

THE ARC BALTIMORE ADVANCES ITS MISSION OF ADVOCACY WITH NEW NETWORK SERVICES FROM COMCAST BUSINESS



Maryland Nonprofit Connects Six Sites and 100+ Residential Homes with Ethernet and Internet to Support Over 6,000 Developmentally Disabled Adults and Children

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION PROVIDES LIFE-CHANGING ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT TO UNDERSERVED POPULATION

The Arc Baltimore was founded in 1949 by a group of eight concerned parents who wanted to provide support and services to the intellectually and developmentally disabled adults and children in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Over the last 60+ years, the Arc Baltimore has grown into an organization with 800 employees that offer community-based services to more than 6,000 men, women, children, and their families.

Today, the Arc Baltimore provides resources such as employment training, daytime and residential support, education, specialized foster care, advocacy, and respite care for the community it serves. It is one of the largest and most respected organizations of its kind and has been recognized by the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations for dramatically improving the quality of life for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults and children. It is also certified by CARF International, an organization that provides accreditation to groups that meet the highest standards in the health and human service fields.

“All of our employees are dedicated to helping people with developmental disabilities get the support they need to live, work, and have fun!” said Director of Information Technology, Christian Ehrhardt.

RELIABLE NETWORK CONNECTION NEEDED, COME RAIN OR SHINE

The Arc Baltimore works out of many different locations – from community Arc centers to residential homes – to support the thousands of adults and children that rely on the nonprofit to help with many, if not all, aspects of their lives. But, an unreliable network connection can jeopardize a day’s operations. If the network is not available, employees can’t access training guides, webinars, or resources for the individuals they support and their families. Additionally, the individuals the Arc Baltimore supports use the internet in their homes or at day centers to play games, update social media, and plan outings or meetings with friends and family.

Previously, the Arc Baltimore was using a 1.5 megabit per second (Mbps) MPLS connection to connect to the internet at its main office, but the service was incredibly slow – with dozens of employees trying to access the organization’s internal network at any given time to transfer files, access the records database or simply send emails, the 1.5 Mbps did not provide sufficient capacity.

The Arc Baltimore knew it needed to significantly upgrade its infrastructure to help improve employee productivity and better serve the individuals at their homes and centers. At the same time, the nonprofit wanted a way to link all of its sites to each other to assist with internal collaboration and efficiency, while also allowing the adults and children living in the organization’s residential homes to receive internet access.

SITUATION

- Nonprofit helps 6,000 adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- 800 employees
- 100+ locations

CHALLENGE

- Unreliable network connectivity
- Reconciling bills from multiple service providers each month
- Poor customer service

SOLUTION

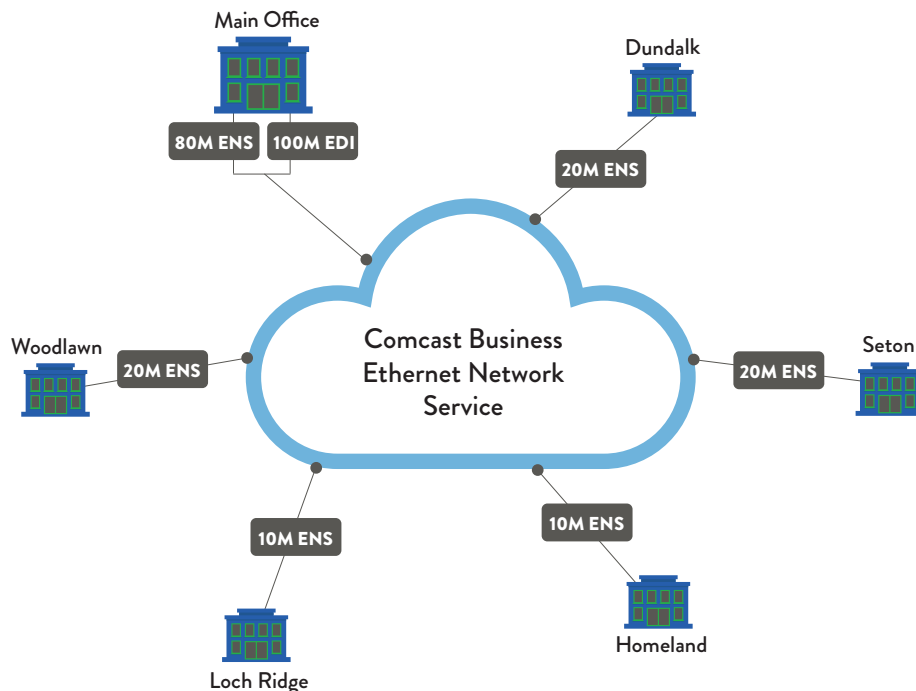
- Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service
- Comcast Business Ethernet Dedicated Internet
- Comcast Business Internet

RESULTS

- Fast and reliable network and internet services
- Consolidated billing
- Responsive and trusted customer service

“Our goal is to empower developmentally disabled people to reach their fullest potential, and technology plays an incredibly important role as our employees need reliable access to the internal databases and applications that help us best serve our individuals,” said Ehrhardt.

In addition, when services did go out, the process to get them back up and running was frequently delayed by inefficient customer service. The Arc Baltimore needed a provider that could keep systems up and running and address any issues in a timely and efficient manner. It also needed a consolidated billing process that would allow its accounting team to more easily manage costs across locations.



WITH COMCAST BUSINESS ETHERNET SERVICES, THE ARC BALTIMORE CAN HELP MORE OF THE COMMUNITY

The Arc Baltimore evaluated a number of new service providers, and ultimately chose Comcast Business because of the reach of its advanced network and portfolio of services. Comcast Business installed an Ethernet Network Service with up to 80 Mbps of capacity to help expedite the transfer of internal information between the nonprofit’s headquarters and five major facilities, as well as support a new four-digit dialing system to improve employee communication. An additional 100 Mbps Ethernet Dedicated Internet line allows employees to access financial software and the Arc Baltimore’s custom records management database as if everyone were connected from the same location, all of which improves efficiency.

Comcast Business also installed Business Internet service at the Arc Baltimore’s five day centers and the more than 100 housing sites, giving participants internet access so they can research employment, pursue interests, and connect with family and friends. According to Christian Ehrhardt this task was not an easy one, “Many of our residential homes are very old and the wiring is difficult to work with. But Comcast Business service technicians went above and beyond during the installation by finding a way to make it work.”

The complex billing issues the nonprofit was experiencing were also fixed by switching to Comcast Business. Now the Arc Baltimore’s accounting team receives one bill for all services, organization wide, that are categorized by location, instead of multiple bills for multiple services.

“Comcast Business met every requirement we had. They were accommodating and made the transition very smooth. They even were able to put circuits exactly where we wanted them, saving us the time and money of rewiring everything. Our Comcast Business Ethernet and Internet services are a tremendous upgrade from what we had before in every way possible, and will help us in assisting even more of the community,” said Ehrhardt.

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- Christian Ehrhardt
Director of Information
Technology
The Arc Baltimore