

**STANDARD COVID-19 RESPONSE FAQ TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROVIDERS  
FOR MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS**

**Consolidated Communications Responses  
Answered on May 18, 2020**

**The FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge**

- Q. Did [company] sign the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge?**
- A. Yes, Consolidated Communications signed on to the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge on March 13, 2020.**
- Q. When did [company's] Pledge period start? When does it end?**
- A. Consolidated's Pledge started on March 13, 2020 and is scheduled to be in effect until June 30, 2020.**
- Q. Does [company] plan to extend the Pledge, or portions of the Pledge, at all?**
- A. The FCC recently extended the Pledge timeframe through June 30, 2020 and Consolidated agreed to extend our Pledge accordingly. If the FCC, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic decides to extend the Pledge beyond June 30, 2020, Consolidated will review the extension at that time**

**Shut Offs**

- Q. What is [company's] shut-off policy during the Pledge time period?**
- A. Consolidated's involuntary disconnection policy during the Pledge time period follows the language of the Pledge**
- Q. How can I qualify to avoid having my service shut off?**
- A. Customer's that are experiencing an inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic need to call Consolidated and self-declare their inability to pay their bill due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic.**
- Q. Do I need to opt-in to the shut-off part of the Pledge or will I automatically be protected from shut offs?**
- A. Customers need to contact Consolidated and self-declare that their inability to pay their bill is due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic.**
- Q. I am behind on my bills, or I know I will not be able to pay my current or upcoming bill by the due date listed on my bill. I am worried my service will be shut off.**

**Do I need to contact [company] to prevent shut off, and if so, how can I contact the company?**

- A. Yes, you can reach Consolidated at 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224).
- Q. My broadband and/or telephone service has been shut off.
- How do I get my service turned back on?
- A. Please call Consolidated at 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224) to discuss payment options to restore your service.
- Q. I am unable to pay my bills during [company's] Pledge period.
- When will I be expected to pay my unpaid bills once the Pledge period is over?
- A. We encourage you to contact Consolidated as soon as possible to discuss payment options at 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224).
- Q. Will [company] offer a payment plan for my unpaid bills beginning now or once the Pledge period is over?
- A. We encourage customers that are unable to pay their bills and have called to self-declare their inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic to contact Consolidated to discuss payment options immediately. If customers wait until after the current Pledge expiration date of June 30, 2020 to call to discuss payment options, it's likely that customers past due balances will be even higher than they are today, making potential payment arrangements even more challenging.
- Q. When will [company] begin shutting customers' service off again?
- A. Consolidated will begin collections activities for customers that have self-declared their inability to pay their bill due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic once the FCC Pledge expires, currently June 30, 2020.

#### **Late Fees**

- Q. What is [company's] late-fee policy during the Pledge period?
- A. Customers that have self-declared their inability to pay their bill due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic will not incur late fees based on the FCC Pledge.
- Q. How can I qualify for waived late fees?
- A. Please call Consolidated at 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224) to discuss the FCC's Pledge and late fees.
- Q. Do I need to opt-in to the late-fee waiver part of the Pledge or will my late fees automatically be waived?

- A. You need to opt-in by calling Consolidated.
- Q. I am behind on my bills, or I know I will not be able to pay my current or upcoming bill by the due date listed on my bill. I am worried about late fees.
- Do I need to contact [company] to seek waiver of any late fees. If so, how can I contact the company?
- A. Please call Consolidated at 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224) to discuss the FCC's Pledge and late fees.
- Q. When will [company] begin charging late fees again?
- A. Customers that have self-declared their inability to pay their bill due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic will start incurring late fees at the expiration of the FCC Pledge, currently June 30, 2020. We encourage customers that are experiencing financial hardships caused by the pandemic to call Consolidated to discuss options at 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224).

#### **Changes in Broadband/Wireless Service**

- Q. Has [company] made any changes to its data caps or data speeds for my broadband/wireless service?
- A. Consolidated does not have data caps on its internet services and has not made any changes to customer's data speeds.
- Q. I'm worried that I can't pay my broadband/wireless bill by the due date.
- Will I experience any change in my data caps or data speeds as a result?
- A. Customers that are unable to pay their bills and have called to self-declare their inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic will not experience any change in data speeds through June 30, 2020.
- Q. More people are working from home and communicating online.
- Does [company] have enough bandwidth to accommodate everyone? Will I experience any service issues as a result of this increased demand?
- A. Consolidated's Network is operating well. We have experienced an increase in Internet usage during the day but that daytime increase is still less usage than we typically see in the evening hours. Evening hour usage has increased slightly but we have not experienced congestion on our network. Our Network usage has been fairly consistent over the last 7 weeks.

**Q. If [company] lowers my data caps or data speeds for any reason during this crisis, will [company] notify me?**

**A. Consolidated has no data caps and will not lower data speeds if a customer has self-declared their inability to pay is related to the coronavirus pandemic.**

**Q. I am afraid I can no longer afford my current service plan with [company], but I currently have a contract with [company].**

**Will I be charged any fees for canceling my broadband/wireless service or switching to a less expensive plan?**

**A. We encourage customers that are concerned over paying for existing plans to contact Consolidated to discuss options immediately.**

**Q. I need to cancel my broadband/wireless service because I can no longer afford it due to this crisis.**

**Will [company] charge me a reinstallation or reconnection fee if I reestablish service in the future?**

**A. Yes, there may be a reinstallation or reconnection fee.**

#### **Cable Television – NOT APPLICABLE**

**Q. I have cable service with [company].**

**Does the Pledge apply to cable service as well?**

**Q. I have bundled cable and broadband and/or telephone service with [company].**

**If I am unable to pay my bills, will [company] shut off my cable service during the Pledge period?**

**Q. I live in an area where I cannot get access to digital channels over the airwaves, even with a digital antenna.**

**Will [company] keep me on basic service cable even if I am unable to pay my bills?**

**Q. I have bundled cable and broadband and/or telephone service with [company], and I am worried about incurring late fees during this time.**

**Does the late-fee waiver in the Pledge apply to my bills, even though those include charges for cable service?**

**Q. I can no longer afford my cable service plan, but I have a contract with [company] for this plan.**

**Will I be charged any fees for canceling my cable service or switching to a less expensive plan?**

**Q. I can no longer afford my cable service plan due to this crisis.**

**Will [company] charge me a reinstallation or reconnection fee if I reestablish service in the future?**

**Q. I am still being charged a Regional Sports Fee as part of my cable bill, but no new sports are being broadcast.**

**Why am I still being charged this fee? Does [company] have any plans to reimburse me for this fee?**

### **Cellphone Leasing/Purchase – Not Applicable to Consolidated Communications**

**Q. I currently pay [company] a monthly fee for the purchase/lease of my cellphone.**

**How does the Pledge affect these payments? Am I at risk of losing my cellphone if I cannot pay my bills?**

**Q. My monthly cellphone purchase/lease payment is significant, and I am worried I will not be able to pay after the Pledge period is over.**

**Is [company] offering any payment plans related to cellphone purchase/lease amounts that weren't paid during the Pledge period?**

**Q. I can no longer afford the monthly fee for the purchase/lease of my cellphone.**

**Am I able to trade in my current cellphone for a less expensive cellphone, and if so, will I be charged any type of termination or change fee?**

**Q. I can no longer afford the monthly fee for the purchase/lease of my cellphone.**

**Can I cancel my wireless service and return my cellphone to [company] without incurring any termination fee, change fee, or further monthly fees?**

### **Wi-Fi Hotspots**

**Q. [company] offered to open its Wi-Fi hotspots during the Pledge period.**

**What does this mean?**

**A. Consolidated doesn't offer Wi-Fi hotspots.**

**Q. How can I locate the Wi-Fi hotspots that [company] is making publicly accessible during the Pledge period? Does [company] have a map available of all Wi-Fi hotspots?**

A. Not applicable.

**Low-Income Programs**

**Q. What current programs does [company] offer to low-income customers that need access to broadband and/or telephone services?**

**A. Consolidated has provided a significant amount of information related to the pandemic, our response and resources on our website. Customers are also encouraged to call Consolidated if they have questions about offers or services.**  
<https://www.consolidated.com/support/alerts/coronavirus-updates>

**Q. Who qualifies for these broadband and/or telephone low-income assistance programs?**

**A. There are existing programs like the Lifeline Program that are available to low-income customers. These programs have requirements and customers can refer to the website below for more information.**

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-discounted-communications-service-through-the-lifeline-program>

**Q. How can I sign up for these broadband and/or telephone low-income assistance programs?**

**A. Please see the website for more information.**

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-discounted-communications-service-through-the-lifeline-program>

**Q. Does [company] offer any cable service packages for low-income households? If so, what are they?**

**A. No, Consolidated does not offer cable service packages for low-income households.**

**Q. Does [company] participate as a provider in the FCC's Lifeline Program?**

**A. Yes**

**Q. What benefits can I receive as a [company] customer through the Lifeline Program?**

**A. Consolidated customers that qualify for the Lifeline Program could receive a discount of up to \$9.25 per month.**

**Q. I am a current Lifeline customer with [company].**

**Will I be asked to certify or verify my Lifeline eligibility during the Pledge period?**

**A. It is Consolidated's understanding that the Lifeline eligibility requirements are still**

required, even during the FCC Pledge timeline.

#### **Contacting [company] During COVID-19**

**Q. What is the best way to contact [company] with any questions or concerns during the COVID-19 crisis?**

**A. Please call Consolidated at 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224).**

**Q. I am worried that customer service phone lines will be overloaded.**

**Does [company] offer live chat or other Internet-based assistance with live customer service personnel?**

**A. Consolidated offers a live chat and email option for customers to communicate with us. Consolidated also has a 24x7x365 Internet Technical Support that can be accessed by calling 1-844-YOUR-CCI (1-844-968-7224).**

#### **Technical Assistance and Social Distancing**

**Q. What precautions is [company] taking to maintain social distancing during service calls and at its stores?**

**A. Updates on Consolidated's response to the coronavirus pandemic can be found at <https://www.consolidated.com/support/alerts/coronavirus-updates>**

#### **Other Assistance Programs**

**Q. Is [company] offering any other programs or assistance to Massachusetts residents during the COVID-19 crisis? If so, what are they?**

**A. Not at this time.**

**Q. What steps is [company] taking to help educators and students stay connected and to keep students learning during the COVID-19 crisis?**

**A. Educators or families with students are encouraged to call Consolidated to discuss options to get connected and stay connected.**

**Q. What steps is [company] taking to help health care workers stay connected to patients and incorporate telemedicine into their practice during the COVID-19 crisis?**

**A. The work of health care providers is critical. Consolidated continues to work with a number of health care customers to expand capacity, provide upgrades and increase bandwidth. Any health care worker or organization in need of connectivity to care for patients should call Consolidated to discuss options.**