

A Guide to Operation Connectivity: How Municipalities and Counties Can Help

1.8 million students lack technology to learn from home

With the rise of COVID-19 in Texas, remote learning has become an essential part of schools' academic offering. Yet, it is estimated that over 1.8 million students in Texas lack the connectivity technology to learn from their homes. This connectivity gap is a significant barrier to academic success and economic empowerment for these students.

In response to this critical need, Governor Abbott and Texas legislative leaders have allocated \$200M in CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) funding to match \$200M in local district funding. This combined \$400M in bulk buying power will be used to cover the purchases of internet solutions such as hotspots and e-learning devices for Texas' School districts, with the goal of providing connectivity technology for all students who would not otherwise have them.



\$200M in CARES Act CRF funding + **\$200M** in local district funding = **\$400M** bulk buying power for connectivity technology

1 million e-learning devices

The Operation Connectivity bulk order program may leverage the majority of these funds to put over 1 million e-learning devices and nearly 500,000 hotspots in students' homes to enable learning, significantly reducing the connectivity gap.

Even with this historic investment, we may still have hundreds of thousands of Texas students who lack reliable internet access.

500,000 hotspots



Texas received \$11.24 billion in federal CARES Act CRF funding, of which over \$5 billion has been given to counties and cities to determine how they should be spent.



We are asking our cities and counties to allocate some portion of their local CRF funds to help us provide devices and internet to facilitate remote learning.¹

By assisting school systems with their local match funding right now, CRF contributions can enable purchases of devices and hotspots at steeply discounted rates that vendors have made available specifically for orders placed through Operation Connectivity.

Local governments will see a dramatic return on this investment, including smart procurement, increased access to online learning for students, and access to urgent family telehealth care.



1. U.S. Department of the Treasury's guidance on use of CARES funding lists examples of eligible use of funds, including "Expenses to facilitate distance learning, including technological improvements, in connection with school closings to enable compliance with COVID-19 precautions." Source: Coronavirus Relief Fund Guidance for State, Territorial, Local, and Tribal Governments, Updated June 30, 2020