

BROADBAND UPDATES: From the MO Department of Health and Senior Services

<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/broadband.php>

Broadband access is more important than ever as Missourians have been instructed to stay home from work and school as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accessibility is critical to meet our needs for education, telemedicine, telecommuting, and overall quality of life.

In response to the quarantine, several broadband providers are temporarily offering free internet service, waiving disconnect and late fees, providing access to wi-fi hot spots and other measures to help people at home access the services they need.

Below you will find examples of how Missouri providers are ensuring continuity of service to our communities during this time of need.

- **AT&T:** Removing data caps associated with their wireless and wired connections, offering eligible low income families in service territory reduced internet connectivity (expanded eligibility for SNAP, National School Lunch or Head Start program) with first two months free, no contract or equipment fees, and participating in the FCC Keep Americans Connected Pledge
- **BOYCOM Vision:** Participating in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge.
- **Bluebird Network:** Bluebird Network is offering temporary bandwidth upgrades to existing customers, this allows the customer to increase bandwidth on a temporary basis. Bluebird is participating in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge.
- **Callabyte Technology:** Participating in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge.
- **Charter Communications:** Will offer free access to broadband for 60 days to households with K-12 and / or college students.
- **Comcast:** Increases access and speeds to their Internet Essentials Program (\$10 / month broadband); new families get 60 days free.
- **Consolidated Communications:** Offering two free months of internet services for families with school children that currently do not have service. Consolidated is participating in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected pledge. We are also offering two free months of internet service for families with school children that do not have service
- **Ellington Telephone Company:** Delayed service suspension for non-payment.
- **GoSEMO:** Streamlined and much faster response for services if a work from home or school displacement need. Free services for 60 days to a new subscriber student displacement issue.
- **Green Hills Communications:** Participating in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge.
- **IAMO Telephone Company:** Participating in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge.
- **Marshall Municipal Utilities:** Accommodations made for late payments and delayed disconnects.
- **Mediacom:** Participating in the FCC Keep Americans Connected Pledge, pausing data allowances until May 30th, and providing access to complimentary Wi-Fi hotspots where available.
- **Midwest Connections:** Offering free installation and routers to family with schoolchildren who are home. Suspending "delinquent" shut-offs and working with customers who might be

laid off or unemployed on payment plans to keep service running, even if they are not able to pay in full.

- Net Vision: Delayed service suspension for non-payment.
- **Northeast Missouri Rural Telephone Company:** Waiving late fees, delaying disconnects, and offering free WiFi in all of our exchanges plus Milan, MO at our central offices and business office. Providing 2 months increased speed for customers requesting it.
- **Northwest Missouri Cellular:** Delayed service suspension for non-payment.
- **Pemiscot Dunklin Electric Cooperative:** Upgraded existing customers to gigabit service, installing free hot spots in our communities, and accepting requests for no-cost service/installation for students that verify enrollment in local schools and universities.
- **Ralls County Electric Cooperative:** Offering delay of payments and no late fees.
- **Ridgetop Networks:** 60 day grace period, not disconnecting service for nonpayment.
- **Steeleville Telephone Exchange:** Free Internet to houses with school age children in all exchanges. Suspended Re-connection Fees and eliminated all disconnections.
- **Suddenlink:** 60 days of free internet for students without access to broadband. After 60 days, the price is \$14.99 per month.
- **T-Mobile:** Current customers will have unlimited smartphone data, additional 20GB of mobile hotspot/tethering service for the next 60 days, working with our Lifeline partners to provide customers free extra data up to 5GB of data per month for the next 60 days, offer to schools and students using our EmpowerED digital learning programs to ensure each participant has access to at least 20GB of data per month for the next 60 days, and offering free international calling for all current to Level 3 impacted countries.
- **Windstream:** Participating in the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge.

FCC's Keep Americans Connected: FCC Chairman Ajit Pai launched the Keep Americans Connected Initiative, in order to ensure that Americans do not lose their broadband or telephone connectivity as a result of these exceptional circumstances. The pledge entails for the next 60 days:

1. Not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
2. Waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and
3. Open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

The current list of Missouri providers who have taken the pledge, this list grows daily:

- AlticeUSA
- AT&T
- Bays-ET Highspeed
- Bluebird Network
- BOYCOM Vision
- BullsEye Telecom
- Cable One
- Callabyte Technology

- CenturyLink
- Charter
- Citizens Telephone Cooperative
- Comcast
- Consolidated Communications
- EarthLink
- Fidelity Communications
- Google Fiber
- Green Hills Communications
- GRM Networks
- Holway Telephone Company
- Hughes
- IAMO Communications

- KLM Telephone Company
- Logix Fiber Networks
- LTC Networks
- McCormack / Ellington Telecom
- Mediacom
- NewWave Communications
- Northwest Missouri Cellular
- OTELCO
- PD Fiber
- Roggen Telephone Cooperative
- Socket Telecom
- Sprint
- T-Mobile
- Total Highspeed
- United Fiber
- US Cellular
- Verizon
- Viasat
- Windstream
- Wisper Internet

Additional Broadband Items of Importance

- **DESE:** Resource links for remote teaching and learning for educators, parents, and students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this site will be updated frequently.
- Helpful tips to improve your **internet connection**, provided by Connected Nation. Additionally, a **resource page** is available for COVID-19 helpful tidbits on telework, telehealth, and education resources.
- FCC waives **Rural Health Clinic & E-Rate Gift RulesPDF Document** to support remote access for healthcare and education.
- **FCC Lifeline Rules WaivedPDF Document:** The FCC announced changes to waive Lifeline program rules to assist program participants potentially affected by the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic and aid community efforts to slow its spread. The Lifeline program plays an important role in ensuring that low-income Americans have access to affordable

communications services by providing monthly discounts on broadband and voice services to qualifying customers.

- **Free & Low-Cost Internet Plans:** The National Digital Inclusion Association (NDIA) list of current offers from major ISPs that will help low-income household to acquire service at no cost, or at very affordable prices. Most have eligibility limitations linked to income or program enrollment. The list also included established, nationally available low-cost plans offered by nonprofit organizations.
- **TechforLearners:** As a part of the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy's COVID-19 technology initiative, American technology companies were called on to make online learning resources more accessible for teachers, parents, and students. As a result, the technology industry has launched a new resource for educators, administrators, and public officials who are turning to online learning as coronavirus response disrupts the school year.



**Have questions?
Chat about COVID-19**

Contact

24 hour hotline: 877-435-8411