the challenges of connectivity for many families, ITDRC began projectConnect to provide Wi-Fi access points so that community members can access internet resources, including distance-learning curricula.

Installation

For projectConnect, ITDRC is focusing on providing and installing Wi-Fi access points on community facilities such as schools. The equipment is donated to the school and the installation costs are free. Schools must provide the internet service. ITDRC will configure and mount the access point on the wall or roof of a building and run cabling to the existing network equipment. They will provide a router/switch if necessary. If there is no internet connection at the site, ITDRC will offer assistance in identifying a solution. For example, ITDRC can help by identifying commercial internet service providers (including cellular and satellite carriers), installing a wireless bridge from another facility, and partnering with other organizations to explore newer technologies like private LTE/CBRS/TV WhiteSpace. However, ITDRC is unable

Contact Information:

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to pay for recurring internet subscription fees.

E-rate funded sites are eligible for this program as determined by the Federal Communications Commission on March 23, 2020, in [public notice document DA 20-234](#).

ITDRC provides a [frequently asked questions](#) document to provide additional technical and installation details.

Additional Resources

For information on reported Wi-Fi hot spots in your community, visit the Department of Public Service [Wi-Fi Hot Spot Project web page](#).