

# New Jersey Digital Readiness for Learning & Assessment Project

The power of cooperative technology purchasing



## Piscataway, New Jersey, January 2021

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNI) is pleased to announce a new round of cooperative contracts available statewide to schools and municipalities through the New Jersey Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project (NJDLAP). Launched in 2014 with the backing of the NJ Department of Education, NJDLAP has become a model of success in cooperative technology purchasing. The initiative has helped hundreds of schools and municipalities save millions of dollars while significantly increasing their Internet access, with dozens more joining the co-op each year. With Covid-19 forcing schools to move rapidly to hybrid and remote learning, NJDLAP is more important than ever to the citizens of New Jersey.

## 2021 Co-op Contract Highlights

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- The 2021 procurement is the biggest so far, helping **795 educational institutions** close the Digital Divide, including districts, charters, non-public schools, & private organizations.
- No district is left behind. The 2021 program offers **high-speed Internet access to every school district in New Jersey**, plus fiber connectivity to hundreds of schools statewide.
- Speeds are faster than ever before. Compared to the 2018 contract, which set the previous record for statewide K-12 Internet speeds, **average bandwidth is up 47%** from 1,177 Megabits per second (Mbps) to 1,729 Mbps. That's almost 2 Gigabits per second per district.
- While bandwidth is up, costs are down. The **average price for Internet access is 29% less than the previous contract**, declining from \$1,991 per month to \$1,405 per month.
- The coop delivers tremendous value for critical technology tools. **The 2021 contracts reduce the average monthly price per Mbps for Internet access by 52%** from \$1.69 to 81 cents. That's enough to keep 100 more teachers in New Jersey classrooms.<sup>1</sup>
- **Municipal agencies and local governments may participate too.** Any eligible public organization may take advantage of these contracts to increase bandwidth and save money.

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<sup>1</sup> The \$0.88 differential in price per Mbps applied to the 738,200 Mbps total bandwidth proposed to the 427 school districts in the regional buying groups equates to \$7.8M in annual savings. At \$78K per teacher that is 100 teachers.

# Key Facts about the First Six Years of NJDRLAP

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The ESCNJ will be updating important findings about NJDRLAP as new schools and municipalities sign up for service through the spring of 2021. In the meantime, here are the facts and figures for the NJDRLAP program since the latest update during the summer of 2020.

## Equitable Access

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One of the main objectives of the NJDRLAP co-op is to make high-speed Internet access available to every student in New Jersey. The program is well on its way to achieving that goal.

In the first year of the program, 137 school districts signed up for faster and cheaper broadband access through the NJDRLAP program, a promising start for the cooperative. By the beginning of 2020, 283 school districts were using the program, **almost half of all districts in New Jersey**.

In addition, **41 public charter schools, non-public schools and educational non-profits** have taken advantage of the program. Participants are from every county in the state, representing schools big and small, rural and urban, wealthy and poor, from pre-kindergarten to high school.

Altogether, that's **349 educational and government institutions** using the NJDRLAP co-op. The contract has helped thousands of citizens get better government services and **benefited approximately 700,000 students** by delivering world-class Internet access to their classrooms.

## Better Infrastructure

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Before the NJDRLAP program began, more than 17% of participating schools were struggling with copper lines to connect to the Internet. Today, at least **98% of districts are on fiber**.

By bundling the demand for advanced telecom services, the ESCNJ co-op helps local telecom providers make more productive investments in the New Jersey economy, which benefits businesses, hospitals and individual citizens, as well as schools and government organizations. The NJDRLAP co-op is on-track to facilitate **\$114 million in telecom contracts** for the shared benefit of our public sector members, approved service providers and New Jersey citizens.

## Faster Speeds

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The NJDRLAP program has significantly enhanced the availability of high-speed Internet access to K-12 schools. Before the program began, the average Internet connection for participating districts was 348 Megabits per second (Mbps). Today, districts are buying more than twice that amount- 886 Mbps apiece. That's **2.5 times more Internet per district**- a 155% increase!

Besides faster Internet access, co-op members are using the NJDLAP contract to connect multiple campus locations and government buildings together for super-fast information exchange. NJDLAP is delivering fiber-optic circuits of at least 100 Mbps each to 423 additional schools and municipalities, with an **average bandwidth of 1.1 Gigabits per second** (Gbps). These co-op circuits are meeting the “need-for-speed” for schools and municipalities statewide.

## Lower Costs

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The ESCNJ works hard to deliver the lowest-possible prices to public organizations, and the NJDLAP program has been successful in reducing technology costs for taxpayers statewide.

As the co-op increased Internet bandwidth to participating districts by an average of 155%, **NJDLAP decreased the monthly price of Internet to schools by 58%**. On a cost-per-unit basis, **NJDLAP reduced the average price per Mbps for Internet by 88%**. Before NJDLAP, schools paid an average of \$26.17 per Mbps for Internet access. Today they pay just \$3.05.

## Bottom Line

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NJDLAP co-op contracts for high-speed Internet access and advanced telecom services are servicing **800 education and government facilities** with world-class technology. If these organizations had to pay pre-NJDLAP prices for their current levels of service, they would have needed to make very difficult decisions: buy less Internet, cut spending elsewhere or raise taxes. Fortunately, the ESCNJ offers a better alternative: buy more for less with the NJDLAP co-op.

The ESCNJ estimates that **NJDLAP will save \$275 million for its members** in reduced costs per Mbps for Internet access through the first five years of the program. That’s \$55 million annually, **enough money to keep 500 teachers in New Jersey classrooms**.

## What’s Next?

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The ESCNJ is continually working to improve the NJDLAP program. Since 2019, schools and municipalities can access a new co-op contract that includes cable modems, fiber-to-the-home services, and other affordable means of Internet access. Beginning in 2021, co-op members can buy from the new contract for dedicated Internet and high-speed telecom. This will ensure that NJDLAP continues to offer the best pricing for the most relevant services.

**Purchasing from the NJDLAP co-op contract is easier than ever.** Visit the ESCNJ’s new member’s website (<https://www.escnj.us/members>) and select “Telecommunications” from the drop-down menu to access all the NJDLAP contracts. NJDLAP-approved vendors also can work with schools and municipalities to sign up for service. Or you may get in touch with a representative from the ESCNJ using the contact information on the next page.

# Contact Information

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# About Us

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## The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey | Leading the Way in Shared Services

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey operates the most trusted and most comprehensive cooperative purchasing consortium in the state (NJ State-Approved Co-op #65MCESCCPS). **Every NJDRLAP purchase is an investment in NJ kids.** Visit: [www.escnj.us](http://www.escnj.us)



Dellicker Strategies is the consultant to the NJDRLAP program and an approved co-op provider (RFP 18/19-18). The company delivers Internet and technology consulting services with a 10% discount for co-op members. Dellicker specializes in helping public organizations **upgrade their technology infrastructure, improve their cybersecurity, and manage complex technology programming.** The company is veteran-owned with 15 years of experience serving more than 3,000 schools and municipalities. Visit: <https://dellicker.com/escnj-contract>