



AT&T Opens Connected Learning Center in Tupelo to Help Bridge the Digital Divide

New dedicated learning center at El Centro will provide greater connectivity, devices, and digital learning resources for students and parents

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What's the news? AT&T* is opening a new Connected Learning Center at El Centro in Tupelo to provide internet access and education tools to those who face connectivity barriers vital to their long-term success. It's part of the AT&T Connected Learning initiative and our \$2 billion [commitment](#) to address the digital divide through internet accessibility, affordability, and safe adoption. In addition, AT&T has made a \$50,000 contribution to El Centro.

The center in Tupelo is one of more than 20 Connected Learning Centers that AT&T is opening nationwide. Centers will be housed within local organizations that support underserved populations, including some of our nation's most vulnerable students and families. The goal of the centers is to encourage more families to get connected through free access to the internet and education resources that teach the value of broadband and how to use it safely and effectively.

Why is this important?

In Mississippi, it's estimated that [more than 124,000 students](#)¹ don't have internet at home needed to participate in distance learning.

"As we expand fiber availability to more locations across Mississippi, we are excited to bring the latest in fiber technology, computers, education and mentoring resources to El Centro and the establishment of this Connected Learning Center to help bridge the digital divide," **said Mayo Flynt, president, AT&T Mississippi.** "We are committed to building critical connections with community organizations – like El Centro – that share our dedication to the communities where we live and work."

How we will make it happen

The new center will help to bridge the digital divide by providing underserved students and families in Tupelo access to education, mentoring and tutoring resources, as well as high-speed AT&T Fiber internet, Wi-Fi, and computers.



Free education resources will be available within the center to help students and families participate in digital engagement. This includes newly launched [The Achievery](#), a free digital learning platform created by AT&T, as well as [free digital literacy courses](#) and workshops created with the Public Library Association.

“We can’t overstate the critical need to close the digital divide in Mississippi, and while my colleagues and I remain focused on delivering resources to make connectivity a reality for all Americans, this kind of collaboration between AT&T and El Centro is essential to our success in this work,” **said U.S. Senator Roger Wicker.**

As part of its ongoing commitment to championing digital inclusion for underserved communities, Dell Technologies donated Dell OptiPlex computers and Dell monitors which feature integrated audio and webcams to support virtual learning. Overland-Tandberg, a leading global technology and IT services company, led the onsite configuration of the computers. The company, a Black-owned corporation, is part of AT&T’s \$3 billion Supplier Diversity initiative.

“We have enjoyed working with AT&T over the years, and the collaboration on this project will prove critical for our community, our students, and their families,” said **Leticia Gassaway, chairperson, El Centro.** “Providing access to broadband, to devices, and to digital literacy tools will be essential to closing the homework gap and improving educational outcomes for the students and families we serve.”

How else are we supporting underserved communities in Mississippi?

We offer affordable internet options

We’re continuing to help make internet more affordable for millions of eligible households around the country, including in Mississippi. Eligible households can sign up for [free internet service by combining](#) the \$30 a month benefit from the new federal [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) with our low-cost [Access from AT&T](#) plan, which provides faster internet speeds of up to 100 Mbps.

We are expanding our network

In addition to our community investments across the state, we also continue to invest in bringing fiber and connectivity to businesses and residents in Mississippi. In fact, as of the end of 2021, more than 160,000 customer locations in Mississippi have access to AT&T Fiber, and from 2018-2020, we expanded coverage and improved connectivity, investing more than [\\$750 million](#) in our wireless and wireline networks in Mississippi.

Learn more at att.com/connectedlearning.



¹ Digital Bridge K-12

About El Centro

El Centro helps Hispanics and Northeast Mississippi residents integrate into the local community. El Centro provides services such as after-school tutoring, adult English classes, and workshops on a variety of topics relevant to the community.

***About Philanthropy & Social Innovation at AT&T**

We're committed to advancing education, creating opportunities, strengthening communities and improving lives. As part of our companywide \$2 billion commitment to address the digital divide from 2021 – 2023, we launched AT&T Connected Learning to invest in connectivity and technology, digital literacy and education solutions to help today's learners succeed inside and outside of the classroom. Since 2008, we've committed more than \$600 million to programs that help millions of students across all 50 states and around the world, particularly those in underserved communities.

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