

***Staying connected during COVID-19 March 27, 2020***

The City recognizes that having access to the internet is critical for families and individuals during this time of crisis. While practicing social distancing and dealing with the closures of many businesses and social services, internet access will help families and individuals do a wide range of activities, from schoolwork to job searching to paying bills.

Through the Office of Innovation and Technology, the City is working to make sure everyone can remain connected and that those without Internet access can get it.

Below are some of the most important updates on low-cost internet and wi-fi access that have been made available. This list also provides the updates made to mobile phone service plans to help support individuals during the COVID-19 crisis. Full updates for each company and any restrictions or limitations can be found on their respective websites.

We will continue to update this list as we receive more information to share with the Philadelphia community.

***Comcast Internet Essentials***

* 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 will increase speeds of Internet Essentials from 15/2 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps for all customers at no charge.
* Comcast also offers laptops for $150 to Internet Essential customers.
* [**1-855-8-INTERNET**](about:blank) (1-855-846-8376) The call centers are very busy and individuals are encouraged to apply with their smartphone if they have one.

***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). For answers to your questions, see [**Verizon’s COVID-19 FAQs.**](https://www.verizon.com/about/news/our-response-coronavirus)
* 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 waived internet and voice service charges for current Lifeline customers.
* Verizon will add 15GB of high-speed data for wireless consumer and small business customers.
* Consumer and small business Fios and DSL broadband internet plans will have no data caps.

***AT&T***

* [**AT&T**](https://www.att.com/shop/internet/access/#!/) 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.
* AT&T will 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 Wi-Fi hotspots open for any American who needs them.

***T-Mobile***

* For the 60 days after activation, Metro is offering a new $15 per month plan for unlimited talk and text plus 2GB of high-speed smartphone data. Get details from [**T-Mobile**](https://www.t-mobile.com/news/t-mobile-update-on-covid-19-response).
* 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.\*
* MetroSmart Hotspot devices will be half 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.

***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. Get more details from [**Sprint**](https://www.sprint.com/en/landings/covid-19.html?INTCID=HPB:ALL:ALL:COVID19:LP) and [**Boost Mobile**](https://www.boostmobile.com/about/covid-19-response.html?INTCID=HP:Wide:W:Other:All:Covid19-OurPlan)
* 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**](https://www.sprint.com/en/support/solutions/device/mobile-hotspot.html?INTNAV=Search:mobile%20hotspot) per month for 60 days (a minimum of two bill cycles) at no extra cost.
* 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.

***Tips for getting and improving access***

In addition to new offers from the telecommunications companies, here are helpful tips to [**improve your internet access**](https://connectednation.org/helpful-tips-to-improve-your-internet/) and how to [**turn your mobile phone into a Hot Spot**](https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-turn-your-phone-into-a-wi-fi-hotspot) to connect your computer to the internet.

Lastly, we recognize that not everyone may have access to a computer or device. We are working with the community to figure out how to better address this need. For now, we advise connecting with [**PCs for People**](https://www.pcsforpeople.org/covid19updates/),  a non-profit that works to distribute low-cost computers nationally.

***Additional resources***

To learn more about what is happening nationally to get people connected to the internet, here are three additional resources that might be useful:

1. [**The National Digital Inclusion Alliance**](https://www.digitalinclusion.org/) offers resources for educators, policymakers, and a list of low-cost internet options nationally.
2. [**The FCC has a COVID-19 response**](https://www.fcc.gov/coronavirus) and has initiated a Keep America Connected Pledge to ensure Americans don’t lose internet access during this time.
3. [**EveryoneOn**](https://www.everyoneon.org/) Discount Broadband Locator is updating the ISP discount locator tool with information about COVID specific offers.