



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DATES ANNOUNCED FOR SCHOOL MOBILE HOTSPOT ORDERS

COLUMBIA, SC – July 22, 2020 – The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education has begun the process of engaging school districts and higher education institutions across South Carolina to implement the distribution of mobile hotspots and monthly internet service through December 2020 to a minimum of 100,000 households.

For all school districts and educational institutions, paperwork will be sent out on or before July 27, with a deadline for orders being returned by Aug. 5. Priority is being given to households in counties that contain a school district that has been defined by the South Carolina Department of Education as having a poverty rate greater than or equal to 86 percent.

Already, the ORS has worked with wireless providers to secure up to 200,000 hotspots for South Carolina in anticipation of demand. As part of the agreement reached with providers, each hotspot will have security measures installed in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Schools themselves also will have the ability to block or unblock certain sites.

In some cases, wireless service may not be available or sufficient to meet an eligible student’s needs. Depending on the location, wired internet service may be available, and the ORS has received quotes from multiple wired providers offering competitive pricing.

As part of the authorization of the CARES Act funding, schools – public school districts as well as private schools, special schools, charter schools, private colleges, universities, or technical colleges – are responsible for distributing the mobile hotspots to eligible households.

To the extent schools can provide the addresses of qualifying households, the best available option can be determined, such as a hotspot or broadband internet access.

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