

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

Vermont Department of Public Service Looks for Local Residents and Business Owners to Fill Out Broadband Survey before November 2, 2020

Vermont aims to understand how COVID-19 has affected the use and need for telecommunications services for telehealth, telework, and remote learning across the state.

Montpelier, VT – The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and exacerbated gaps in Vermont’s broadband infrastructure that have left too many Vermonters vulnerable during the public health emergency. “This status quo is simply unacceptable,” said June Tierney, the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Public Service. “Especially during the stay-home-stay-safe order last spring.” Tierney continued, “we saw the crucial role the internet played in keeping many Vermonters safe by allowing them to stay home while continuing to learn, work, and consult with medical care providers. Like electricity, heat, and water, everyone needs access to the internet.” With nearly 70,000 addresses in Vermont that have little or no broadband access, the Department aims to address this problem by identifying and documenting these gaps. This work will then help accelerate the implementation of infrastructure solutions.

Today the *Department* announced the start of two surveys to gather data that shows how the pandemic has altered and impacted the ways residents and business owners across the state get online. One [survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8SR9MPP) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8SR9MPP>) is designed for residential Vermont residents while the second [survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z8BQHQK) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z8BQHQK>) was created specifically for business owners and managers.

“We’ve heard loud and clear that some Vermonters are having difficulties with remote work, education and telehealth,” said Clay Purvis, Director of the Department’s Telecommunications Division. “We must do all we can to mitigate these challenges as quickly as we can, and so we are asking residents and business owners to take these surveys before November 2nd so we can collect data from across the state to devise the best strategies for improving our telecommunications infrastructure.”

The surveys will measure how our reliance on broadband has changed during the pandemic, and the extent to which gaps in service have hindered the ability of students to complete schoolwork, adults to work remotely, and businesses to provide services in this new environment. Importantly, they will also be used to identify specific geographies across the state with specific telecommunications needs.

This effort is accompanied by a parallel DPS effort to document infrastructure gaps, public safety and emergency services concerns, and related legal matters to develop potential solutions that can be implemented as quickly as possible.

The DPS residential survey can be found [here](#) and the business owners survey can be found [here](#). They are currently active and will remain open through November 2, 2020.

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