

How It Came Together

The RI Parent Distance Learning Helpline was a truly collaborative effort, with 22 organizations supporting in some manner--none thinking they could do it alone and each driving in their lane to support this work.

And it wasn't rocket science or a big to-do. All of the partners came to the table immediately when asked, with no assumption of financial gain to support students during this COVID crisis.



Partner Structure

- The Highlander Institute leveraged its educator helpline to provide web and Google Voice hosting for the helpline--as well as a staff member to serve as helpline manager. They also leveraged their Fuse Fellows network to recruit over 40 former and current educator volunteers.
- The RI Office of Innovation offered overall project management, used its network to recruit additional content-area expert volunteers, and created marketing materials.
- The RI Department of Education used its communications capacity to share the helpline information with families.
- Librarians from over a dozen municipal libraries volunteered their time while their libraries were shut down for COVID.
- And a few local nonprofits with specific expertise--from supporting parents of students with special needs to providing interpretation services--stepped up. Through volunteer support, we were able to take calls in over 200 languages.

"It was awesome! We talked for over an hour and [parent] was so thankful. She said she was so happy to have a call from someone 'who understands the day-to-day life.' What an experience."

VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVE



Call themes

- SPECIAL EDUCATION & MEETING CHILD'S NEEDS
- INTERNET & DEVICE ACCESS
- TECHNOLOGY TROUBLESHOOTING
- STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & MOTIVATION
- PARENT TUTORIALS FOR EDTECH PLATFORMS