

COMCAST TO PROVIDE WI-FI TO LOW INCOME STUDENTS THROUGH LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTERS



Last year during the COVID-19 pandemic, Comcast, an American telecommunications conglomerate, launched a program to provide free Wi-Fi in community centers as part of an effort to improve internet access for students in low-income areas. The so-called “lift zones” have provided free internet connectivity as well as access to hundreds of hours of educational and digital skills content to help families be part of this online learning process.

The first 200 lift zones included community centers in cities such as Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Trenton, and St. Paul. Other community centers in Atlanta, Denver, Detroit, Miami, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC were added later.

“The COVID-19 crisis has put many low-income students at risk of being left behind and has accelerated the need for comprehensive digital equity and Internet adoption programs to support them,” Comcast executives said at that moment. “Lift Zones are intended to help those students who, for a variety of reasons, may be unable to connect to distance learning at home, or who just want to have another place in which to study.”

Back in June 2020, Comcast said it would continue to offer free access to its 1.5 million public Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots through the end of 2020, and they also extended free internet service to new customers on its Internet Essentials plan, which is designed for low-income families.

Comcast was one of several broadband internet providers to commit to an agreement to keep Americans connected back in March 2020, when the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and resulting lockdowns kept people working and studying from home. The providers promised not to terminate services for residences or small businesses that were unable to pay their bills because of the pandemic. The agreement also included a provision to open Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needed them.

**Adapted from <https://www.theverge.com/2020/9/17/21441222/comcast-wifi-community-centers-low-income-students>*

Glossary:

- **Hotspot:** a place in a hotel, restaurant, airport, etc. that is fitted with a special device that enables you to connect a computer to the internet without using wires.
- **Broadband:** a way of connecting to the internet that allows you to receive information, including pictures, etc., very quickly and that is always active (so that the user does not have to connect each time)

1. What has led Comcast to provide free internet to a big number of Americans?
 - a. The injustice in America.
 - b. A new government law.
 - c. The Covid-19 pandemic.
 - d. A rival internet provider.
2. The phrase **such as** in paragraph 1 is used to
 - a. express quantity.
 - b. introduce an example.
 - c. express contradiction.
 - d. Introduce a consequence.
3. A student with a lot of noise at home will be more likely to
 - a. quit his/her studies.
 - b. pay for a Comcast internet service.
 - c. move to Chicago as they have 200 lift zones.
 - d. go to a community center to join his/her online classes.

4. Complete the following cause-effect sequence using the words in the boxes below.
Drag a box and drop it in the corresponding number.

Lockdown

Comcast provides free internet

Low-income parents with kids can't pay internet services

Online Learning

Covid-19

