

July 22, 2019

Dear Friends,

We have exciting news to share with you! The Illinois Century Network (ICN) is currently implementing changes to how we serve our public K-12 schools. The Illinois K-12 Broadband Initiative is designed to remove barriers, which limit access to secure Internet bandwidth essential in today's digital learning environment.

The ICN was built as an Internet and Intranet network to serve Illinois K-12 schools and has been fulfilling that mission for over 20 years. The ICN is managed by the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) and functions as a state-wide communications network serving K-12 schools, higher education, libraries, museums and local and state government. See www.illinois.net for more information about ICN and our services.

Primary changes include:

- **As of July 1, 2019, the ICN is waiving service charges for our public K-12 schools and will provide all traditional services as well as new security services at no cost.** The ICN will not place any limitations on bandwidth to ensure that every ICN connected public K-12 school has adequate bandwidth to meet the needs of their students, faculty and administration. Please note, the transport circuit between ICN and the school, and the school's hardware may be limited in capacity and may require an upgrade to access the higher bandwidth levels. ICN will work with school staff to identify bandwidth utilization levels and bottlenecks which may limit bandwidth access. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) recommends a minimum of 1 Mbps of bandwidth (per student) to ensure students have adequate connectivity for digital learning now and into the future.
- **On July 1, 2020, ICN will discontinue participating as a USAC E-rate Service Provider.** Since 2013, ICN has participated in the E-rate program as a Service Provider and responded to Form 470 bids for Internet access. This year, DoIT will form a consortium acting as an E-rate applicant on behalf of our public K-12 schools. This Fall, DoIT will issue Form 470 RFPs for Internet access and supporting transport (Last Mile).
- **ICN is adding additional network security services.** We have configured all ICN public K-12 school connections for automatic Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) protection and mitigation. If your school is targeted by a DDoS attack that could potentially disrupt your Internet connection, ICN will identify the attack and proactively prevent any service disruption (24/7). Other security services include Cisco's Umbrella content filtering and firewall services.

Next steps:

With regards to ICN service billing, no action is required by schools other than any internal notifications that may be necessary. Please note, E-rate applicants who use the BEAR method of reimbursement **should not** claim reimbursement from USAC on your ICN service since there will

be no cost. Both SPI and BEAR applicants **will still need** to ensure reimbursement on service you receive from other providers.

Contact your local ICN Regional Technology Center (RTC) to obtain an assessment of your current connection bandwidth, your router and firewall. RTC staff can be found at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/icn/support/Pages/default.aspx>.

To participate, complete our “Letter of Agency” to join the DoIT E-rate consortium. Joining the consortium is mandatory to participate in this service. The DoIT consortium will issue the E-rate 470 bid on your behalf. The greater the number of participants, the more successful the program will be. The Letter of Agency will be sent by separate email.

This new approach to broadband support for our public K-12 schools is part of a larger initiative to expand broadband access across Illinois that includes addressing unserved and underserved areas of Illinois. The initiative also allocates capital funding for the ICN to upgrade our backbone network, core hardware, Internet egress and network capacity, ensuring ICN remains one of the top education networks in the country.

Please stay tuned for future emails, webinars and meetings to keep you informed about the Broadband K-12 Initiative.

Please contact us with any questions, and as a member driven network, we value your input. Thank you for being part of the ICN.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Woodsome'.

Robin Woodsome
DoIT-ICN Field Operations Manager