

A Consumer Action Guide

Low-income broadband plans

The flyers in this package describe programs that offer low-income households more affordable access to the internet.

A companion brochure, “Getting up to speed: Broadband internet for low-income households,” explains the benefits of internet access:

http://www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/getting_up_to_speed.

Consumer Action

www.consumer-action.org

Consumer advice and referral hotline

Our national hotline offers consumer advice and referrals in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Email: hotline@consumer-action.org

Phone: 415-777-9635

Access from AT&T



Access from AT&T is AT&T's high-speed internet adoption program for low-income households. It provides low-cost internet service for \$5 or \$10 a month, depending on speed.

Cost: Qualifying households will get the fastest of three speed tiers—10Mbps, 5Mbps or 3Mbps—available at their address. Internet speeds of 10Mbps and 5Mbps will cost \$10 a month, and internet speed of 3Mbps will cost \$5 a month. Service will include a monthly data allowance of 150GB, 300GB or 600GB, depending on the type and speed of service you receive. If you exceed your monthly data plan allowance, you will be automatically charged \$10 for each additional 50GB of data you use, even if less than the full 50 gigabytes is used. Participants do not have to pay for installation, activation or the modem or gateway, and no deposit is required.

Equipment: Access from AT&T service includes a Wi-Fi-capable modem or gateway that broadcasts a Wi-Fi (wireless) signal inside your home, allowing you to extend the reach of your wireline internet service. You can access this Wi-Fi signal on a variety of devices that are Wi-Fi compatible, including laptops, tablets and smartphones. AT&T will send you a self-installation kit with step-by-step instructions so that you can complete the installation process yourself. However, if you need help after attempting self-installation, you may request a technician (at no charge) to assist with installation.

Eligibility: Access from AT&T is available to households:

- With at least one resident who participates in the U.S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (California households also qualify if a resident receives Supplemental Security Income [SSI])
- With an address in AT&T's [21-state service area](http://www.att.com/Common/merger/files/pdf/att-us-service-area-map-21-state.pdf) (<http://www.att.com/Common/merger/files/pdf/att-us-service-area-map-21-state.pdf>) where it offers wireline home internet service and at least one of the three speed tiers offered under the program
- Without outstanding debt for AT&T fixed internet service within the last six months or outstanding debt incurred under the Access from AT&T program

How to apply: Visit att.com/access online, or call 855-220-5211 (English speakers) or 855-220-5225 (Spanish speakers). In addition to providing identification and address information, you will need to submit proof of SNAP participation (a copy of either a SNAP card or a SNAP participation or benefits letter) or, in California only, receipt of SSI (a copy of either an original award letter from the Social Security Administration or a current Benefit Planning Query statement [BPQY] Form number SSA-2459).

Internet Basics (CenturyLink)



CenturyLink Internet Basics is a low-cost internet service available to eligible low-income customers. It provides internet service for \$9.95 per month (faster speeds available for a higher monthly fee).

Cost: The rate of \$9.95 per month is for speeds up to 1.5Mbps (may vary; not guaranteed), with a 12-month contract. Taxes, fees and surcharges are extra. Qualifying customers may keep the low-cost service for a maximum of 60 months after service activation provided the customer qualifies the entire time. After the first 12 months, a monthly rate of \$14.95 will apply and will last for the next 48 months. A one-time high-speed internet activation fee applies. Free self-installation is available. If installation by a CenturyLink employee is required, an installation fee applies. An early termination fee of up to \$200, prorated based on the remaining number of months in the contract term, will apply if service is canceled before the end of the contract term.

Equipment: Customers must either lease a modem from CenturyLink (the \$8.99 monthly lease charge will be waived for the first 12 months of service; the lease fee will apply starting in the 13th month) or purchase a modem from CenturyLink for a one-time charge of \$99.99. Credit approval and a deposit may be required. Enrollees have the option to purchase an iPad Mini tablet for \$150 plus tax and shipping/handling, with a mandatory 24-month internet contract (\$9.95/mo. for 12 months; \$14.95 for months 13-24). Early termination fees apply.

Eligibility: Internet Basics is available to households that:

- Follow current guidelines for Lifeline/TAP phone service programs
- Live where CenturyLink offers internet service (not available in all areas)
- Have not subscribed to CenturyLink internet service within the last 90 days and are not a current CenturyLink internet customer
- Do not have an overdue CenturyLink bill or unreturned equipment

The program requires customers to recertify their eligibility every year.

How to apply: Visit www.centurylink.com/home/internetbasics/ online, or call 866-541-3330 (English and Spanish). The company offers a Spanish website (<http://espanol.centurylink.com>).

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Internet Essentials from Comcast



Internet Essentials is Comcast's high-speed internet adoption program for low-income households. It provides low-cost internet service for \$9.95 a month with in-home Wi-Fi included; the option to purchase an internet-ready computer for \$149.99 plus tax; and access to free digital literacy training available online and in person.

Cost: For \$9.95 a month plus tax, Internet Essentials subscribers get up to 10 Mbps downstream, which is enough to power multiple devices simultaneously. All customers receive an in-home Wi-Fi router, allowing them to connect any internet-enabled device, such as tablets or smartphones, which could help save money on monthly wireless bills. There is no installation or activation fee and all customers are eligible for a free professional installation.

Equipment: Your welcome kit includes a modem (with built in Wi-Fi) and set-up instructions for connecting. Internet Essentials customers have the option to purchase an internet-ready computer for \$149.99 plus tax. The computer is delivered pre-loaded with Microsoft Office and Norton Security Suites. A payment plan is available.

Eligibility: Households with school-age children and those receiving HUD housing assistance may apply for Internet Essentials. Additionally, Comcast offers pilot programs for low-income seniors and community college students in select markets (see below). All applicants must:

- Not have outstanding debt to Comcast that is less than one year old (Comcast offers amnesty for households who are eligible for Internet Essentials and have a past due balance older than one year.)
- Live in an area where Comcast internet service is available (and in a pilot market for pilot programs)
- Have not subscribed to Comcast internet within the last 90 days

Additionally, applicants must fall into one of the following programs:

- **K-12 Program:** Open to any family that has at least one child eligible for the National School Lunch Program. Families whose children attend schools with 40 percent or more participation in the National School Lunch Program can get instant approval without needing to submit additional paperwork.
- **Housing Assistance Program:** Open to households who receive HUD housing assistance such as Public Housing, Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8 Vouchers) or Multifamily Assistance (such as Project-Based Section 8 and 202/811).
- **Senior Citizen Pilot:** Open to low-income seniors (62 years or older) receiving federal or state public assistance and residing in Palm Beach County, FL, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco or Seattle.
- **Community College Pilot:** Open to community college students receiving a federal Pell Grant and residing in Illinois or Colorado.

Regardless of participation in the Internet Essentials program, households are eligible to attend free Comcast digital literacy programs in person (operated by Comcast training partners: <https://learning.internetessentials.com/free-classes-search>) or take advantage of free online tutorials (<https://learning.internetessentials.com/>).

How to apply: For more information or to see if you are eligible for Comcast Internet Essentials, visit www.internetessentials.com or call 855-846-8376 (English and Spanish). Call center agents have access to translators to help callers speaking a variety of languages, and program materials are available in 12 languages beyond English and Spanish, such as Somali, Chinese, Korean and Russian.

Spectrum Internet Assist



Spectrum Internet Assist is Charter Communications' low-cost high-speed internet program for qualifying households. It provides up to 30 Mbps with no data caps, modem included, for \$14.99 per month wherever the service is available.

Cost: For \$14.99 per month plus tax, Spectrum Internet Assist subscribers get up to 30 Mbps downstream, which is enough to power multiple devices simultaneously, and 4 Mbps upstream. An internet modem and self-installation kit is included in that cost. For an additional \$5 per month, subscribers can receive a Wi-Fi router so that multiple users throughout the home can use the service (avoidable if you purchase and set up your own Wi-Fi router). No contract is required, and Charter has promised to never raise the plan price.

Equipment: An internet modem will be provided when you sign up for service. A Wi-Fi router costs an additional \$5 per month, but this monthly charge can be avoided if you purchase and set up your own router.

Eligibility: The discounted internet service is available to families with students who participate in the National School Lunch Program and seniors 65 and older who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), wherever the service is available (existing or expected in approximately 40 states). To participate, households must:

- Have at least one child who receives reduced or free lunch through the National School Lunch Program and/or a senior (65 and over) who receives SSI
- Not have subscribed to a Charter, Time Warner Cable or Bright House broadband plan in the 60 days prior to enrollment
- Not have outstanding bills or unreturned equipment from any of the three companies

How to apply: Visit <https://www.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist.html>, where you can enter your ZIP code to find out if service is available in your area (Spanish speakers can use this link: <https://espanol.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist.html>). Then call 844-525-1574 for more information or to subscribe.

Connect2Compete (EveryoneOn.org)



Connect2Compete (C2C) is a nationwide program offered by non-profit EveryoneOn to provide affordable internet service and devices to students and families that qualify for the National School Lunch Program. C2C is offered in partnership with leading cable companies, including Cox, Bright House Networks, Google Fiber, MediaCom, Suddenlink and Comcast. EveryoneOn also collaborates with libraries and other non-profits to spread the word about free computer and internet courses at over 8,000 training sites across the country. Call 855-EVERY1ON (387-9166)—English and Spanish available—or visit EveryoneOn.org to find out if there's a class near you.

Cost: Eligible households receive internet access for as low as \$9.95 per month (plus tax). For most customers, there is no deposit required, contracts to sign, or installation or modem rental fees. The actual monthly service rate and cost, if any, for installation, modem, etc., as well as contract and deposit requirements, will depend on the cable company serving your area. Learn more about the plans offered by participating service providers at <http://everyoneon.org/eligibility/>.

Equipment: A modem will be provided by the cable company providing your service. Whether there is a modem purchase or monthly rental fee will depend on the provider. EveryoneOn works to sell refurbished devices, including tablets costing under \$150 and computers costing less than \$200, to eligible individuals and families.

Eligibility: The discounted internet service is available to students and families that qualify for the National School Lunch Program in areas served by the internet service providers (ISP) that are part of the program. Some providers may offer low-cost plans to seniors as well. Not every ISP serves every part of the United States. To participate, families must:

- Have at least one child eligible for or enrolled in the National School Lunch Program
- Not have subscribed to internet service within the last 90 days
- Not have outstanding bills or unreturned equipment from any partner ISP

How to apply: Visit <https://everyoneon.org/get-connected/>, where you can enter your ZIP code to find local plans and enroll online (Spanish speakers can use this link: <http://everyoneon.org/?lang=es>). To learn more, visit everyoneon.org/about/c2c/ (English site) or <http://everyoneon.org/about/c2c/?lang=es> (Spanish site).