Plugged In

Frequently Asked Questions

Program:

Who is Viasat? Viasat is a US-based space technology company that builds and operates satellites that provide connectivity to homes, airlines, and businesses around the world. Learn more at www.viasat.com.

Who is Columbia Urban League? Columbia Urban League is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization affiliated with the National Urban League that is a multi-service, non-profit agency that promotes financial stability and racial inclusion in our community. The Columbia Urban League offers programs designed to provide economic empowerment and educational opportunities for those in need. Learn more at www.culsc.org.

What is the program and why? *Plugged In* was created to help address systemic inequities particularly around the digital divide by providing no-cost high-speed internet, a computer, and support and training on how to use these technologies to households and families located in internet deserts. The program intends to help narrow the digital divide and to increase digital equity through supporting households in their internet usage to be able to leverage connectivity for things like online tutoring, telehealth appointments, online job training programs, and more.

What are the costs of the program and how long does it last?   The cost for participating households is zero. The initial duration of the program is three years. At the end of two years, Columbia Urban League and our partners will evaluate the status of the program and determine if it will continue beyond three years.

Who is eligible for this program? To be eligible to participate, your household must have one or more students enrolled in the Fairfield County School District, must be eligible for federal SNAP benefits and/or Medicaid, and must reside in an area of Fairfield County that does not have high-speed internet (high speed defined as download speeds greater than 60mbps).

How many spots are available for this program? We currently have funding to support 130 households.

If you get more than 130 interested, how will you select? If we receive more eligible applicants than we have program spots, Columbia Urban League will prioritize the households with the highest number of FCSD students and prioritize geographic locations where Viasat offers the strongest satellite service.

What is the process for applying? The first step is to complete the "Express Interest" form which can be found here: https://wkf.ms/43G9FAW. This form will be open until Friday, May 12. Households that meet the criteria and are selected to move forward will receive a more detailed form for completion no later than Thursday, May 18.

What information do you need? We will ask for basic information like name, address, phone, email, and internet usage needs. Households selected to apply for the program will be asked for more detailed information about their familiarity with certain internet elements.

How will you use and store my information? Any information provided will be kept strictly private and confidential. Your information will be used to build your internet account and to help understand how having high-speed internet may or may not provide opportunity for your household.

Am I required to do anything to participate? Yes, in addition to completing all the necessary information to register, we will ask that you participate in periodic surveys and possible focus groups. It's important that we capture the impact high-speed internet is having within your household and among the community at-large. We will determine this using 3-5 surveys and 1-2 focus groups over the three-year program period. Additionally, we will have a Kick-Off Event on Thursday, June 8th where you will learn more about your internet, receive your computer, and have access to numerous resources. We ask that you prioritize attending this event.

Internet

What is the process of getting the internet at my home? If your household is selected to participate, a certified installer will call you to schedule installation at your home. Installation takes—on average—two hours.

What will this cost my family? Zero. There is no cost for any component of Plugged In. The program is funded through a partnership between Columbia Urban League and Viasat.

Will I receive a monthly bill? You may receive a monthly statement. It may show an amount due and then a credit for that amount. You will not be responsible for any money/fees shown on the invoice.

What do I have to sign to receive free internet? You will be required to sign a standard "end-user agreement" (similar to what you may sign for cell phone service) and an addendum that outlines Plugged In program elements. Participants are required to sign both documents (at the time of installation) to be eligible and for your installation to be completed.

What do I do if my internet stops working, or I have a technical issue? You will be provided with a binder containing printed resources to help you troubleshoot and fix minor issues. If you are unable to resolve an issue yourself, you may reach out to Viasat's Customer Care Center. Contact information will be provided in the binder of information.

What are speeds and data limits? The internet plan you will receive will produce up to 100mbps download speeds. After you reach300GBs of High-Speed Data, your service will be slower during times of network congestion.

How can I track my data usage to know how much data I have remaining? You will have full access to the MyViasat mobile application that will help you track your usage.

What if I need to move? Columbia Urban League and Viasat will cover up to two relocations during the three-year program period assuming you are relocating to a new home within Fairfield County and that the children in your home will still be attending FCSD schools. If you are moving outside of Fairfield County and/or your children are no longer attending FCSD, your enrollment in the program will be discontinued.

Can I use the internet for activities beyond the Plugged In program? The internet will be yours to use as you see fit, but we recommend and ask that you prioritize use for education, learning, job training,

healthcare, and similar uses. Applications like Netflix and YouTube use substantially more data, so you may run through your monthly High-Speed Data somewhat quickly with high use of applications like Netflix. Additionally, you will have access to higher speeds during non-peak times and you can use the MyViasat app to determine what times of day are "non-peak" in your area based on service availability.

What if I have a friend or family member who would like to participate? Assuming they meet the eligibility requirements listed above and register in the timeline provided, they are eligible to apply.

If I don't own my residence, do I need landlord approval? Yes, you do need to obtain permission from your landlord/property owner. You will be asked to confirm and verify that you have this permission at the time of installation. If you do not have landlord permission, your installation cannot be completed.

Where on my residence will the dish be installed? This depends on numerous factors like tree line/tree coverage, roof type, and a clear line of sight to the southern sky. In some cases, it will go on your roof, and in other cases it may be mounted on a pole that we will install in your yard. Our installers have extensive experience in quality installations on all types of buildings.

What do I do with the equipment if I move outside of Fairfield County? You will notify us of your move and we will send a box for you to return a portion of the equipment (receiver device and modem) at no cost to you.

How many people can be on the internet at one time? This depends on the type of usage each individual is performing. Viasat's satellite-based internet can support several simultaneous users using applications such as web browsers, email, self-paced learning programs, and online banking. The service can support a smaller number of simultaneous users using applications like Netflix and massively multiplayer online games.

Are any websites blocked by Viasat? Viasat, as an Internet Service Provider regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, does not block any websites. However, adults in your household--should they choose—can use parental controls on devices (TVs, laptops, tablets) to block websites as you wish.

Computer

What kind of computer will I receive? The computer you will receive from Compudopt will be a professional-grade laptop which will contain a 5th Generation i-series (or AMD equivalent) CPU, have a minimum of 8GB RAM, and a 120GB HDD or a 128GB SSD.

What kind of training will I receive? At our Kick-Off event on June 8, 2023 there will be various teaching and learning opportunities for you to help become acquainted with your new laptop. Additionally, Columbia Urban League will offer support and training throughout the program period.

What support is available if I have a question about my computer? Compudopt provides a two-year warranty and two years of technical support for your laptop via phone. Please note this technical support is separate from Viasat's technical support for your satellite internet. You will contact Compudopt directly for technical issues with your laptop.

What if my computer stops working? You will reach out to Compudopt's technical support line.

What software will be available? Your laptop will have Windows operating system. You will be able to download any other software you need (but are responsible for any associated costs).

Will there be parental controls on the computer? Parents will have the option and opportunity to place parental controls and blocks on your new laptop.

Will I need to give the computer back? No. The computer is yours to keep.

Other

What if I have additional questions? Reach out to Columbia Urban League at PluggedIn@culsc.org or 803-799-8150