



# ONLINE LEARNING Initiative



## Mobile Hotspots and Monthly Internet Service

The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff is working with the South Carolina Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and private school associations on an Online Learning Initiative.

\$50 million of the Coronavirus Relief Fund for South Carolina included in the CARES Act has been allocated for broadband initiatives related to COVID-19. A portion of this funding will be used to procure mobile hotspots and monthly internet service for qualifying student households through December 31, 2020.

### → Program Overview

- One mobile hotspot or internet service per qualifying student household
- Paid monthly service through December 31, 2020
- Minimum of 100,000 households

### → Eligibility

Individuals who believe their household is eligible should contact their local school

- Households with an annual income of 250 percent or less of federal poverty guidelines
- An individual in the household attends a school
- The household does not have existing internet service
- The mobile hotspot is necessary as a result of the public health emergency caused by COVID-19
- The cost of mobile hotspots and related service was not accounted for in a school's budget as it existed on March 27, 2020
- Priority will be 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

### → Mobile Hotspot Distribution

Schools are responsible for distributing the mobile hotspots to eligible households

- Schools – public school districts as well as private schools, special schools, charter schools, private colleges, universities, and technical colleges – must complete a Memorandum of Understanding and submit an order form to the ORS
- Schools need to provide the ORS addresses of eligible households as soon as possible to help determine the best available option such as a mobile hotspot or wired internet access
- The ORS has secured 200,000 hotspots for South Carolina in anticipation of demand
- For all school districts and educational institutions, paperwork will be sent out on or before July 27, 2020, with a deadline for orders being returned by August 5, 2020

## Questions?

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### → Monthly Internet Service

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. Schools will need to provide the ORS addresses of those qualifying households in order to consider wired internet service as an alternative.

More information can be found at [ORS.SC.GOV/broadband](https://ORS.SC.GOV/broadband)