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Charter Communications, Inc. Monday announced applications are now being accepted for the company's 2020 Spectrum Digital Education grant program, which supports nonprofit organizations that educate community members on the benefits of broadband and how to use it in their lives. Applications are available at [corporate.charter.com/digital-education/grants](http://corporate.charter.com/digital-education/grants) and will be accepted until Friday, June 26, at 5 p.m. EDT. Grants will be announced in August and awarded in September.

Charter opened the Spectrum Digital Education application portal two months earlier than planned to help meet the overwhelming need from nonprofit organizations focused on providing broadband training, access and education during the COVID-19 crisis. "As a broadband provider, Charter's connectivity services provide a vital link within the communities we serve, more so than ever in this challenging time," said Rahman Khan, Vice President of Community Impact for Charter. "We have heard from many organizations struggling to keep up with the demand in their communities for broadband education, training and technology. We are proud to support these nonprofits through Spectrum Digital Education grants and to help meet their evolving needs by accelerating the application process."

Charter launched the Spectrum Digital Education program in 2017 and has since committed to awarding \$6 million in cash grants and in-kind donations to support broadband education. Prior awards have allowed local beneficiaries to set up technology labs, provide online education to senior centers, and distribute laptops, impacting 28,845 individuals across 17 states and Washington, D.C., through 2019. To be eligible for a Spectrum Digital Education grant, organizations must serve communities located within Charter's 41-state service area and have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. More information on how to apply is available [here](#).

In addition to Spectrum Digital Education, Charter's Community Impact team has developed several programs to improve local communities. In 2015, it launched its signature program, Spectrum Housing Assist, with the goal of improving 50,000 homes. To date, the company has reached more than 41,000 homes. In 2019, the Spectrum Employee Community Grants program was created to support employees' volunteer work at local social and human services nonprofits. Last year, the company donated to 140 organizations across 24 states for this program.

In February, Charter announced the launch of the Spectrum Community Investment Loan Fund, which will invest \$10 million in capital by the end of 2021, making loans up to \$1 million to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) in the company's footprint. Most recently, Charter launched Spectrum Scholars, a two-year educational program for eligible rising juniors in financial need, which will award a total of \$400,000 in scholarships.

— [Patch.com](#)

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Satele Brewer had finished an exhausting day of work when he tried to log in to the Netflix account he shares with his family. A message popped up on his screen telling him he couldn't watch "Breaking Bad" because too many people were using the account at one time. "I'm like 'How are there too many users?'" said Mr. Brewer, a 28-year-old music producer in Columbus, Ohio. Then he realized that his [family was staying home, with little to do but stream movies](#) and shows.

As people spend more time at home amid coronavirus restrictions, many of them are [turning to video-streaming services](#) like Netflix, Hulu and HBO Now more than ever. The problem is, so are their families and friends. Although the

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services allow [people to share accounts](#), they place limits on how many devices can stream at once, stirring tensions among loved ones. Mr. Brewer said he called his sister, whose young son watches a Netflix animated series in the late afternoon, and recommended other ways the boy could spend his time, like reading a book to his mom or coloring. "Can't he do something else?" Mr. Brewer recalled telling his sister. "Doesn't he have schoolwork to do on the computer?"

When he isn't able to access the family account, Mr. Brewer said he ends up watching videos on YouTube to pass the time. He said he isn't interested in subscribing to a Netflix account of his own because his parents allow him to use theirs. Fatima Akoob, a 27-year-old student in Durban, South Africa, said her family WhatsApp group has been pinging with messages from members blocked from watching Netflix. Compounding the problem is that her brother gives out the password to "literally everybody," she said. "I think my cousins have it, my uncles, my aunts," Ms. Akoob said, who suspects they in turn have passed the password on to their family and friends. "That's why it's gotten a little bit crazy right now."

She recently learned, she said, that Netflix sent her brother an email to flag that someone was accessing the family account as far away as Dubai. When she confronted her brother, he confessed that on an international flight, he had become friendly with the passenger sitting next to him and shared the password as a kind gesture, she said. "I was like no, no, dude, what are you doing!" said Ms. Akoob. After intense lobbying from others in the family, Ms. Akoob's brother recently changed the password, to limit who could watch.

Netflix allows streaming on two devices at the same time on its standard plan, which costs \$12.99 a month in the U.S., and four devices on its premium plan, at \$15.99. (A plan for a single screen is \$8.99 a month.) The company's terms of use say its service must not be shared with individuals beyond the subscriber's household. But password-sharing is rife. One-third of subscribers to services like Netflix share their password with someone outside their household, according to a February survey of 2,235 subscribers by Magid, a market-research company.

In October, Netflix's chief product officer Greg Peters said the company is monitoring password-sharing but has "no big plans to announce" in regards to it. A Netflix spokesperson said last month, "We have always allowed members of the same household to share Netflix—and created guardrails to prevent abuse." Netflix added nearly 16 million new subscribers around the world in the first quarter. HBO and Hulu didn't respond to requests for comment.

Andrew Hare, senior vice president of Magid, said streaming companies may benefit if subscribers discover that sharing passwords means they can't always watch their favorite shows when they want to. "We'll have to look back to see if this to some degree stifles password-sharing long term," he said. Another possibility, Mr. Hare said, is that cooped-up consumers who have already watched all the content that appeals to them on one platform could borrow passwords from friends who have subscriptions to other streaming services. "People are running out of content," he said.

Will Hardy, a 26-year-old fan of Netflix's "Ozark," has been struggling to get his fix. He sometimes calls other members of his family to investigate how long they expect to watch and if there's something else they could be doing. "It depends how bad I want to watch it," he said. Mr. Hardy, who lives in Chicago, shared the password with his girlfriend and a friend before the virus-linked lockdown. Back then, he said, he didn't know there were restrictions on the number of users who could watch at the same time.

Some account owners have decided to purge free-riders. Yesenia Lopez Duran, 22, a recent graduate in Santa Cruz, Calif., pays for a Netflix account that her mother and older brother also use. When she got the message about too many people streaming, she suspected her brother's ex-girlfriend was also

watching. She hadn't minded until it became a problem during the lockdown. "It didn't really affect me, and then when it did I was like 'uh, time to go.' " She changed the password.

When the ex-girlfriend reached out about the account, Ms. Duran told her she had ended the subscription. "I didn't know how to tell her I basically kicked her off," said Ms. Duran. Those who are kicked off sometimes have no choice but to finally get a subscription of their own. Tahmeena Carawan, a 23-year-old owner of a marketing agency in South Africa, said she had been watching "Orange Is the New Black" on her husband's brother's girlfriend's uncle's Netflix account, after she got the password from her brother-in-law.

Then around a month ago, she couldn't stream her show because there were too many people watching. Not long afterward, the password she had from her husband's brother's girlfriend's uncle stopped working—she suspects he changed it. The next day she and her husband purchased their own Netflix account. – ***Wall Street Journal***

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State legislators came to a reasonable agreement — which doesn't happen often — and passed an interim spending bill to fund state government through November. By then, state leaders will have a better handle on just where things stand with the 2020-21 budget — and it won't be pretty.

What's all but certain is that lawmakers will need to agree on some major concessions and spending cuts to get the state through to next June. The interim spending plan of \$25.8 billion keeps spending level for the next five months — except for public education, which received a full year's appropriation. While most lawmakers and the governor called it a reasonable approach until the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is realized, there is no question that painful decisions are ahead.

The state Department of Revenue said tax revenues dropped 17% in May from official estimates, creating a shortfall of roughly \$440 million. Revenues from sales taxes have plunged dramatically since businesses were shut down in mid-March, and more than \$1 billion in personal income taxes has been shifted into the next fiscal year when the deadline for filing tax returns was pushed from April to July. All told, state officials estimate a loss of nearly \$5 billion in revenues through next June. And that will impact nearly every state agency and operation in the coming year.

The state has received \$3.9 billion in federal stimulus aid in response to the pandemic, and the governor signed off on a plan to direct \$2.6 billion of that to relief programs for nursing homes, small businesses and local governments. The money can't be used, however, to make up for lost revenues under the current federal rules. Congress should loosen the requirements to provide states with more flexibility, especially if talks of another stimulus package for state and local governments fall through.

The state budget passage is typically a battle over where to spend tax dollars and how to balance spending without raising taxes. This coming year will be an even greater challenge with the dramatic drop in tax revenue and the increased needs of so many throughout the commonwealth. The budget is secure from July through November, but residents should brace for some dramatic cuts through the remaining seven months of the fiscal year.  
– ***Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* editorial**



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