



## **AT&T Expands Efforts to Bridge the Digital Divide in Communities Across the Nation**

*AT&T Connected Learning Center debuts in Dallas;  
Dell Technologies and Public Library Association among collaborators  
providing devices, digital literacy and learning tools for students and families*

DALLAS, Sept 16, 2021

### **What's the news?**

Today AT&T\* is taking new steps to help underserved students and families impacted by the digital divide. We're expanding free-device programs, increasing access to educational and digital literacy tools and opening the first of more than 20 AT&T Connected Learning Centers across the country.

These centers will be housed within local community organizations and will provide underserved students and families with free access to the internet, computers, and educational resources. As of now, we plan to open AT&T Connected Learning Centers in Dallas, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Miami, and San Francisco.

This expansion follows the announcement of the AT&T Connected Learning program in April, which is part of our three year [\\$2 billion commitment](#) to bridge the digital divide through efforts that promote broadband affordability, accessibility and adoption.

"The stakes for closing the digital divide are incredibly high, and it is imperative that we remove barriers to opportunity for children and families," said Jeff McElfresh, chief executive officer, AT&T Communications. "Education plays a vital role in the long-term success of our society, and we are committed to investing in the educational and connectivity needs of underserved communities, while also expanding access to low-cost broadband services."

### **Why is this important?**

Millions of students struggle with virtual learning, because of poor internet connections at home, lack of laptops or other devices, and poor digital literacy skills. These gaps have been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic that has forced millions of families to attend school and work remotely.

A [Morning Consult survey<sup>1</sup>](#) found that 35% of parents and 39% of teachers say their children had to seek internet connectivity somewhere outside the home - including community centers, libraries and friends or family member's homes over the last year. The same study



also found that 73% of parents and 70% of teachers anticipate that the traditional classroom learning environment will rely more heavily on technology in the future, which means many students without access to the internet could continue to get left behind.

“Our nation’s most underserved communities need immediate solutions for overcoming barriers to access, affordability and adoption,” said Charlene Lake, senior vice president, AT&T Corporate Social Responsibility. “AT&T Connected Learning is tackling these issues head on, working to expand access to connectivity services and devices, as well as drive digital literacy and adoption through relevant and engaging educational content, and tutoring and mentoring support.”

## How will we make this happen?

### Access to essential connectivity, device, and education tools

The opening of the first AT&T Connected Learning Center – located at Family Gateway in Dallas – moves us toward our goal to provide 1 million K-12 students in the United States with the technology and/or skills needed to succeed by 2025. We’re working to bring more than 20 centers to life across the nation, many of which we expect to open before the end of the year.

Each center will be housed within existing local organizations that support underserved populations, including some of our nation’s most vulnerable students and families. They will offer free access to high-speed AT&T Fiber internet and Wi-Fi and as part of its ongoing commitment to bring digital inclusion to underserved communities across the country, **Dell Technologies** will donate [Dell OptiPlex](#) computers and Dell monitors featuring integrated audio and webcams to support virtual learning in each center. Additionally, **Overland-Tandberg**, a leading global technology and IT services company, will lead the onsite configuration of the computers. The company, a Black-owned corporation, is part of our [\\$3 billion Supplier Diversity initiative](#).

The centers will offer educational content from **Khan Academy**, **the Public Library Association**, and other learning resources, to help students and families participate in virtual learning and gain digital literacy skills. Additional content will be available to the centers through the digital learning platform that we’re developing, which will include exclusive content from WarnerMedia. Also, AT&T employees will take an active role in the centers, volunteering their time and offering mentoring and tutoring for students. Each organization with a center will receive \$50,000 in additional support from AT&T to use for operational expenses, educational needs of students and families and more.



To help students and families we are unable to reach through our Connected Learning Centers, we'll collaborate with national and community organizations, including Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Digitunity, the Public Library Association and more.

- Since [November 2020](#), AT&T has worked with **Connected Nation** to provide more than 35,000 of our nation's most vulnerable students with a free year of internet connectivity and wireless hotspots. Today, we're expanding our device support, working with **Digitunity**, to provide more than 20,000 laptops to families of K-12 students affected by the homework gap over the next two years in 10 cities.
- We're also working with **Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)**, which will provide computer resource rooms with digital skills and coaching to parents and families in up to 16 additional community-based organizations around the country.
- We continue to work to equip parents and families with free digital literacy education that is vital for preparing for the jobs of the future. With the **Public Library Association**, we've launched the first [three of 12 digital literacy courses](#) in a curated series to help newly connected parents and families build skills and confidence using computers and mobile devices. These courses are available [online](#) to everyone and will be offered at AT&T Connected Learning Centers and in public libraries nationwide.

### **Affordable options for broadband services**

AT&T continues to help make broadband more affordable for millions of eligible households. Families can sign up for discounted connectivity through the \$10/month Access from AT&T broadband offering and can get a temporary benefit on internet service through AT&T's participation in the federal [Emergency Broadband Benefit \(EBB\) program](#).

Access to technology is essential for students to thrive and for teachers to succeed. That's why AT&T continues to offer solutions—in and out of the classroom—for the more than 135,000 public and private K-12 schools, colleges and universities. Since March 2020, AT&T has connected more than 500,000 students and educators across 50 states with agile mobile connectivity.

### **What they're saying**

#### **Family Gateway**

"We are happy to have the first AT&T Connected Learning Center onsite at our emergency shelter in downtown Dallas," said **Ellen Magnis, president and chief executive officer, Family Gateway**. "The AT&T Connected Learning Center will help us continue meeting the educational and social-emotional needs of children experiencing homelessness in Dallas. AT&T has been a wonderful corporate collaborator of ours for many years, and the children



in our care look forward to tutoring sessions with AT&T employees every week. We are so grateful for their collaboration in our mission."

### **Dell Technologies**

"Access to technology has never been more important, allowing communities to participate in today's digital ecosystem. It's part of our responsibility to make sure we are reaching communities across geographies, cultures and socio-economic status, to help ensure everyone is given the tools, skills and support needed for future success," said **Jessica Anderson, Director of Strategic Giving, Dell Technologies**. "We are excited to work with AT&T to bring access to communities across the U.S. helping more people participate in today's digital world."

### **Overland-Tandberg**

"Companies that are willing to assist economically-impacted communities realize that in these challenging times, assistance means more than just writing a check," said **Eric L. Kelly, Chairman and CEO of Overland-Tandberg**. "That's why we're so excited to be working with AT&T, Dell and others who fervently share our commitment to community building. Together, we're investing the resources necessary to deliver the vital training and infrastructure needed to help bridge the digital divide for underserved communities across the country."

### **Public Library Association**

"We are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with AT&T and to improve digital literacy and promote broadband access among families and communities," said **Melanie Huggins, Public Library Association President (2021-2022)**. "The digital literacy content we are developing with AT&T, which is based on PLA's DigitalLearn.org initiative, will provide parents and families with an opportunity to build the skills and confidence they need to help children navigate distance learning and participate effectively and safely in today's digital world."

Learn more at [att.com/connectedlearning](https://att.com/connectedlearning).

### **About the Survey:**

<sup>1</sup>Morning Consult Survey: Morning Consult polled 1,000 parents, 500 teachers/administrators and 100 non-profits on behalf of AT&T April 2-9. Full survey here.

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

We're committed to advancing education, creating opportunities, strengthening communities and improving lives. AT&T Connected Learning is a multi-year commitment to narrow the homework



gap, so today's learners are connected with skills, resources, and opportunities for success in school and in life. Since 2008, we've committed \$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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