

Connect2Compete and HUD Partnership

Frequently Asked Questions

Connect2Compete

General

Q. What is available through C2C?

A. Connect2Compete (C2C) works in partnership with the nation's leading Internet providers, hardware and software manufacturers, digital content creators, and over 10,000 libraries and nonprofits to deliver free and affordable technology and training to all Americans.

- **Technology:**
 - Low-cost Internet Service
 - Wired, high-speed Internet through cable provider partners (Comcast, Cox, CenturyLink, Bright House, Mediacom) - \$9.95 +tax/month
 - Wireless, high-speed Internet through FreedomPop- Varies by network coverage
 - Clear Network- 1GB/mo at no cost or 12GB/mo for \$9.99
 - Sprint Network- 500MB at no cost or 2GB/mo for \$19.99
 - Discounted Computers
 - Refurbished Desktops- max. \$150 (+ shipping)
 - Refurbished Laptops- max. \$199 (+ shipping)
 - Refurbished Tablets- max. \$150 (+ shipping)
- **Training:**
 - Online learning portal for end-user- everyoneon.org
 - In-person digital literacy training locator tool available through everyoneon.org/training-sites, calling 1-855-EVERY1ON (387-9166) or texting "connect" to 303-64.
 - Resources for training centers and facilitators- everyoneon.adcouncil.org

Q: What is the cost of broadband services?

A: All Internet service offers available through Connect2Compete are under \$10/month. *Wired*, high-speed broadband service offered through C2C's cable provider partners- Comcast, Cox, Mediacom, Bright House, Suddenlink and CenturyLink- is priced at \$9.95 +tax/month for qualifying customers. The eligibility requirements and speeds vary between offers and we encourage you to refer to slide 18 of the webinar deck or visit <http://www.connect2compete.org/faq/eligibility-requirements.php> for further details. *Wireless*, high-speed Internet is available through C2C's partner, FreedomPop, at no cost, \$9.99, or \$19.99 per month depending on customer's service coverage and choice of data plan.

Q: You've mentioned the data caps. What down/upload speeds are your providers offering?

A: The down/upload speeds for FreedomPop depend on the data plan, with up to 8Mbps download speed. Comcast's Internet Essentials plan has a download speed of up to 3Mbps and uploads up to

768Kbps (speed can vary). Cox's offer has downloads up to 5Mbps and uploads up to 1Mbps. More about the specific provider's offers can be found on the individual provider's website.

Q: How can I find out if my community is eligible (for the FreedomPop discounted offer)?

A: We recommend entering your ZIP code into connect2compete.org/HUD and you'll be presented with the available offers, or you can use the "FreedomPop coverage spreadsheet", available at <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/node/861>, to search by ZIP code or city to see if you are in a FreedomPop covered area (either Clear or Sprint network).

Q: What happens if I don't have a coverage origination in our area?

A: If you are not covered by FreedomPop (meaning you're not in the Clear or Sprint network), you may be covered by one of our Cable provider partners- Comcast, Cox, Bright House, Mediacom, CenturyLink, or Suddenlink. Please keep in-mind that the Cable providers have restricted the discounted Internet offer to only be available to families who have children receiving "free", or in some cases "free or reduced", school lunch through the National School Lunch Program.

If you find you are currently not in coverage for a C2C Internet offer, we encourage you to stay tuned via social media or checking connect2compete.org for any updates regarding new available offers and expanded coverage as we're constantly working to develop new partnerships with Internet service providers. And of course, our low-cost laptop, desktop, and tablet offers are available through our device partners to all HUD staff and residents, even if they are not in coverage for the Internet offers.

Q: Will the C2C website be in languages other than English?

A: The website is currently available in Spanish; you can click the last link on the top navigation bar on connect2compete.org/Spanish.

Q: Is this open for Native American Tribes?

A: Yes! While the available Internet offers depend on the coverage available for a tribe's location, they are certainly welcome to apply to become a pre-qualified partner.

Partnership with HUD

Q. What is the partnership with HUD about? What are the benefits?

A. In order for HUD-assisted residents to succeed in today's digital economy, they will have to have access to computers, the Internet, and the training to use them. HUD has long understood the importance of helping low-income Americans connect to the tools of the 21st century. Since 1995, when HUD created the Neighborhood Networks program, HUD has helped many residents get online. But HUD cannot do this work alone. The resources C2C brings to the table can help HUD and its housing partners continue the important work of "bridging the digital divide" so that more residents can enjoy the benefits of Internet connectivity.

By partnering with C2C, HUD has been able to pre-qualify residents of public and assisted housing for the low-cost programs offered by C2C. Please note that availability of the low-cost offers can vary by geographic location.

Q. Are HUD funds available to support broadband Internet adoption and training?

A. Yes.

Public Housing Response: The Public Housing Capital Fund can be used to open a Neighborhood Networks computer lab. Equipment, Internet connectivity, space renovation/remodeling, staff salary, and insurance costs can be paid for using Capital Funds. These funds can be used for the first year of the center's operation. Subsequently, PHAs can use their Operating Funds for the continued operation of the NN center. However, any equipment upgrades over the life of the NN center would come from the Capital Fund. Similarly, PHAs can use their Capital Funds to purchase routers for individual units. However, neither Capital Funds nor Operating Funds can be used to pay for residents' in-unit Internet access.

Multifamily Housing Response: To utilize HUD funding, talk with a local HUD Project Manager or HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinator. Multifamily Neighborhood Networks centers rely primarily on local support. The Initiative encourages partnership development, business opportunities, and other income-generating activities. To help support and sustain a center, HUD funding can be obtained from one or more of the following:

- Residual Receipts account. Residual Receipts accounts are found in properties owned by nonprofit and limited dividend owners. Funds from the Residual Receipts account may be used to fund a center to the extent that HUD determines that these funds are not required to maintain the habitability of units or to meet other building needs or to off-set the Housing Assistance Payments contract.
- Owner's Equity. The owner of a limited distribution property can increase the amount of the initial equity investment (and, in turn, the yield on distribution) by investing non-repayable funds in the center. A rent increase, however, will not be approved to provide for additional yield.

Other HUD funding options include:

- Funds borrowed from the Reserve for Replacement Account. Funds from the Reserve for Replacement Account may be used to fund a center as long as HUD determines that these funds are not required to meet anticipated repair and replacement needs. If this source of funding is used, a scheduled repayment plan that illustrates how the Reserve for Replacement Account will be replenished must be submitted.
- Rent increase. The owner of a property where rents are set under the budgeted rent increase process may request an increase to cover center costs. These increases may be approved at HUD's discretion. For properties with Multifamily Assisted Housing Reform and Affordability Act (MAHRA) contracts, there may be limitations on HUD's ability to raise rents.
- Requesting a special rent adjustment. Properties with rents that are set using the annual adjustment factor may request a special adjustment rent increase to cover costs of a

Neighborhood Networks center. These increases may be approved at HUD's discretion and are subject to guidance in the Multifamily Asset Management and Project Servicing Handbook, 4350.1, Chapter 34.

- Excess income. For properties that generate excess income, HUD Notice 01-07 authorizes the retention of excess income to help develop a Neighborhood Networks center.

Q: Can individual residents of an affordable housing agency participate as readily as organizations?

A: HUD has registered to be a pre-qualified organization, thereby pre-qualifying all of the local housing authorities nationwide as well as residents of Multifamily Housing properties. Individual residents just need to go to connect2compete.org/HUD and follow the steps to enrollment to receive their discounted modem and/or computer.

Q: As a housing authority, can we order modems for all (212) of our units, instead of having our residents apply individually?

A: Yes, that is an excellent strategy and we'd love to talk to you about it. Please email info@everyoneon.org with your contact information and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Q: Is a Neighborhood Networks Center (NNC) eligible to pre-qualify even though the zip code they are in does not?

A: Yes. Any organization, such as a Neighborhood Networks Center, that provides services for, or works with, low-income individuals and/or families can become a pre-qualified partner regardless of whether they are located in an "eligible zip code". One caveat, however, is that the organization and community should have either Sprint or Clearwire network coverage so they are able to access the connection.

If you are looking to connect all of your center's computers through the discounted FreedomPop Internet service, we suggest you reach out to us directly (info@everyoneon.org) so we can find a time to discuss the best options for your center.

Digital Literacy training

Q. What training options are there?

A. There is the in-person digital literacy training locator tool available through everyoneon.org/training-sites, calling **1-855-EVRY1ON (387-9166)** or texting "**connect**" to **303-64** that will tell someone where the closest facilities offering free training are located and their contact information. End-users can also find self-paced online learning resources to help them get started on digitallearn.org as well as everyoneon.org.

If you're looking for facilitator resources- digitallearn.org has recently launched an online community for practitioners to share ideas, best practices, and resources related to helping people attain new digital literacy skills.

Tools/Resources/Tech Support

Q: How are you handling the 90 days of support? Is this contracted out to the refurbishers?

A: The 90 days of free PC technical support is managed directly by the device refurbisher.

Q: What tech support is provided especially for new users with a lot of questions or, potential troubleshooting needs?

A: All of the Internet providers and refurbished computer/software providers that work with C2C have customer service call centers available. Such contact information is listed on the website within the offers' descriptions. Real people are answering questions and they understand that this channel is going to be new users. We have also included these technical support numbers in the Frequently Asked Questions section of connect2compete.org.

Q: I'm not sure I understand enough about Connect2Compete to present it to my Director. Would one of your staff be available to come and present your program to my Director and his staff? We have seniors and low income families in our facilities. I am Senior Services Coordinator for 4 senior high rises.

A: As our team is quite small, we are somewhat limited to destinations within driving distance of the D.C. area. If you are located within this region, we can certainly discuss having someone from C2C come and present in-person. Otherwise, we would be happy to work with you to make sure you have all the appropriate information necessary so that you feel comfortable presenting or we can discuss setting-up a call or webinar where a C2C staffer could go over the program with your team. In either case, please reach out to info@everyoneon.org to discuss the opportunities further.

Q: Who trains people how to use the C2C website?

A: C2C is in the process of creating a brief tutorial video to help guide facilitators and users through the enrollment steps on the C2C website. The video will be made available on the homepage within the next few weeks. We are also happy to perform customized in-person or via webinar trainings for partners, depending on the circumstances. Please contact info@everyoneon.org to learn more.

Also, please note that the C2C website is constantly being updated to create the most intuitive and user-friendly experience and any feedback and/or suggestions are always welcomed.

Partnerships

Q: How will your program address rural populations? Considering that most C2C cable providers, Sprint and Clear don't serve rural areas in the West, have you thought about possibly adding rural telecoms as partners?

A: First and foremost, C2C is not an infrastructure or deployment focused organization, although we do care about access where it doesn't exist on the infrastructure side. We encourage new partners on the private sector side to come onboard where there are no existing offers. We all know that approximately

3 - 5% of the country lacks any infrastructure, and while this gap is not a primary focus of C2C's, we do hope to be involved in conversations about how that infrastructure does get built in the near term sooner than later. To that end, we are currently in conversations with the National Cable and Telecommunications Association (NCTA) and small multi-system operators (MSOs) about extending the footprint for C2C offers into rural areas.

Availability

Q: What does it mean when you do a zip code search and the response on all three elements of the program is "N/A"?

A: Unfortunately this implies that the user is not within a FreedomPop covered area and does not qualify for any of the cable provider offers. They would be disqualified from any of the cable providers' offers if, on the questionnaire page, they indicated that "there is no child participating in the free or reduced price school meals program in the home", or if they answered "yes" to either of the other questions concerning past due balances and un-returned equipment or having internet service within the past 90 days.

Q: I have been browsing the Connect2Compete site to see if there is any availability of low-cost internet through Connect2Complete and haven't found it. Initially I know that there was no participation here, but I heard that there were plans for Connect2Compete to hit all 50 states. True or not? The speeds that you are talking about don't exist for home consumers at any price here.

A: Currently, there are about 60 million Americans across 49 states (excludes Alaska) who are in coverage and qualify for one of C2C offers. Some of these states do have much less covered area than others of course, and we are working on bringing more rural multiple-system operators (MSOs) to the table to participate in the C2C program. However, C2C's focus is not on network deployment in areas that currently have no infrastructure, though we do hope to inform the policies and investments to bring broadband infrastructure to every American through our success.

Q: I know there is a list of zip codes, but is the aim to reach all 50 states, or does it depend on convincing ISPs to participate?

A: Yes, the goal is to reach all unconnected households with affordable offers in all 50 states, but this is dependent on service providers who are willing to work with us to create the necessary value discount on the monthly high-speed Internet. Currently, there are about 60 million Americans from 49 states (excluding Alaska) who are in coverage and qualify for one of C2C offers, though some states have small pockets of coverage at present. C2C is constantly working to develop new partnerships with Internet Service Providers in order to expand the footprint for discounted Internet offers.

Q: When you go to the Connect2Compete website it doesn't show that Comcast covers our zip code (32114), even though previously the cable company was Comcast. Is there some kind of conflict with the site? Where do we proceed from there?

A: On the questionnaire page, did you indicate having at least one child in the home who is eligible to receive free or reduced school lunch? In order to qualify for, and be presented with, the Comcast's Internet Essentials offer, a user must be able to check either "Yes, my child receives **free** school meals" or "Yes, my child receives **reduced price** school meals".

FreedomPop

General

Q: How does Freedom Pop manage to pay for this program? Is there any attempt by the provider to "upgrade" subscribers at increased costs?

A: We were really careful that the Connect2Compete Freedom Pop partnership offer was highly customized towards new users in the way that it protects against predatory behavior. We believe in our partners, in their intrinsic kind of mission focused participation in this, but that said, we took a lot of precautions.

One such precaution is that customers who come through the C2C channel cannot be charged with an overage fee. When a customer comes within 200-300MB of their data cap, 12GB for example, they will receive a text message (at no charge) alerting them that they are approaching their cap for the month. On top of this, a customer's service will be automatically shut-off when they meet the 12GB so they cannot risk going over the limit and getting charged. These services, which usually cost extra, are automatically included in a C2C's customer's plan at no cost.

Also, if a customer with the 12GB plan misses their \$9.99 payment one month, they won't lose their Internet service. Instead, they'll simply be downgraded to the 1GB plan until they make the next payment. This provides a great safety net so that individuals are not completely cut off if they aren't able to afford the \$9.99 charge one month.

We have made sure that information on the various data plans, such as what you can do with 12 gigabytes, how much can you use, and how you will get a text alert if you're getting close is easily accessible on both C2C's and FreedomPop's websites.

Another piece worth including here is the social layer on Freedom Pop that allows users to earn additional free data by connecting their friends to the offer. Through a tool called "Freedom Friends," users can essentially invite their contacts via email to sign-up for the service, and for every friend that joins- the user earns 50MB of extra data. We find this tool incredibly valuable as it allows more folks within the peer network of our users and beneficiaries to know about the offer.

Q: Where is the funding coming from for FreedomPop, and how will it be sustainable?

A: Investors of FreedomPop include: Skype Founder Niklas Zennstom's Atomico, Mangrove Capital, and DCM Capital among other leading venture capitalists. FreedomPop is already profitable and currently has over 150,000 customers.

Q: Do you ask for paper verification of lunch list status?

A: We do not require any sort of verification, paper or electronic, for the discounted offer through FreedomPop. However, the discounted offers through the cable companies do require paper verification at this time since they are only available for students receiving free or reduced school lunch and their families. Please see <http://www.connect2compete.org/faq/eligibility-requirements.php> for a more detailed overview of the various offers and eligibility requirements.

Q: Is there a map of areas eligible for Connect2Compete?

A: We do not have a map highlighting the pre-qualified zip codes by network coverage available at this time. However, we have the excel spreadsheet of eligible zip codes, “FreedomPop coverage spreadsheet” available at <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/node/861> that can be explored city-by-city. If you’d like any assistance reviewing the spreadsheet- please feel free to email info@everyoneon.org with questions.

Q: How is this different from a similar program offered by Comcast?

A: While Comcast’s Internet Essentials program is available exclusively for students who are in the National School Lunch Program, our partnership with the wireless service provider, FreedomPop, enables us to offer affordable Internet service to a much broader population. Our eligibility criteria requires that the customer either live in a zip code that has a median household income level of \$35k or less, known as a “pre-qualified zip code”, OR is a member or beneficiary of a local C2C pre-qualified partner organization. There are also no restrictions based on previous subscriptions to Internet service, bad debt, and/or unreturned equipment.

Q: Is there a website that contains all these FreedomPop details in one place?

A: Yes, you can visit connect2compete.org/faq/eligibility-requirements.php or freedompop.com/support.htm should have information.

Q: I wonder why there was not a payment option for PayPal?

A: That’s a great question- and while we don’t have that option available yet that’s not to say we aren’t looking to explore the possibility. We spent the past few months focusing on getting the partners to accept pre-paid debit cards, which was just recently set in place, so we can now try to push forward with including PayPal as well. We will be sure to provide updates with any progress made on this front, and welcome any suggestions you may have.

Q: Since Comcast is our cable provider in this community, would seniors be able to access FreedomPop?

A: Yes, the cable provider is in no way tied to FreedomPop’s service offer. We understand that the eligibility restrictions attached to the cable providers’ discounted offers mean that many people who need to get online are not able to sign-up, which is why we’re so excited to be working with

FreedomPop. FreedomPop worked with us to expand the eligibility criteria so that low-income seniors, veterans, and others who may not have any students in the household are still able to get connected at an affordable price. As long as your community is covered by either the Clearwire 4G or Sprint 3G/4G LTE network, you and your beneficiaries will have access to FreedomPop's discounted offers through connect2compete.org/HUD.

Q: The restriction against internet service in the last three months often excludes my tenants from program participation. They might be paying higher fees and could benefit from the lower fees. Is there a work around that requirement?

A: Yes. Since this restriction only applies to the cable provider offers, your tenants would still be eligible to sign-up for the FreedomPop discounted wireless Internet service. The only requirement for public and assisted housing residents to enroll in FreedomPop's service is that they live within Clear or Sprint network coverage. You can check coverage by entering your ZIP code on connect2compete.org/HUD or checking the "FreedomPop coverage spreadsheet" available on <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/node/861>.

Pre-qualified Beneficiaries

Q: Is this a separate prequalification from EveryoneOn?

A: Yes. EveryoneOn (everyoneon.org) is Connect2Compete's digital literacy awareness campaign and is a separate entity from C2C's discounted Internet and computer project. Assuming you are referring to the registration process for a facility to add itself to the EveryoneOn [digital literacy training locator tool](#), this is completely separate process from registering your facility or organization to become a C2C prequalified partner with automatic qualification for the discounted wireless Internet service and devices.

Q: What can be done for disadvantaged families who live in zip codes that do not prequalify?

A: Low-income families who happen to live in zip codes with a median household income exceeding \$35,000 are still eligible for the FreedomPop offer if they use a local C2C pre-qualified partner organization's unique URL to enroll, such as connect2compete.org/HUD. *Please note, the family must be within Clearwire or Sprint network coverage to access the offers.

Q: When you say partner non-profits are eligible for FreedomPop - does that include non-profit staff and patrons?

A: Yes it does! Once an organization has been pre-qualified and received their unique URL- all staff members and patrons will automatically be eligible.