



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PSC and DPI Announce Emergency Internet Finder

MADISON - On Tuesday, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) announced a new web tool that can assist users in finding free-to-use public broadband locations in their area. These "Emergency Internet" locations are for when a user's own internet is too slow or not available. While many of the identified location buildings are closed to the public, their Wi-Fi connections remain accessible. Users should stay in their vehicles while accessing the Wi-Fi and only use it long enough to access critical services.

People looking for emergency broadband locations can use the web tool at <https://maps.psc.wi.gov/apps/PublicWiFiLocations/>.

The web tool is the result of a collaboration to collect and map Wi-Fi location data between the State Broadband Office at the PSC and the Division for Libraries and Technology at DPI.

"Equitable access to broadband internet is crucial for children to succeed in education," said Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. "The digital divide is even more apparent during this health emergency, and this new tool will identify internet access locations so students and their families will be able to continue learning while schools remain closed."

The PSC and the DPI continue to survey internet service providers, public school districts, and libraries to obtain Wi-Fi location information and will update the web tool regularly with new information. Currently, there are almost 450 Wi-Fi locations identified statewide. The information is accessible on mobile devices so people can quickly find and visit local Wi-Fi hotspots.

"This pandemic underscores that access to broadband is an essential service for daily life, not a luxury," said Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson of the PSC. "It's unfortunate that families have to get into their cars and travel in order for students to continue their basic learning or for those in need to utilize telemedicine. Broadband offers the ability to connect when connectivity is needed the most."

As part of a broader legislative package in response to the COVID-19 outbreak,

Governor Tony Evers requested the state legislature approve additional funding for the state's Broadband Expansion Grant Program to push broadband access further into areas that are currently unserved or underserved by high-speed internet services.

"We've been working hard to expand access to high-speed internet, and I'm proud that the PSC and the DPI are connecting the dots to help kids and families across our state," said Governor Evers. "We also know that when it comes to high-speed internet, we have more work to do, and that's why I've asked the state legislature to take up an additional \$20 million to expand access to these critically important services."

On March 23, 2020, Governor Tony Evers and Andrea Palm, Secretary-designee of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services ordered residents in the state to stay at home or place of residence except for when performing essential activities or accessing essential services. See the order [here](#).

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