



Wireless service offerings: Virtual/distance learning program (7/30/2020)

Overview

VITA is offering virtual/distance learning-specific wireless rate plans for AT&T, Sprint/T-Mobile and US Cellular. These plans contain more guaranteed high-speed data than normal government plans and were established to provide Virginia schools (primarily K-12) the ability to acquire and distribute wireless devices to students who lack adequate access to the Internet and who need to participate in virtual learning activities. Depending on the wireless carrier, school systems will save more than 50% off the normal government rate plan.

The rate plans, included on the wireless carrier state contract, are available statewide in Virginia and are the same for each carrier regardless of where the school system is located in Virginia. (*Exception: US Cellular only serves Southwest Virginia.*)

The plans provide 4G/LTE high-speed internet access wherever it is available in the commonwealth and are “unlimited.” A user will not be cut off during a billing cycle for high usage, but in some cases their speeds may be restricted (any restrictions are listed along with the plans) due to tower congestion, etc.

All of the distance learning rate plans include content filtering that is compliant with the **Children’s Internet Protection Act** (CIPA). It is a bundle, and the content filtering cannot be deleted from the offering at this time.

What can Virginia schools expect?

School systems can select from any offered wireless carrier rate plans, and can acquire services from one or all of the providers. Schools will receive one consolidated bill each month from VITA for their virtual/distance learning services.

Schools are responsible for tracking each device by the assigned phone number. If devices are lost or stolen, service can be suspended, the device will be turned off and the schools will not continue to be billed for the service.

The rate plan pricing does not include the cost of any equipment such as a MiFi, etc. Compatible equipment can be acquired from the wireless carrier and can be ordered from VITA at the same time the service is ordered. Schools should discuss equipment options with VITA or their selected wireless carrier prior to ordering.

Options include:

- Portable rechargeable MiFi type device
- SIM cards (no charge) for existing equipment. For example: a Chromebook that may already have a cellular modem installed

- Additional industrial grade equipment from Pepwave or Cradlepoint for installations in buses or buildings, etc.

Rates and order details:

Ordering is online, through the VITA simple work order process, and requires a login ID and password. School systems that currently do not have a TEBS login ID can email SCMInfo@vita.virginia.gov to get instructions on establishing an account and setting up credentials.

The rates can be found on the VITA website in two ways:

- Follow the distance learning links, and click on "Distance Learning Rate Plans":
<https://www.vita.virginia.gov/supply-chain/wireless-zip-code-search/>
- Enter the main zip code of the school system:
<https://vita2.virginia.gov/services/rates/zipSearch.aspx?dt=27&supplier=42>

Once the account has been set up, the school can enter orders, make service changes and run usage reports, etc. for their entire school system or individual schools. Once an order is entered into the VITA service portal, it takes 24-48 hours for it to reach the wireless carrier. Orders for large quantities may take longer to process by VITA and the carrier. Carriers will ship equipment or SIM cards, upon receipt of orders. Standard shipping is free.

School systems will have access to the state account teams for each carrier, and will continue to work with their local wireless carrier account representative. Schools continue to work directly with the wireless carrier for equipment or service issues and can use VITA as an escalation point. VITA provides ordering, billing and contract support.

Any billing issues are handled between the school system and VITA. School systems do not have to handle billing disputes with each carrier. VITA will act on their behalf.

Any concerns or additional questions about the virtual/distance learning rate plans should be sent to VITA's supply chain management (SCMInfo@vita.virginia.gov).