

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CARES ACT HOTSPOT GRANTS

Background

On May 4, 2020, Oklahoma was awarded \$160,950,476 in federal K-12 relief funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund created by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Within that funding, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) was allocated a set-aside amount of \$15,290,296 for “emergency needs” to address issues related to coronavirus. Of the set-aside funds, the OSDE has purchased 50,000 Verizon Ellipsis Jetpack 900L hotspots to award to districts through a competitive grant.

The OSDE intends for these hotspots to be used to provide connectivity to students who do not currently have an internet connection at home to access online learning content for purposes of distance learning. In addition, the OSDE intends for these hotspots to be used to serve low-income students to help bridge the digital divide.

Award Eligibility

Districts receiving an award will be required to pay for the monthly service plan for each awarded device for a minimum of six months beginning when the devices are received by the district. The monthly service plan through Verizon includes **unlimited data (4G LTE)**. In considering an application for this grant opportunity, districts should evaluate their ability to fund the monthly service costs for all hotspots requested in the application. Pricing and additional terms will be available in the application. If you are unsure if Verizon service is available in your area, please reference the [Verizon coverage map](#) or contact OSDE.

As a condition of receiving a grant, hotspots funded through the grant may only be assigned to low-income students (i.e., economically disadvantaged students as reported on the district’s FY 20 Consolidated Report). Additionally, districts may only assign one hotspot per household unless the household has more than three school-age children, in which case the district may assign two hotspots.

To be eligible, districts must have a distance learning plan adopted by the local school board or a draft plan and projected date for adoption. Additionally, districts must have completed a survey of students and families to determine the technology needs of the district. The survey should provide evidence of the district’s need for hotspots and support the number of hotspots for which the district is applying. OSDE published a [draft technology](#) survey that districts can use for this purpose in its spring 2020 distance learning resources. Both of these documents are required to be uploaded with the district’s application.

Minimum content filtering will be included on each hotspot through partnership with OneNet. Districts are required to use best efforts to ensure data is solely used for educational application purposes (i.e., to limit service from being used for non-educational purposes and access to the open internet).

Additional Requirements for Hotspot Usage

- Districts must deploy hotspots to eligible students within two weeks of receiving the hotspots.
- Districts are responsible for payment of the monthly service fee regardless of whether the device is being used; however, a district may pause the service on a device at any time. While hotspots include a 12-month warranty for device malfunction, hotspots that are lost or damaged can only be replaced by the district at the full cost of the device.

- At the end of the six-month service agreement, service will be automatically extended at the same rate and plan until the Pandemic National Emergency is lifted or June 30, 2021, whichever is later.
- Districts not wishing to continue service beyond the six-month agreement must return all equipment to OSDE to be reassigned to those in need.
- Districts may continue service beyond the date the Pandemic National Emergency is lifted or June 30, 2021, whichever is later, but will do so at the market rate for hotspot service at that time. For districts that enter into such an agreement, the hotspot will become the property of the district.
- Hotspots secured through the grant may not be awarded to teachers and staff. However, districts may purchase additional hotspots for students not considered low-income and for teachers and staff from Verizon at the same cost and rate as secured by OSDE.
- Participating districts will have the opportunity to join monthly calls with the Verizon team, and each district will have a point of contact and account representative to work with directly.

Grant Management and Timeline

Districts will apply for the Hotspot Grant through the Grants Management System (GMS) of the OSDE. For additional information, contact Shelly Perkins at (405) 522-2194 or Shelly.Perkins@sde.ok.gov.

The Hotspot Grant application will be released Tuesday, July 14. Applications are due Friday, July 24, at 11:59 p.m. The OSDE expects to announce grant awards Friday, July 31. Hotspots will ship to districts within a week of the announcement.

Grant Application Review Process

The following scoresheet will be used to score each application.

Criteria	Maximum Point Value
Connection to Distance Learning Plan	50 points
Connection to Local Initiatives	20 points
Hotspot Deployment and Implementation	30 points
Bonus Points	
District received less than \$150 per student in CARES Act formula funds*	5 points
District did not receive an Incentive Grant*	5 points
Total Points	110

*Districts will either receive 5 points or 0 points on this item.

