



East Central Vermont Telecommunications District

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ECFiber Supports Students with Free Installations and Service through April

The East Central Vermont Telecommunications District (ECFiber) is working with the supervisory unions and schools in the 22 member towns in which it has active service to get high-speed internet to students forced to stay home due to the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. Until further notice, ValleyNet, the non-profit company that designs, builds and operates the fiber-to-the-home network for ECFiber, will install internet to any serviceable address at no cost to families whose school-age children are eligible for WIC or Reduced/Free Lunch programs at school. The internet service will also be provided at no cost through at least the end of April or until school reconvenes if longer.

“Many of us have long been concerned about affordability, especially as a barrier to fully realizing the educational benefits of ubiquitous broadband. Obviously, school closures have made that problem even more urgent.” said Irv Thomae, Chair of the ECFiber Governing Board.

The program will prioritize households with one or more children enrolled in grades 6-12, on roads where ECFiber is now or imminently about to be available. This includes 13 fully built out towns, and parts of nine others.

“Our staff is fully committed to the mission of getting internet available to anyone, and since this pandemic was declared, we’ve been implementing protocols to protect our workers and homeowners to ensure we can continue to do installations for as long as possible” said Christopher Recchia, ValleyNet’s Managing Director. “Parents and households wishing to take advantage of this offer need only go to www.ecfiber.net/subscribe or call (802) 763-2262 and subscribe. This gives us permission to get the fiber from the nearest utility pole to your house, and we’ll then schedule the inside installation.” Recchia added. When subscribing, eligible households are asked to add in the “Special Instructions/Comments” section that the family is eligible for WIC or reduced/free lunch programs. ValleyNet and ECFiber will confirm eligibility at a later date with the family.

This internet service offer applies to homes serviceable by above ground (aerial) connections to the nearest utility pole for homes that are on-grid (receive electricity from a utility). ECFiber can service the entire towns of: Barnard, Braintree, Brookfield, Granville, Hancock, Pittsfield, Pomfret, Rochester, Stockbridge, Strafford, Thetford, Vershire and West Windsor. Partial towns that are serviceable are: Bethel, Chelsea, Norwich, Randolph, Reading, Royalton, Sharon, Tunbridge and Woodstock.

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