

Notice of Proposed Settlement of Class Action About WiFi Access for Students in DHS and HRA Shelters

Who should read this notice?

You should read this notice if:

- you are a student enrolled in any New York City public or non-public school, **OR** you are a parent or a guardian of such a student; **AND**
- you live or lived in a Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Families with Children Shelter or Human Resources Administration (HRA) Domestic Violence Shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic; **AND**
- you had problems connecting to online remote school because you had problems with accessing the internet.

What is this notice about?

In 2020, three parents and guardians of children enrolled in New York City schools, along with Coalition for the Homeless, sued the City of New York in a federal class action lawsuit called E.G. et al. v. City of New York, et al., 1:20-cv-09879 (AJN). This is a class action case, which means that it was brought on behalf of a group of people who had the same problem. Both sides in the case have come up with a plan to fix the problem and have asked the judge to approve their plan, which is called a settlement. In the settlement, New York City agreed to install WiFi in shelters with families with minor children to make sure students living in those shelters can connect to the internet for remote learning. New York City must also make sure students can get access to the internet while it is installing WiFi at the shelters.

Who is a Class member?

You are a Class member and covered by this settlement if:

1. you are a 3-K to 12th grade student, or custodial parent or guardian of a student, enrolled in any school, whether public or non-public; **AND**
2. you are currently living in a DHS Families with Children Shelter or HRA Domestic Violence Shelter **OR** you lived in such shelters any time from March 26, 2020 through the present; **AND**
3. you did not have reliable internet access inside the shelter at any time from March 26, 2020, to present.

What is in the settlement?

Note: This notice contains a summary of the settlement and does not describe all the details.

1. *WiFi installation:* The City of New York agreed to install WiFi in buildings that will operate as DHS Families with Children Shelters and HRA Domestic Violence Shelters to provide students with better access to the internet for remote learning. The City will complete WiFi installation at applicable shelter sites no later than August 31, 2021, unless a delay is caused by factors beyond the City's control.
2. *Signage about how to get help:* The City will work with shelters to continue posting signs notifying shelter residents of how they can get help connecting to the internet from the DOE Helpdesk and other technical support. These signs will be available in many different languages. The City will also work with shelter providers to provide each resident a fact sheet about how students and parents can contact the DOE Helpdesk for support. The DOE Helpdesk number is (718) 935-5108.

3. *Outreach and technical support:*

Shelter case managers will discuss any internet issues during regular check-ins with clients. If families report an issue to the Helpdesk about a DOE-issued iPad, the City will reach out to them and do their best to resolve the issue, such as replacing the iPad or hotspot.

For full details of the settlement or to get more information

The settlement agreement is on the websites of The Legal Aid Society, Coalition for the Homeless, and the New York City Department of Education: <https://legalaidnyc.org/>, www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wifi, and <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/special-situations/students-in-temporary-housing>. To get a copy of the settlement, or if you have questions, you can call, mail, or email:

The Legal Aid Society
WiFi Class Action
199 Water Street, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10038
ShelterWiFiCase@legal-aid.org

1-800-649-9125

If I agree with the settlement do I have to do anything?

No. If you agree with the settlement, you do not need to do anything. If the Court approves the settlement, students and families will see improved internet connectivity, and better help fixing technology issues. You will also be bound by the settlement, which means you won't be able to make changes to the settlement.

How can I tell someone that I don't agree to the settlement?

Class members have the right to tell the Court if they object or don't agree to the settlement. Class members can object in person by coming to the hearing at 2:00 p.m. on September 3, 2021 at the below address.

**Judge Alison Nathan
United States District Court for the Southern District of New York
United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square, Courtroom 906
New York, NY 10007**

Class members may also object by sending a letter marked "WiFi Class Action" and postmarked by August 13, 2021, to the Court at the address listed above, with a copy sent to the following:

The Legal Aid Society
Attn: Beth Hofmeister
199 Water Street, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10038

If you have any questions, you may call 1-800-649-9125, or email the above attorney, who represents the certified Class in this action, at ShelterWiFiCase@legal-aid.org. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE COURT.** Court staff are not able to respond to calls and ask that you reach out through the email or address above.