Internet Access Information in San Francisco

Updated 8/19/2020

Solutions Summary

Following is a summary of options for obtaining internet access in the San Francisco area:

Solution	Description	Best Option and Next Steps	Ctrl Click for Link to Detail
Home Internet	Pay for subsidized internet services where installing internet into someone's home is an option	*See Chart in Details. The best option will depend on whether a households meets requirements for a given plan.*	**Details: Home internet**
Mobile Hotspots	Purchasing mobile hotspots when home internet service is not feasible or when an individual needs access away from home	*Mobile Citizen hotspots come with unlimited service from Sprint (no throttling, no overage charges) for qualifying organizations. New customers have 30 days to try these out with full refund less shipping costs.*	**Details: Mobile hotspots**
Public Hotspots	Using public internet hotspots when feasible	*Option 1) Use Xfinity public hotspots, which are free for customers **and non-customers** at least through Dec 2020.* *Option 2) Use a free crowdsourced app to find hot spot maps by location. See detail for options*	**Details: Public Wi Fi Hotspots**

Details: Home internet

Background:

- [Lifeline](#) is the Federal Communication Commission's program that helps lower either monthly phone or internet costs. Lifeline provides a discount of $9.25 per month for either your phone or internet bill (but not both) and is limited to one discount per household.
- To [take advantage of Lifeline discounts](#), you first must establish that you qualify through one of the government programs above. You may need to show proof of qualification, such as presenting a card or award letter from Medicaid or SNAP. If you do not receive assistance from one of the government programs listed above, you may still qualify for the $9.25 per month Lifeline discount based on your income.
- Lifeline provides the monthly phone or internet discount to eligible low-income applicants who have an income at or below 135% of the [federal poverty guidelines](#).
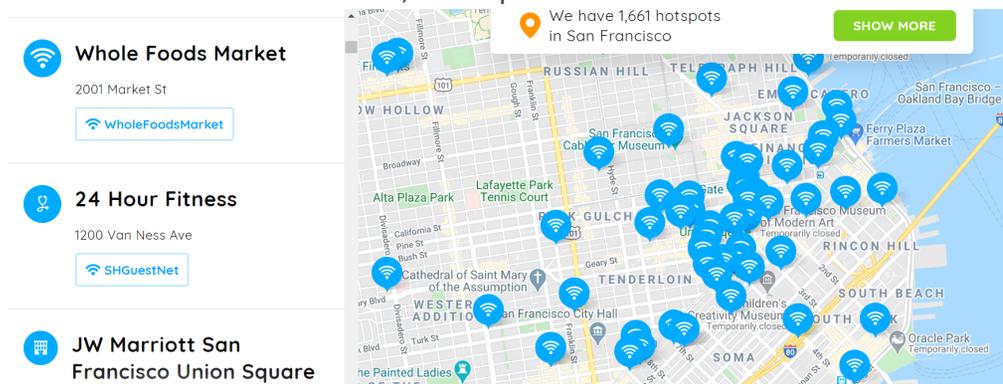
Options in San Francisco:

Plan	Offer	Cost	Days/ Mo. Free?	Any ONE of these Qualifying Conditions									Contact info
				Over 60	Veterans Benefits	College	SNAP	% above poverty	SSI	National School Lunch	FPHA Housing Assistance	Medicaid	
Fiber to Housing (Monkey brains)	Free high-speed Internet to residents in affordable housing. Also access to free modems, which are required. See list of housing developments included.	Free	**Always**								X		Call 415-974-1313, then choose #2 for support https://tech.sfgov.org/news/fiber-housing/
AT&T Access	Free installation and in-home Wi-Fi® No annual contract No deposit	**$5 to $10** a month	**None**				X	135%	X	X			855-220-5211 https://www.att.com/internet/access/
Comcast Internet Essentials	25/3 Mbps Internet service with No activation fees; no equipment rental fees ; Option to purchase a computer for $149.99 plus tax; Access to free Internet training ; free Wireless Gateway router Discounted rates for organizations are possible - CLC is negotiating 30 XFinity accounts for members and staff	**$9.95** a month	**60 days**				X		X	X	X	X	855-846-8376 **https://www.internetessentials.com/**
Sonic	3 months free internet access and unlimited nationwide home telephone service to households with K-12 students, college students, senior citizens 60 or older, educators, Healthcare providers, delivery persons, food and safety workers, and all homes financially impacted. There are no enterprise rates.	**$39.99** / int. & phone	**3 months**	X	X	X							888-766-4233 **https://www.sonic.com/cov19**

Details: Mobile hotspots

1. Citizen Mobile offers the best option given the unlimited Sprint access at $10 per month. Actual hotspot devices are well priced and range in quality. Further detail:
    a. Organizations must qualify for Citizen Mobile's services - as a non profit CLC qualifies
    b. Operates on 4G LTE internet service
    c. $10 per month ($120/year) per device
    d. Unlimited data usage – no throttling and no overage charges
    e. Devices at $61 each CoolPad Surf or $193 MiFi 8000 . Either device can accommodate up to 10 to 15 people at a time

Details: Public Wi Fi Hotspots

1. There are a number of smartphone and web apps that can be used to help find hotspots. Some of the more popular include [Wefi](), Wi-Fi Map ([iOS]() and [Android]()). These apps use crowdsourced data to build global hotspot maps.

2. Wi-Fi Map is especially impressive, with over 100 million hotspots in its database – here's an example of their screen. When you click on an individual network, it will provide the network name and in some cases the password:

3. Xfinity customers **and non-customers through Dec 2020** can find free hotspot locations at [xfinity.com/wifi/#find-a-hotspot](). Xfinity Internet customers can also locate them through the Xfinity WiFi Hotspots app. *To connect to an Xfinity WiFi hotspot:*

   1. Visit [xfinity.com/wifi]() or use the Xfinity WiFi Hotspots app to see a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots. All open hotspots, both indoor and outdoor, will be displayed on the map in blue.

   2. Once at a hotspot, customers and non-customers should select xfinitywifi from the list of available WiFi networks, and then launch a browser. Comcast uses the same SSID for both residential and business/public hotspots: xfinitywifi. If you happen to be in a location with one of their residential hotpots, and try to connect to xfinitywifi, you'll need a paid account. If you're in a commercial area where there is a true public/free hotspot, you'll be able to access it for free. Below are the screens you'll see in each case.

   3. Xfinity Internet customers can sign in using their Xfinity ID and password to be automatically connected to Xfinity WiFi hotspots. Non-Xfinity Internet customers can connect by clicking the Accept and Connect button. Non-Xfinity customers will be able to renew their complimentary sessions every 12 hour

How to find public Xfinity WiFi hotspots

Public Xfinity WiFi hotspots are available to anyone who needs them for free during the COVID-19 national emergency, including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers:

1. Go online to wifi.xfinity.com

2. Use 'Find a hotspot' and enter your city or zip code

3. Go to location of hotspot

Look for "xfinitywifi" in the list of available networks on your device. Most are located in businesses and outdoor locations. Please follow health and safety guidelines, as outlined by health officials.

✓ xfinitywifi 📶

Note: If you are asked to pay for additional time, you are most likely logged onto a residential hotspot, which are not a part of our COVID-19 open access.

Outdoor hotspots are open.

Home hotspots work as normal.