



# Digital Inclusion Network

## DIGITAL INCLUSION NETWORK

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

2:30-3:30pm

Call-in number: 877-363-1831, Participant code 710930

### AGENDA

- Introductions
- COVID-19 response efforts/needs
  - Below you will find information and resources related to:
    1. Connectivity
    2. Devices
    3. Online training resources
    4. Public policy/advocacy – with some time sensitive **CALLS TO ACTION** highlighted
    5. Foundation support

Thank you,

The Planning Team

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DIN meetings are convened by the City of Portland Office for Community Technology, Multnomah County Library and County IT. [www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/DEAP)

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### CONNECTIVITY

390 entities have signed on to the Keep Americans Connected Pledge.

By taking the pledge, a company commits that until May 12, 2020 it will:

- 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;
- Waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and
- Open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

[EveryoneOn.org](http://EveryoneOn.org)'s offer locator tool is up to date on all new internet service provider commitments in light of demands from the outbreak. Anyone can visit [EveryoneOn.org](http://EveryoneOn.org) and click on the red banner at the top to search for offers exclusive

to their area. The algorithm eliminates having to determine if a particular provider is in a given market. All that is needed to find low-cost internet offers is a zip code and responses to eligibility questions to further narrow down active offers.

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY SERVICE PROVIDERS

Signed on to the pledge: AT&T, CenturyLink, Comcast, Frontier (NW Fiber), Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon

In addition to the pledge commitments:

- **AT&T** is funding an eLearning coalition to provide free resources to educators and offering Cisco Webex Meetings for 90 days to businesses, universities and schools.
- **CenturyLink** is suspending data usage limits.
- **Comcast** (Xfinity) is increasing broadband speeds for [Internet Essentials](#) (low-income) customers from 15 Mbps to 25 Mbps, offering broadband service for free for 60 days to new Internet Essentials customers ([apply online](#)), and offering all customers unlimited data for 60 days.
  - [Accessing Comcast hotspots](#) – (note hotspots are primarily located in business and outdoor locations like parks, shopping areas and transportation platforms. The sites aren't designed to be accessible in homes, so aren't as effective in providing access in a shelter in place situation). Some FAQs below:
    - **Why are we seeing prompts to either pay, use an existing account login, or a limit of 60 minutes when there is the free for everyone announcement?** If a person has selected "xfinity" from the list of available hotspot names, they will be asked for more information like payment details or password because they are most likely trying to connect to a residential Xfinity hotspot. Instead, please have folks make sure that they are selecting the "xfinitywifi" network name from the list of available hotspots to get the free access. These hotspots are located in business and outdoor locations like parks, shopping areas and transportation platforms which are open to everyone at this time.
    - **How can consumers find an open hotspot to connect to?** People can find their nearest hotspot by visiting <https://wifi.xfinity.com> and entering their zip code. Or download the Xfinity WiFi app and find the nearest hotspot on the map view.
- **Sprint** is offering unlimited smartphone data and additional mobile hotspot data for 60 days, increasing data usage limits for high school students without home Internet that are supported by the 1Million Project Foundation, and accelerating the delivery of 100,000 devices originally intended for next school year to those students.
- **T-Mobile** is offering unlimited smartphone data and additional mobile hotspot data for 60 days, providing additional free data to Lifeline partners' customers, increasing data usage limits for schools and students using EmpowerED digital learning programs, and offering free international calling to COVID19 impacted countries.
- **Verizon** is tripling the data usage limit for students in Title I schools that are part of the Verizon Innovative Learning Program and committing an additional \$10 million to nonprofits supporting students and first responders.

## DEVICES

- The National Cristina Foundation has put out a call to action to all public agencies and large corporations to repurpose surplus devices. **Call to Action:** Please send this link to all public agencies and large corporations in

your contact lists asking them to repurpose their devices, or send a personal note putting them in contact with Free Geek. <https://cristina.org/covid-19/> Or [donatetechnology.com](http://donatetechnology.com)

- **PCs for People** has a limited supply of devices available to low-income, free and reduced lunch or snap eligible residents. \$60/device, shipping is free. [pcsrefurbished.com](http://pcsrefurbished.com)
- **Human-I-T** has devices and hotspots <https://hitconnect.org/sales/buyInternet?product=6616>
- **Portland Public Schools:** To ensure access for all PPS students, PPS created the form below for you to fill out if your student or students need to borrow a mobile device from PPS. Please complete this form for each student that would need a device (for example, a computer or tablet). [PPS Student Computer Request Form](#)

## ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES

A few resources are highlighted below. We are interested to hear from DIN members about what is needed in the way of collecting and sharing online learning resources.

- The library is working to provide library cards through online sign up. Some resources for online learning for children are at the link here: <https://multcolib.org/e-books-and-more>
- <https://multcolib.org/resource/lyndacom> The library provides access to Lynda.com which includes technology, music (piano/guitar), and craft tutorials.
- <https://oslis.org> The State Library of Oregon maintains the OSLIS (Oregon Schools Library Information System) portal which includes research instruction and access to some online learning databases aimed at elementary and secondary level students (and their educators).
- <https://www.driveyourlearning.org> Connected Nation is providing some FREE resources for online training to help senior citizens and others in need of assistance.

## POLICY/ADVOCACY

- **CALL TO ACTION - FREE GEEK LETTERS OF SUPPORT** Free Geek is appealing to the state for funding to be able to continue providing computers for free to folks in vulnerable communities and is seeking letters of support for this effort. Contact Free Geek's Digital Inclusion Manager Adelle Pomeroy @ (503) 232-9350 x 116 or [Adelle.pomeroy@freegeek.org](mailto:Adelle.pomeroy@freegeek.org) for a helpful support letter template.
- **CALL TO ACTION – STIMULUS BILL** NDIA is working with Senator Murray on a Stimulus Bill – no draft language available yet. Initial idea is to ask for \$500 million to cover 1 million households (ABCD – Assistance, Broadband Connectivity, and Devices) (18 million don't have access nationally, so reaching 1 million is still a drop in the bucket). Call to action – get in touch with State elected officials/ OR Broadband Office and let them know this is a priority and that you encourage them to reach out to Senator Murray. Overall messaging: Digital Equity needs to be part of any stimulus bill. Republican support: Republican support is needed. NDIA is working on messaging that links stimulus funding for digital access as critical to public safety (education, health, economic prosperity don't seem to be topics that get Republicans to move on funding for digital equity, but public safety does). A blog post detailing Public Knowledge's proposal for Congress to pay for everyone to have free broadband for the duration of the Covid-19 crisis as part of the stimulus bill. <https://www.publicknowledge.org/blog/want-to-keep-america-home-give-everyone-free-basic-broadband/>
- **CALL TO ACTION – LIFELINE** Lifeline is a program that offers subsidies to low income households so that they can obtain access to telephone and Internet services. Given the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis and the need for access to affordable telephone and internet service, public interest organizations are sending this letter

requesting the Federal Communications Commission: 1) immediately prohibit disconnections of Lifeline consumers; 2) require Lifeline providers to offer unlimited voice minutes and unlimited texting; and 3) create an emergency Lifeline enhanced broadband benefit. Sign on to this letter to support emergency increases in the Lifeline benefit. [Sign on to this letter at this form ONLY](#). The sign on letter is for ORGANIZATIONS. The text of the letter is also available [here](#). The deadline for signing is **Friday March 20, 2020**. If you have questions, contact Cheryl Leanza of the United Church of Christ at 202-904-2168 or [cleanza@alhmail.com](mailto:cleanza@alhmail.com). If you cannot sign by the deadline, there is a plan to continue to collect signatures over the weekend and resubmit on Monday with a press push.

## FCC ACTION (source: Benton Institute)

The FCC recently took a number of actions intended to meet people's connectivity needs as our lives increasingly (exponentially) move online.

### Some actions that are most relevant to our DIN community:

- The FCC granted [Telecommunications Relay Service providers temporary waivers](#) to better enable American Sign Language interpreters to work from home in order to maintain relay services during the current coronavirus pandemic for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, or have a speech disability. Telecommunications relay services (TRS) ensure access to the communications network for hundreds of thousands of Americans with disabilities. The FCC also temporarily waived certain other TRS rules to provide flexibility to providers and allow them to continue to provide these vital services.
- On March 18, the [FCC made it easier for broadband providers to support telehealth and remote learning efforts by waiving gift rules until September 30, 2020](#). The waiver will enable service providers to offer, and Rural Health Care and E-Rate program participants to solicit and accept, improved connections or additional equipment for telemedicine or remote learning during the coronavirus outbreak. FCC rules prohibited soliciting or accepting anything of value from a service provider participating or seeking to participate in those programs. The waiver will allow health care providers, schools, and libraries to accept improved capacity, Wi-Fi hotspots, networking gear, or other equipment or services during the coronavirus outbreak. For example, some providers have expressed interest in providing free network upgrades for hospitals that need more robust connections to treat patients via telemedicine and free connected devices and hotspots for students who will be taking classes at home. This waiver will enable them to do such things.
- There were also changes for the Lifeline program. The [FCC waived recertification and reverification requirements](#) for participating low-income consumers for 60 days. The FCC also waived for 60 days the requirement that participating carriers' enrollment representatives register with the Lifeline program administrator, the Universal Service Administrative Company. These changes are meant to ease burdens on Lifeline subscribers during the coronavirus pandemic and allow Lifeline carriers to focus their efforts on assisting customers.
- On the wireless front, we've been reading all week about [spectrum lending](#). Wireless spectrum holders are working together to most efficiently use available spectrum. That has led carriers and spectrum holders to temporarily put competition aside and enter wireless spectrum lending arrangements. The goal is to expand voice, video, and data capacity where it is needed as work, education and commerce shifts to the home from the office, school, and store. The FCC has been expediting approval of the required special temporary authority (STA) requests. Dish Network and at least six other spectrum holders are loaning T-Mobile 600 MHz spectrum for 60 days. T-Mobile also expanded roaming access to Sprint subscribers to its network. In addition to Dish, carriers loaning spectrum to T-Mobile are Bluewater, Channel 51, Comcast, Grain Management affiliate NewLevel, LB Holdings, and Omega Wireless. The FCC's major spectrum actions:
  - The [FCC granted Special Temporary Authority to T-Mobile U.S.A.](#) to use additional spectrum in the 600 MHz Band to help it meet increased customer demand for broadband during the coronavirus pandemic.
  - The [FCC granted Special Temporary Authority to U.S. Cellular](#) to operate for 60 days in spectrum licensed to Advantage Spectrum in the AWS-3 Band in order to provide additional capacity to U.S. Cellular customers in parts of California, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin.

- The [FCC granted Verizon's request](#) to operate for 60 days in spectrum licensed to Northstar Wireless LLC and SNR Wireless LicenseCo in the AWS-3 Band in order to provide additional capacity to Verizon customers across the country.

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

- Miller Foundation: James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation is working with other funders interested in supporting our statewide arts and cultural communities whose gatherings, galleries, performances, productions, and exhibitions are closed for the time being. If you are interested in learning more visit [millerfound.org](http://millerfound.org) or write to [martha@millerfound.org](mailto:martha@millerfound.org) Also, you may be interested in the [Portland Area Artist Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- United Way of Columbia-Willamette: United Way's Safety Net funding mobilizes nonprofits across our four counties (Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington and Clark, WA) to help individuals and families meet their basic needs. In the wake of the new virus, and the rippling effect it will have, we remain committed to providing critical services including short-term housing assistance, utilities assistance and access to food boxes and pantries. [Read more.](#)
- McKenzie River Gathering Foundation: MRG Foundation has decided to release \$300,000—30% of its operating reserves—to start a Community Response Fund. The Fund will rapidly deploy resources to community-based organizations at the frontlines of the COVID-19 outbreak in Oregon. [Read more.](#)
- Oregon Community Recovery Fund: Established in collaboration with partners throughout the state, the Oregon Community Recovery Fund will rapidly deploy resources to community-based organizations at the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak. Donations are coming in from around the state – from business, individuals, other foundations – all stepping up to support our fellow Oregonians. [Read more.](#)
- Women's Foundation of Oregon: COVID-19/Coronavirus Rapid Response Fund: Given the emerging and uncertain nature of COVID-19, we recognize this moment will have large and lasting impacts on service providers and organizations working with those most vulnerable in our communities in Oregon and surrounding Indigenous communities and nations. [Read more.](#)