

Winding Down the MBLC Hotspot Program at Your Library

Contents

Introduction	2
Do You Want to Continue Lending Hotspots?	2
Providers	2
State Blanket Contract	2
T-Mobile	3
Contact	3
Cost	3
Franklin / Pintrac	3
Contact	3
Cost	3
Mobile Beacon via Tech Soup	3
Program	3
Contact	4
Cost	4
Kajeet	4
Contact	4
Cost	5
September/October	5
Stop Lending	5
T-Mobile - Transition of Accounts/Ownership	5
Disposal of Hotspots and Cases	6
Hotspots	6
Return to T-Mobile	6
Cases	6
Reporting to MBLC	6
Circulation Statistics	6
Patron Surveys	7
Library Survey	7
Questions?	7

Introduction

This guide is designed to help you a) identify options if you want to continue to lend hotspots after the program ends October 1st, b) understand how to cleanly end lending of MBLC hotspots and dispose of the devices and cases, and c) provide the reporting we will need from you in October.

This is a living document and may change several times over the next few months as we learn more. Please check in occasionally for the most updated advice. We will also notify participants via the t-mobile-hotspots@mblc.state.ma.us mailing lists when a new version has been posted.

Do You Want to Continue Lending Hotspots?

First, we will discuss the current providers in use: 1) T-Mobile for the hotspot devices and data service, and 2) Franklin Wireless (via Mobile Edge and Whalley Computer Associates), for the Pintrac MDM, or mobile device management dashboard.

Then we will provide information on Mobile Beacon and Kajeet, the two most likely alternate hotspots vendors designed for education, libraries, and public sector services. Mobile Beacon will undoubtedly be the least expensive option. Kajeet has more tools to manage the hotspots and analyze their use. Kajeet also using with a broad array of cellular telecommunications vendors (*i.e.*, T-Mobile, Verizon, AT&T).

You will follow your own local procurement rules to continue service with T-Mobile or obtain replacement hotspots and service from another provider. MBLC is not able to facilitate or coordinate any sort of group purchase.

Providers

State Blanket Contract

State blanket contracts have advantages and disadvantages. They simplify the procurement process, but the pricing may not be competitive in a fast-moving industry like cellular telecommunications.

The contract you should use is ITT 72, Category 1 “Cellular Services and Devices”.

Download the [Contract User Guide](#).

You will find the links to specific vendors on the last page of the User Guide. The major providers: T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless and AT&T are included. Follow the link to the pricing sheet. Note: If you are looking for a quote from T-Mobile specifically, please use Ryan Lopes (*see below*) as the contact, not Jim Leonard, who is listed in the Guide.

When reviewing pricing sheet for each vendor, look for the category **MiFi Data**. This is the standard data plan for hotspots. Look for a MiFi data plan with **unlimited data**.

Do not review any cellular contract flagged as PSGW (Public Safety Grade), which is more expensive and unnecessary for public library use.

T-Mobile

Contact

Ryan Lopes is the sales representative that has worked with MBLC throughout this project.

Ryan Lopes
ryan.lopes1@t-mobile.com
425-331-7047

Cost

The current pricing is \$31.50 / hotspot / month, which is a 10% discount off of retail. MBLC paid \$28.70 / month (18% discount). Costs are listed on the T-Mobile ITT 72 pricing sheet. Libraries are free to negotiate with vendors on the state contract to see if they can get a lower price.

Franklin / Pintrac

Contact

Sean Crowley from [Mobile Edge](#)¹ can coordinate buying Pintrac MDM services off of the ITT 72 state blanket contract.

Sean Crowley:
sean@mobileedge.us
818-262-2114 (m)

He would direct you to a value-added reseller on the state contract, Whalley Computer Associates (wcabizma@wca.com). They are listed as a vendor under ITT 72 Category 9, "Equipment Related to ITT 72 Services".

Cost

Mobile Beacon via Tech Soup

<https://www.techsoup.org/mobile-beacon>

Mobile Beacon is going to be the least expensive option at \$10/month. They make a good choice if you are happy with the coverage that you got through T-Mobile and want a simple solution.

Thanks to Tegan Menino (Clapp Memorial Library/Belchertown) for the detailed information on Mobile Beacon and Tech Soup! Tegan is willing to help you. They can be reached at: tmannino@cwmars.org. A further update was provided by Liz Anderson at Sherborn on 7/12/22.

Program

The Mobile Beacon solution includes the ability to get up to 11 hotspots in the fiscal year of donation / purchase to Tech Soup (July 1-June 30), this can be done all at once or in batches. Mobile Beacon can walk you through the Tech Soup donation process.

¹ If you want a content and security filtering solution, but didn't like T-Mobile's, Sean can facilitate obtaining a much more flexible solution called WebTitan that integrates well with the Pintrac MDM.

Mobile Beacon is currently distributing [Franklin T-10 hotspots](#). These are virtually identical to MBLC's Franklin T-9's, just slightly bigger with a different AC adapter. You **cannot** reuse your MBLC hotspots; you must obtain new ones from Mobile Beacon.

To manage hotspots from Mobile Beacon – call or email them. There is no dashboard like Pintrac or the T-Mobile dashboard. There is a hotspot-by-hotspot local configuration admin utility that you can reach by plugging the hotspot into a computer and visiting a specific URL - this lets you change details like network name, password, etc.

Wireless coverage should be the same as with MBLC's hotspots. If the T-Mobile coverage worked for your community, so should Mobile Beacon. Please always confirm with the vendor, however.

Contact

Current Tech Soup Donation: <https://www.techsoup.org/products/hotspot-for-mobile-beacon-mobile-broadband-internet-service-for-nonprofits-g-51472->

Cost

There is a one-time admin fee to Tech Soup of \$15 *per hotspot*. This will enable you to then go through Mobile Beacon and avoid the \$57/fee per hotspot. [Updated 7/12/22]

Each hotspot is then \$120/year (averaging \$10/month).

You pay shipping on the hotspots (rates are on donation information page), and you pay upfront for a full year of service per hotspot ordered.

Mobile Beacon will issue invoices for libraries that cannot pay by credit card

There are no roaming charges, but the hotspots are not usable out of service area (*e.g.*, Canada/Mexico)

Kajeet

Kajeet has a number of plans. Originally designed for schools or libraries serving students, they have a “student unlimited” plan. There are lower (K-8) and higher (9-12) and academic versions. Libraries can tweak around the edges of the student plan to allow some additional services (*e.g.*, YouTube), but many popular and streaming websites are disabled by default since they don't serve an educational need. To enable services like Netflix or Disney Plus, you would need to contact Kajeet and expect to pay for more data per month. See: <https://www.kajeet.net/industries/education/libraries/>

Coming in July will be a new, public-sector plan that may be a better fit for libraries. Pricing is not yet set.

Kajeet provides its own management platform called [Sentinel](#) (like Pintrac MDM, but with more management tools and usage analytics) -- useful if you are trying to determine how much bandwidth is being used by different hotspots and so that you can enable or disable streaming services that might use lots of gigabytes of data.

Contact

<https://www.kajeet.net/contact-sales/>

Keith Wilsey leads new business development in MA
cell: 301.643.0377 email: kwilsey@kajeet.com

Jared Cooper is the Account Manager
cell: 607-281-4355 email: jcooper@kajeet.com

Cost

Kajeet has / will have basic plan costs with assumptions about bandwidth usage. However, you can adjust the amount of data per month by paying more. You would buy enough data to cover the estimated need for your hotspots. For example, 5 hotspots using on average 10 Gb per month per hotspot for a year is 600 Gigabits ($5 \times 10 \times 12$). If, over the course of the year, the aggregate data use for all your hotspots approaches the 600 Gb you had paid for, you can just buy more. If you have leftover data in your plan, you can roll a percentage of it over into a new contract period.

Student unlimited is approximately \$18/month/hotspot. The public-sector plan is likely to cost more because it anticipates more types of uses (not just homework and remote learning), more hours of use, and potentially more streaming services that use lots of data. If you need significantly more data, then costs could approach T-Mobile's monthly costs, \$30 or more per hotspots.

Kajeet recognizes that it cannot match the cost of Mobile Beacon. However, libraries that are interested in significantly more control over their devices, more analysis of whether and how many hotspots are useful, managing circulation of the hotspots directly in the Sentinel dashboard, or using an underlying telecom service that is not T-Mobile when reception is not great in your community, may want to consider Kajeet.

September/October

Stop Lending

Think about when you want to stop lending the hotspots so that they don't simply stop working while in the hands of a patron on October 1st. For the last few weeks in September, you might make the due date September 30th rather than the normal, full circulation period.

T-Mobile - Transition of Accounts/Ownership

If you intend to continue to lend the hotspots under your own T-Mobile account after September 30th, you will need to have your own library account set up. Then, you will work with Ryan Lopes, the T-Mobile sales representative to move your hotspots from the MBLC master account to your own. This should be very straightforward.

Ryan's contact information

Email: ryan.lopes1@t-mobile.com
Direct: 425-331-7047
Mobile 617-564-1313

If you also continue with the Pintrac MDM, the transition will be simplified. Why? Currently, the MBLC hotspots are completely locked down. The factory reset button is disabled. The local administration interface is disabled. This is where you would normally make changes to the hotspot via a simple web interface from a computer on the same local network or directly plugged into the PC/laptop. We did this so that patrons would not be able to change any settings and hijack a hotspot.

IMPORTANT: If you do **not** continue with Pintrac, all those settings need to be unlocked BEFORE OCTOBER 1st. Do not wait until the last minute. Please contact Paul Kissman (paul.kissman@mass.gov) or Jennifer Schwartz jennifer@franklinwireless.com at Franklin/Pintrac if you need help unlocking your hotspots as you transition the hotspots to your own T-Mobile account.

Disposal of Hotspots and Cases

Do not return hotspots or cases to MBLC!!

Hotspots

Hotspots are electronics with lithium batteries. They should be disposed of in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Return to T-Mobile

Ryan Lopes, MBLC's sales rep., will provide a return authorization and instructions for shipping hotspots back to T-Mobile. T-Mobile will pay for shipping.

Ryan's contact information

Email: ryan.lopes1@t-mobile.com

Direct: 425-331-7047

Mobile 617-564-1313

You should also be able to return the hotspots to a [T-Mobile retail store](#) or a [Staples](#). Please check with the local store first.

It is possible that you could find someone interested in reusing the hotspot devices. If so, you are free to give them away. However, see the important note above ([T-Mobile - Transition of Accounts/Ownership](#)) about unlocking the hotspots before they change ownership. Otherwise, they will be non-functional.

Cases

You may dispose of the soft cases/pouches as you see fit. You may reuse them for your own hotspots if they are a good fit, or for any other purpose. You may put them in a Friends book sale or give them away.

Reporting to MBLC

MBLC used federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through the Institute of Museum and Library Services to pay for this program. This was a high-cost program, with, we hope great benefits. MBLC is required to report on the use of the funds.

Circulation Statistics

MBLC requires all libraries to provide their circulation statistics for the program by October 15, 2022. The total number of circs will be requested, regardless of whether you started to circulate in August, 2021 (14 months) or November (11 months).

We will collect the statistics using a quick online survey. Libraries will provide the total circulations, the approximate date when the hotspots began to circulate, and any additional comments that the library would like to offer for clarification of the circulation data.

The automated networks (*e.g.*, CW MARS, CLAMS) helped many libraries set up their bib and item records in the ILS so that circulation statistics would be able to be pulled at the end of this program. If you have questions about how to get a circulation report, please contact your network central site.

Patron Surveys

We made available an optional patron survey form. Patrons may have submitted responses in two ways: [electronically](#) and by paper form. If you have collected paper forms, please drop them in delivery to the MBLC attn. Matt Perry (matthew.s.perry@mass.gov), MBLC Communications Specialist by October 15. Our delivery label name and route are:

Name: Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Route: B

Library Survey

MBLC will release a brief survey for library staff to complete at the end of the program (toward the end of September). We are interested in a few main areas:

1. Library observations / take on patron usage and benefits
How did the program work for you? What worked well, what were the sticking points. Based on your own observations, how do you perceive that the hotspots were received by patrons and what sorts of uses were the hotspots put to?

We will also be interested in whether you partnered with other organizations in the community to make the hotspots available to underserved users, such as the unhoused or residents having no internet access of their own.

2. Anecdotal Information
Compelling stories that your users might have told you showing the value of the service to them.
3. Continuation of Hotspot Lending
Will your library, seeing value in hotspot lending, continue on your own?

Survey responses will be due by October 15th.

Questions?

If you have other questions or concerns, please contact Paul Kissman using the answers@mblc.state.ma.us email.

If you learn something interesting about alternative vendors or have interesting thoughts about how you are going to close up shop, please feel free to share with the whole group at: t-mobile-hotspots@mblc.state.ma.us.